



JSEPA



JSEPA

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The Journal of Social Equity and Public Administration: From Vision to Victory

Susan T. Gooden
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This article details the genesis of the *Journal of Social Equity and Public Administration* (JSEPA), the official section journal of the Section of Democracy and Social Justice (SDSJ) of the American Society for Public Administration (ASPA). It is written to memorialize and celebrate the victory of JSEPA's establishment for the generations of scholars and practitioners who will contribute to its success in the years to follow, as well as the readers—students, faculty, and practitioners alike—who will rely upon its findings to provide understanding and direction to solving some of the greatest inequities confronted by government.

Introduction

As the words of the late Nelson Mandela aptly capture, “It always seems impossible . . . until it’s done.” The vision for establishing a journal with a decided focus on social equity within public administration began with a vision shared by Susan Gooden, a professor and later dean of the L. Douglas Wilder School of Government and Public Affairs at Virginia Commonwealth University, during her 2016–2017 presidency of the American Society for Public Administration (ASPA) and Richard Gregory Johnson III, a professor at the University of San Francisco, who was chair of the Section on Democracy and Social Justice (SDSJ) section of ASPA during that same period. A few years later, in December 2020, the proposal to establish the *Journal of Social Equity and Public Administration* (JSEPA) was presented to ASPA's National Council where it was unanimously approved. A year later, in August 2021, Mary E. Guy, a professor in the School of Public Affairs at the University of Colorado Denver and Brian N. Williams, an associate professor in the Frank Batten School of Leadership and Public Policy

at the University of Virginia, were selected as JSEPA's inaugural coeditors.

To provide background for how the journal came about, it is worth noting that personal résumés, as well as organizations' historical accounts, often convey a linear, well thought out path of success. In reality, this masks many details along the way, including accomplishments and milestones, as well as formative decisions and challenges. This article, which appears in the inaugural issue of the *Journal of Social Equity and Public Administration*, profiles the “birth” of this journal—capturing both its purpose and promise—as well as some of the key sage-making in the journal's birth story. This article is written to memorialize and celebrate the victory of JSEPA's establishment for the generations of scholars and practitioners who will contribute to its success in the years to come, as well as the readers—students, faculty, and practitioners alike—who will rely upon its findings to provide understanding and direction for solving some of the greatest inequities confronted by government.

The authors acknowledge the assistance of David Hayter, interim executive assistant in the L. Douglas Wilder School of Government and Public Affairs at Virginia Commonwealth University.

JSEPA in Broader Context

While JSEPA is a new academic journal in public administration, its launch is best understood against the broader context of social equity's development in the field, and indeed the nation. Since its inception, a thorny challenge for democracy in the United States has been the lack of congruence between lofty and uncontested foundational democratic goals, such as "justice for all" and all persons being "created equal" against the stark reality of their woeful shortcomings in practice, including, for example, broken treaties with American Indians, the legal institution of slavery, Jim Crow policies, lack of equal rights for women, and a problematic history of both legal and practiced discrimination based on race, ethnicity, gender identity, sexual orientation, class, and ability status.

Frances Harriet Williams, the only high-ranking African-American female in the federal government during President Franklin D. Roosevelt's administration, conveyed the value of social equity as a foundation of the field of public administration in a 1947 *Public Administration Review* (PAR) article, "Minority Groups and OPA," its first publication with a focus on equity. Williams, who also served as a member of PAR's editorial board, was a pioneer in advancing equity scholarship in the field. "Her work as a practitioner was pioneering because she paved the way in articulating the importance of impartiality and fairness in the public sector" (Gooden 2017, 777). Her work was advanced via a broader discussion of social equity within the academic field in the late 1960s at the first Minnowbrook Conference (Minnowbrook I).

First convened in 1968 and held by the Maxwell School of Citizenship and Public Affairs at Syracuse University under the leadership of Dwight Waldo, Minnowbrook I provided an opportunity for invited public administration scholars to assess the status of the field. Against the national 1960s context focused on civil rights, racial inequality, and injustice, the young Minnows noted: "A government built on a Constitution claiming the equal protection of the laws had failed in that promise. Public administrators, who daily operate the government were not without responsibility" (Frederickson 1990, 228). The field's response to the political and social turmoil of the 1960s was the advancement of "new public administration" which rejected the idea that administrators were value neutral and recognized

a constellation of values which include responsiveness, worker and citizen participation in decision making, social equity, citizen choice, and administrative responsibility (Frederickson 1980).

As captured by social equity pioneer and ASPA past president Philip Rutledge, "My scholarly friends in the profession can trace our current thoughts and dilemmas around social equity back to Aristotle and Plato. Others would stop at Woodrow Wilson's seminal writings on the study of public administration. But in my own mind, I trace the 'invention' of social equity as a practical tool in public administration to the Minnowbrook conference convened by Dwight Waldo, George Frederickson, and a group of Young Turks in the 1960s" (Rutledge 2002, 391). While it is beyond the scope of this article to capture the historical development of social equity in the field of public administration, other authors have done so (see, for example, Frederickson 1971; Frederickson 1980, Frederickson 1990; Frederickson 2005; Gooden 2015b; Gooden and Portillo 2011; and Wooldridge and Gooden 2009). The actions of Frederickson and Rutledge ignited an intellectual focus on social equity in public administration that robustly continues today. In fact, it was Phil Rutledge who led the work of the congressionally chartered National Academy of Public Administration to develop a standing panel on social equity. The panel developed a working definition of the term, mainstreamed the study of social equity into the field more broadly, and hosts annual conferences on the subject.

In brief, social equity includes "the correction of existing imbalances in the distribution of social and political values. In contrast to equal treatment for all, equity proposes that benefits be greater for those most disadvantaged" (Denhardt 2004, 105). As Frederickson explains, "It's time for public administrators of all kinds to ask the so-called second question. The first question is whether an existing public program or proposed program is effective or good. The second question is more important. For whom is the program effective or good?" (2005, 36). "Social equity recognizes the historical, political, social, and economic influences that structurally influence prospects for access, opportunity, and outcomes. Social equity in public administration further recognizes the importance of public servants and public sector organizations in fulfilling the democratic principle of fairness" (Gooden 2015a, 373).

Since the development and interrogation of the term “social equity” at Minnowbrook I, many more milestones have been realized and advanced through the intellectual contributions of individual scholars, as well as the collective efforts advanced through our professional associations. These include, for example, the unrelenting work of the Conference of Minority Public Administrators (COMPA), since its founding in 1971; establishment of the Standing Panel on Social Equity in Governance by the National Academy of Public Administration (NAPA) in 2000; the same panel’s establishment of a working definition of social equity in 2000; the formal adoption of social equity by NAPA’s board of directors as the fourth pillar of public administration in 2005; and the establishment of the ASPA Section of Democracy and Social Justice (SDSJ) in 2008. It also includes the national recognition of social equity excellence through awards, such as the ASPA Gloria Hobson Nordin Social Equity Award for lifetime achievement, first awarded in 2002; the Network of Schools of Public Policy, Affairs, and Administration (NASPAA)’s annual Diversity Award, Social Equity Award, and Social Justice Curriculum Award, all of which were first presented in 2011; and the establishment of the best book award and the best paper award for works focused on social equity and social justice by SDSJ, which were first awarded in 2019.

The Genesis of JSEPA

As the interest and appreciation for social equity scholarship increased throughout the field of public administration, a common concern that emerged among scholars, particularly doctoral students, and tenure-track faculty, was the lack of outlets to publish their social equity research. These conversations occurred formally and informally among colleagues, and were particularly discussed in ASPA’s SDSJ, which as a newer ASPA section engaged younger and newer scholars in the field and provided an important outlet where their concerns could be seriously advanced. Emblematic of their concerns, an analysis of all articles published in the field’s flagship journal *Public Administration Review*, revealed that of the 4,073 articles published in a period spanning more than seven decades (between 1940–2013), only 208 or 4.26% were focused on social equity (Gooden 2015b, 374).

In addition to the low percentage of published social

equity scholarship in the field’s flagship journal, an additional concern was that among those articles that were published, most were in the area of human resources management, with very few publications in other core areas of the field such as budgeting, ethics, and theory (Gooden 2015b). Ultimately, “decades of PAR scholarship on social equity have yielded remarkably few studies that analyze contemporary structural causes of social inequities in the public sector . . . An important challenge not only for the journal, but also for the field more broadly, is to understand through the voices of scholars and practitioners why social inequities in the administration of public services persist and how these patterns can be significantly reduced” (Gooden 2015b, 378–379). JSEPA directly addresses this challenge.

As discussed next, the idea for developing a journal focused on social equity was the result of parallel efforts advanced by Susan Gooden and Richard Gregory Johnson, III in 2017. Gooden had proposed the need for such a journal in 2014, beginning conversations with ASPA’s executive director, William Shields. Concrete efforts did not begin until 2017 when Gooden, as the first African-American female president of ASPA, and Johnson, as chair of ASPA’s Section on Democracy and Social Justice, were committed to realizing the establishment of the journal as a tangible result of their leadership legacy.

The Road to Implementation

Much of the work of ASPA is accomplished through its chapters and sections. Organized geographically, chapters provide an opportunity for local engagement of academics and practitioners in advancing public administration ideals. Sections offer a specific topical focus to engage a cross section of members. The Section of Democracy and Social Justice (SDSJ) is one of more than 30 sections in ASPA. SDSJ was the brainchild of Richard Box, a professor at the University of Nebraska Omaha and the section was officially established in 2008. It was founded specifically to draw awareness to, and action on, social equity and human rights. The section focuses on matters of civil rights, LGBT matters, women’s rights, disability rights, and related concerns. It is an overarching umbrella that devotes serious attention to the struggles of many marginalized communities. In fact, it might also be suggested that the section exists to provide a voice for those communities in

public administration who remain a voiceless and invisible part of the “public.”

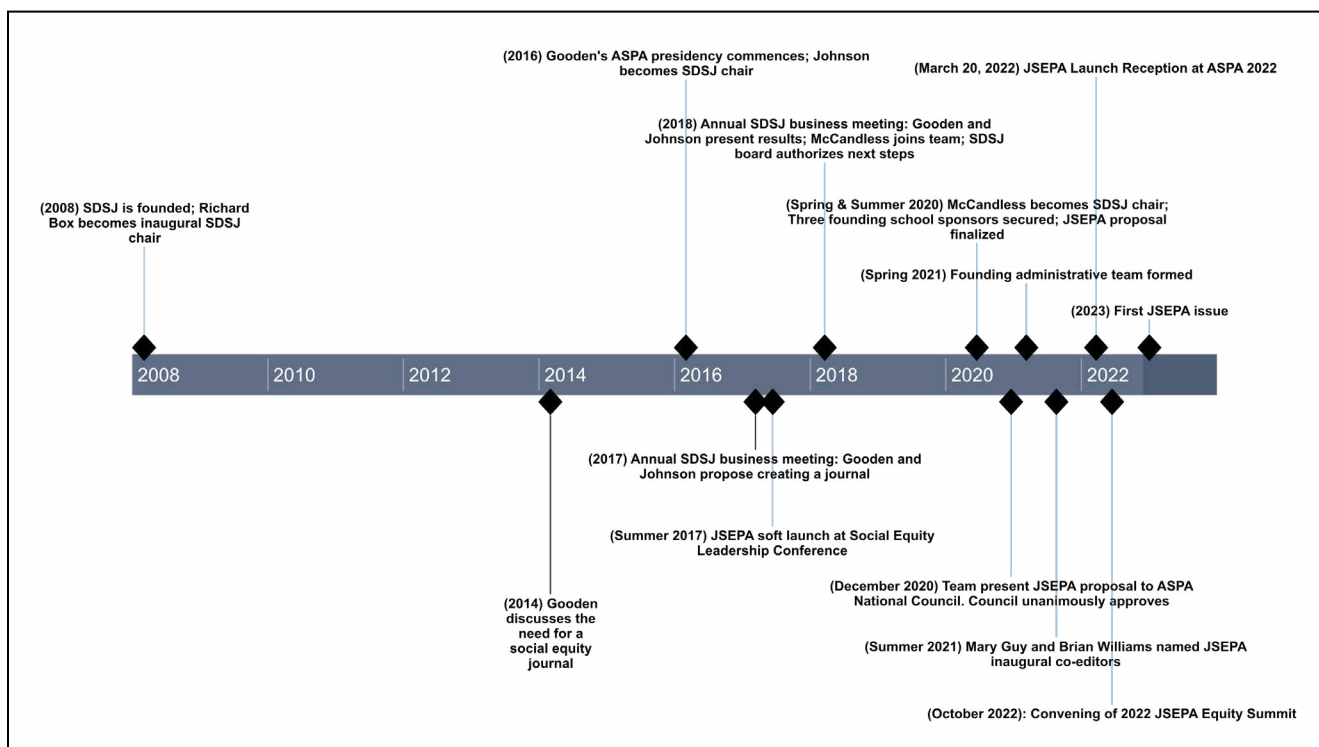
Clearly, the founding of a social equity journal was decades in the making. However, beginning in 2014, this endeavor was particularly formative (see Figure 1). While SDSJ’s membership numbers and outreach expanded over the years, there was a key dimension that still needed to be tackled: the establishment of a social equity journal. It was in this context that Johnson became SDSJ chair (2016–2018) with an intense focus on advancing social equity scholarship.

Johnson was concerned that social equity was not receiving the attention in public policy journals that other topics were receiving. Therefore, as a key next step toward creating a journal, he set about establishing a section newsletter. This newsletter highlights key activities of the section, as well as thoughtful examination of equity issues. It received ASPA’s Patricia Yearwood Chapter/Section Newsletter Award at the 2019 ASPA conference in Washington, DC. Every member paying dues receives a copy of the newsletter, and the newsletter is also publicly posted on SDSJ’s website.

With the newsletter successfully established, Johnson next set his sights on the establishment of a section journal. This task would prove much more challenging. His idea of establishing a section journal was shared by Gooden, who had earlier expressed an interest when serving as ASPA vice president. It was during the 2017 SDSJ business meeting at the annual ASPA conference in Atlanta that these two ideas joined. At this meeting, Gooden mentioned she had long thought of the name for such a journal: The *Journal of Social Equity and Public Administration* (JSEPA). The board and attendees were enthusiastic about the potential to launch a journal and approved next steps as well as the JSEPA name Gooden proposed.

The idea was met with overwhelming support among attendees, but many expressed concern over how difficult the challenge would be to create a section journal. This concern proved to be correct. Johnson would spend the rest of his administration trying to chase down leads about starting a journal. It proved to be a challenging task. While Johnson pushed the establishment of JSEPA, the timeline to accomplish it

Figure 1. JSEPA Timeline



exceeded his term as chair. It would be two years before the proposed journal would see the light of day.

The excitement of developing JSEPA was quickly accompanied by the not-so-exciting practical details and logistics of moving a concept from vision to reality. Gooden and Johnson began by identifying well-respected journals in the field and reaching out to their editors to acquire information about section-sponsored journals. At the top of their list was the journal *State and Local Government Review* (SLGR). SLGR is a well-respected journal founded in 1968 and published by Sage. It is the section journal of ASPA's Section on Intergovernmental Administration and Management. A hallmark of SLGR is its strong editorial team, timely and informative reviews, and excellent communication with authors. SLGR offered a concrete example of the excellence Gooden and Johnson were committed to fostering for JSEPA.

While Gooden and Johnson were impressed with SLGR, they were only professional acquaintances with the journal's editor and managing editor, Michael Scicchitano and Ed Benton. On March 27, 2017, Gooden emailed Scicchitano and Benton to share the idea for JSEPA and to request an in-person meeting in Gainesville to learn more about the success of their journal. They met in Gainesville on April 20, 2017. Scicchitano and Benton provided priceless tips, sobering advice, and specific resources. As Gooden shared, "I left that meeting with a true appreciation for the amount of work involved for running such a well-oiled journal. My immediate thought was that for JSEPA to be successful, we would need a super strong editor who would commit to JSEPA as a top priority. I knew JSEPA would not be successful if the editor approached it as a 'side effort.'"

In addition to securing an editorial team, JSEPA also needed a publisher. ASPA's William Shields agreed to pursue a few informal inquiries with print journal publishers and the information he shared in May 2017 raised important challenges. First and foremost, most publishers were not interested in launching new print journals, so the road ahead would be difficult. Shields also provided information on ASPA's policies and procedures which would require a well-crafted prospectus, including a statement of purpose, funding formula, and target audience. The prospectus would need to be presented to and approved by ASPA's National Council before it could be established as an ASPA section (i.e., SDSJ) journal.

At the 2018 National Conference in Denver, Gooden and Johnson presented their findings to the SDSJ board. Attendees were again enthusiastic about the potential for a social equity journal. It was also at this business meeting that the SDSJ board officially voted in favor of next steps and finalizing the journal's name—the *Journal of Social Equity and Public Administration*—proposed earlier by Gooden at the 2017 ASPA conference.

The SDSJ board was eager to get the word out, so JSEPA saw a soft launch later that year at the 2017 Social Equity Leadership Conference of the National Academy of Public Administration hosted by the University of Nebraska Omaha. Further, while the journal now had a name, a vision, and an institutional home within SDSJ, there was still considerable distance to cover to realize its implementation. Still, Gooden and Johnson knew they needed to seek additional assistance, someone who would be very thorough and detail-oriented, and who was also committed to the JSEPA vision. Enter Sean McCandless, who at the time was about to begin working as an assistant professor at the University of Illinois Springfield.

Across 2018, 2019, and 2020, the new three-person team—Gooden, Johnson, and McCandless—worked to make JSEPA a reality. During these years, the team continued to interface with journal publishers, prominent academics, and practitioners throughout the field. Additionally, based upon ASPA's requirements for starting section journals, the team worked to craft a proposal for JSEPA. A major discussion point during this time was whether the journal should be a "traditional" print journal, or open access. The team considered numerous options and recommended to the SDSJ board that JSEPA should be open access because such a journal would better fulfill the social equity mission of countering and removing boundaries for knowledge production and consumption.

McCandless's term as SDSJ chair started in spring 2020, and the enthusiasm to establish JSEPA was more acute as summer and fall 2020 approached. This was fueled by COVID-19 becoming a global pandemic. Alongside it, a more challenging and longer pandemic, that of racism committed in and by public institutions, was once again evident with the murder of George Floyd by a police officer in Minneapolis. This brought greater attention to other cases of Black, Indigenous, and other persons of color who had been attacked and killed by law enforcement. As more and

more people on social media called for a social equity journal, the team acted even more quickly. JSEPA needed to be made a reality. At the same time, SDSJ scrambled to draw attention to these inequities and to highlight the need for a dedicated space for social equity discussions. In fact, SDSJ was awarded the 2021 ASPA Overta Culp Hobby Training Award for the section's social justice programming.

Securing Resources

First, using the information on best practices in starting a journal, Gooden took the lead in securing seed funding. Amid the COVID-19 pandemic and the 2020 George Floyd murder, Gooden committed to making the case to other public affairs deans about the importance of JSEPA. She began with schools that had a demonstrated record and ongoing commitment to advancing social equity. Together, deans of the L. Douglas Wilder School of Government and Public Affairs at Virginia Commonwealth University, the Hubert H. Humphrey School of Public Affairs at the University of Minnesota, and the College of Public Affairs and Community Service at the University of Nebraska Omaha, led by Susan Gooden, Laura Bloomberg, and John Bartle, respectively, agreed to provide seed funding for the journal.

These developments came in tandem with advancements on the technical aspects of starting JSEPA. Knowing that JSEPA would be open access, the team met with several institutions' libraries to secure a publisher. The topics ranged from broad picture questions regarding indexing and outreach to technical questions like manuscript management software. With the help of Laura Bloomberg, then dean of the Humphrey School of Public Affairs, the University of Minnesota Libraries agreed to become JSEPA's publisher.

Securing ASPA Approval

With the founding sponsorships secured, throughout fall 2020 the team worked with ASPA executive director William Shields to finalize the proposal for JSEPA. The proposal worked to justify the need for JSEPA. Key elements pointed to the need for urgent action on social equity, especially given crises like the murder of George Floyd, which brought greater attention to other cases of Black, Indigenous, and other persons of color (BIPOC) who had been attacked and killed by law enforcement. The proposal also pointed to the growing place and importance of social equity in the field, especially evident in terms of: 1) the NAPA Standing Panel on Social Equity and the Social Equity Leadership Conference; 2) the growing number of social equity awards in the field, especially ASPA's Gloria Hobson Nordin Social Equity Award; 3) more panels and conference tracks focused on social equity; 4) a major uptick in social equity submissions and publications in numerous journals; 5) the need for a dedicated space for social equity discussions; and 6) more attention in bodies like NASPAA and public administration classrooms on topics of equity. On December 16, 2020, the team presented the proposal for JSEPA to the ASPA National Council. The Council unanimously approved JSEPA as SDSJ's official journal.

Editorial Search

With approval in hand, spring and summer 2021 saw the team, along with the SDSJ Board, recruiting JSEPA's founding administrative committee, whose primary charge was to draft and approve the call for applications and then recruit the first editorial team (see Table 1).

In August 2021, SDSJ announced Mary E. Guy (University of Colorado Denver) and Brian N. Wil-

Table 1. JSEPA Founding Administrative Committee

<i>Committee Leads</i>	<i>Committee Members</i>
Chair: Susan T. Gooden (Virginia Commonwealth University)	John Bartle (University of Nebraska Omaha)
Richard Gregory Johnson III (University of San Francisco)	Laura Bloomberg (University of Minnesota)
RaJade M. Berry-James (North Carolina State University)	Laurie DiPadova-Stocks (Park University)
Sean A. McCandless (University of Illinois Springfield)	Bok Gyo Jeong (Kean University)
	Bruce McDonald (North Carolina State University)
	John Ronquillo (University of Colorado Denver)
	Michael J. Scicchitano (University of Florida)

liams (University of Virginia) as JSEPA's inaugural coeditors-in-chief. In the months that followed, Guy and Williams recruited Tia Sherée Gaynor (then University of Cincinnati), James Wright II (Florida State University), and Jodi Benenson (University of Nebraska Omaha) as associate editors as well as doctoral student Adam Croft (University of Colorado Denver) as editorial assistant. Together, this team worked with the University of Minnesota Libraries to set up JSEPA. Additionally, Guy and Williams named the founding editorial board of 27 global scholars, each of whom specializes in various dimensions of social equity (see Table 2).

Three other milestones occurred in late 2021 through early 2022. The first was the official launch of

the journal's website (JSEPAJOURNAL.ORG). The second was the announcement of the editorial board, a truly international representation of social equity scholars and advocates. The third was JSEPA's official launch reception at ASPA 2022 in Jacksonville. It included 10 sponsors (see Table 3).

Launching the Vision

As Guy and Williams eloquently surmised in their proposal to serve as the journal's coeditors-in-chief, "We envision JSEPA as the first journal researchers go to when they seek cutting-edge coverage of social equity issues, and the first outlet authors consider when preparing a manuscript about social equity in the context of administration action. As the only journal dedicated

Table 2. JSEPA Founding Editorial Board

James Agbodzakey, University of North Texas at Dallas	Sean A. McCandless, University of Illinois at Springfield
Aisha Azhar, University of Management and Technology, Pakistan	Kenneth J. Meier, American University
John Bartle, University of Nebraska Omaha	Kris Norman-Major, Hamline University
Domonic Bearfield, Rutgers University, Newark	Shannon K. Portillo, University of Kansas
Abraham Benavides, University of North Texas	Norma Riccucci, Rutgers University, Newark
Rajade M. Berry-James, North Carolina State University	Alasdair Roberts, University of Massachusetts Amherst
Brandi Blessett, University of Cincinnati	Marilyn M. Rubin, Rutgers University, Newark
Erin L. Borry, University of Alabama at Birmingham	Meghna Sabharwal, University of Texas at Dallas
Angela M. Eikenberry, University of Nebraska Omaha	Genie Stowers, San Francisco State University
Susan T. Gooden, Virginia Commonwealth University	Amporn Tamronglak, Thammasat University
Irving Huang, Tamkang University	Ador Torneo, De La Salle University
Richard Gregory Johnson III, University of San Francisco	Seung-Bum Yang, Konkuk University
Patria de Lancer Julnes, University of New Mexico	Staci Zavattaro, University of Central Florida
Kim Moloney, Hamad Bin Khalifa University	

Table 3. JSEPA's Sponsors

Founding Sponsors	Launch Sponsors
Hubert H. Humphrey School of Public Affairs, University of Minnesota	Levin College of Urban Affairs, Cleveland State University
School of Public Administration, University of Nebraska Omaha	School of International and Public Affairs, North Carolina State University
L. Douglas Wilder School of Government and Public Affairs, Virginia Commonwealth University	Maxwell School of Citizenship and Public Affairs, Syracuse University
Editorial Sponsors	School of Public Affairs and Administration, Rutgers University Newark
Frank Batten School of Leadership and Public Policy, University of Virginia	Department of Public Policy, University of Connecticut
School of Public Affairs, University of Colorado Denver	

to social equity and public administration, JSEPA will play a vital role in advancing scholarship and informing practice. By exploring, describing, explaining, and critiquing issues pertaining to social equity, the journal will become the best resource on the subject. It will be the home for both conceptual and empirical papers that explore social equity in the context of administrative action and the pursuit of public purposes. In sum, our goal is for JSEPA to quickly take its spot as a leading voice on social equity and public administration.”

To become that leading voice, JSEPA will need to pursue excellence. While the reputation of academic journals is influenced by many factors, the most important are high quality and impact (see, for example, McCurdy and Cleary 1984; Morales, McKiernan, Niles, Schimanski, and Alperin 2021; and Williams and Lewis 2020). Such terms are subjective, however. Even when metrics, such as the Journal Impact Factor (JIF) are used, the measures are questionable: “as these concepts are context dependent, and in part because they fail to account for the numerous limitations and biases that are present in the creation and implementation of

citation metrics” (Morales, McKiernan, Niles, Schimanski, and Alperin 2021, 9).

Williams and Lewis (2020) suggest that a better way to gauge impact is to rely upon a range of measures. “There are several key proficiencies that are required to successfully navigate these fields: scholarly expression, which gives credibility from the academic field; policy relevance, which gives authority from the politics field; practical applicability, which gives utility from the field of application; broadcasting skill, which gives visibility to the media field; and monetary value, which gives weight from the economic field. Paying attention to these allows for the development of a framework for understanding, measuring, and encouraging research impact for those who seek to produce research that speaks to multiple audiences” (558).

In this vein, Raadschelders’ work (2008), as depicted in Table 4, offers a useful framework to consider the purpose of research published in JSEPA, its impact on the field of public administration, and its prioritization of both academics and practitioners. Ott and Bennett (2012) apply this framework as they “engage with wide-

Table 4. Using Raadschelders’ Traditions of Public Administration Scholarship to Explore Different Understandings of Academic-Practitioner Relations

	Practical Wisdom	Practical Experience	Scientific Knowledge	Relativist Perspectives
Purpose of research	Gaining a better understanding of practice and developing ideas that have application to practice	Making technical refinements to practice	Search for better scientific understanding and principles	Producing multiple interpretations of action and context; deconstructing dominant narratives and prescriptions
Relationship with practitioners	Engaged interested, normative commitment to betterment of public administration practice	Mission to give solutions and prescriptions for practitioners	Practitioners as focus of study, practice, and institutions and arena for inquiry	Ambiguous normative commitment
Obligations of researchers	To develop applied theory, enhance practice, and support practitioners	Refine practices, improve public administration practices	To science and the academy and the stock of human knowledge	To diverse communities of researchers and, less centrally, to reflective practitioners
Role of practitioners	Dialogue with academics, enabling access to organizational settings for researchers to apply new research knowledge	A role for pracademics, practitioners seen as the expert voice in diagnosing problems and setting agendas	Enabling access to organizational settings; largely as objects of inquiry	Enabling access to organizational settings, largely as objects of inquiry; practitioners encouraged to engage in reflective practice

Source: Orr and Bennett, 2012, 489.

spread calls to foster a reconnection between academics and practitioners in public administration scholarship” (494). Employing the approaches of Williams and Lewis (2020, as well as Ott and Bennett 2012), offers important perspective to consider when considering the quality and impact of JSEPA. This includes the consideration of the practical, as well as the theoretical and the scientific as well as the applied.

JSEPA's Voice in Public Administration

In “Social Equity in Public Administration: A Call to Action,” scholars attending the Minnowbrook at 50 conference scripted the “Call to Action” Social Equity Manifesto declaring that social equity must be advanced in research, teaching, service, and scholarly engagement (Blessett et al. 2019). As a field of professional study, social equity narrowly achieved prominence in *Public Administration Review*, the *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory*, and *Administrative Theory and Praxis*. Albeit a pillar of public administration, challenges and solutions in public policy, public budgeting and finance, personnel management and ethics, non-profit management, research methods and analysis, and program evaluation still dominate the scholarly outlets in our field. After considerable thought, the Minnowbrook at 50 scholars declared that the time was now for the field to recognize social equity policy and practices as well as address critical aims in public administration (Blessett et al. 2019). While pivoting and planning for social change takes considerable time, many thought leaders continue to work consciously toward fostering social equity to ensure that our government works and promotes justice for all (Johnson and Svara 2011).

The collective voice of JSEPA advances the social equity action agenda in the field of public administration by enveloping a strategy that connects theory to practice and problems to solutions. JSEPA aims to promote the research and scholarship of academics, practitioners, and students—to describe, explore, and explain policy, programs, and practices—that advance the equitable distribution of public goods and services. Specifically, the voice of JSEPA frames *where we are now* juxtaposed to where *we are going* to offer an intentional guide for social equity scholars in ways that identify how research and practice inform efforts to dismantle the systems and structures that threaten democracy.

As a community of practice, social equity scholars

conduct research and generate knowledge to improve the skills of public administrators who work to advance racial equity and support underserved communities. For decades, social equity champions and cheerleaders have had their research and scholarship kept out or left out of the scholarly journals. Their unique contributions to discovery of knowledge have been marginalized. As such, JSEPA is the scholarly outlet for research, teaching, service, and engagement that enables academics, practitioners, and students to exchange knowledge and skills with policymakers, advocates, and activists for the social good and the future direction of the field. Likewise, JSEPA aims to shed light on the breakthrough approaches that champion our collective moral responsibility to solve wicked problems through social innovation and social change in a fair and just way. Finally, as a peer-reviewed open access journal, we know that JSEPA will encourage scholarship that broadens participation and highlights the synergy of social equity research. The launch of JSEPA enables scholars to share knowledge that benefits everyone in society, particularly marginalized communities who have been disproportionately impacted by economic, social, and political conditions. As a scholarly outlet for early career professionals, engaged scholars, practitioners, and policymakers, JSEPA offers meaningful networking that results in wide dissemination of knowledge to ensure a government of the people, for the people and by the people. Social equity research that dismantles structural racism and eliminates social inequality is essential for fostering social equity in policy, programs, and practice.

One may ask “Does social equity matter?” The answer is yes: both to the future of this nation and as a pillar of public administration that supports democracy around the world. Social equity is a serious matter. When there is a considerable gap in the academic history and knowledge base, fairness and justice are at risk. In “Social Justice Education in Public Policy Schools Is Crucial for the Nation’s Future,” Berry-James asserts, “Going forward, our curricula changes must advance our understanding of social equity and social justice, develop culturally competent professionals, and address critical issues in the public sector. Our students must be trained to identify problems as well as develop strategies to critically analyze oppression” (as cited in Cliburn and Bohanon 2021, 1).

During public administration’s recent troubled times, public policies have disadvantaged people of color by supporting structural racism and systems of

oppression that disadvantage marginalized communities (Berry-James et al. 2021). These unjust and unfair policies, programs and practices are often assessed after the fact, when disproportionate outcomes of health, housing, education, employment, and matters of justice make clear the harm that was caused. Notwithstanding inequities in government infrastructure facilities, systems, and structures, public infrastructure impacts the fair representation and funding for marginalized communities.

As the leading voice in social equity, we know that JSEPA will create a call-to-action for some of the most pressing concerns in the field of public action, as was the case in “Civil Rights, Social Equity, and Census 2020,” where Berry-James, Gooden, and Johnson (2020) describe the ongoing challenge of political participation, representation, and fair funding for racial/ethnic and marginalized groups. Despite the importance of the decennial census, Berry-James, Gooden, and Johnson note that the design, implementation, and evaluation of the U.S. Census point to an unfair and unjust undercount for communities of color. This is a serious matter that impacts voting representation and government funding across policy areas like education, health care and housing in state and local communities. The price of fairness and justice has far too long been paid with insufficient funds (King Jr. 1963). Finding critical research and scholarship in social equity has been an ongoing challenge in public administration. This is why creating JSEPA is the action needed to synthesize the collective effort of social equity thought leaders and practitioners.

Equally important, JSEPA is a tangible manifestation of the importance of social equity research in the field. New scholars who study social equity will have an important journal for their work. While social equity scholarship will continue to have outlets for publication in other journals, as well as special symposia, the launch of JSEPA demonstrates the seriousness and relevance of social equity research in its own right. It provides a vital resource for junior and senior scholars alike, as they build and sustain their professional careers.

For decades now, scholars have called for the field to take social equity seriously (Rosenbloom 2005) by pursuing a post-modern cultural competency framework (Rice 2007) to understand how to manage diversity in the workforce (Berry-James 2010; Riccucci 2021) while considering representative bureaucracy and distributional equity (Meier, Wrinkle, and Polinard 1999). In the face of racism, sexism, and all of

the other “isms” that are known or unknown, JSEPA is the social equity manifesto. In practice and in print, JSEPA conveys to the field of public administration and our community of scholars a professional identity focused on justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion and in our scholarly journey, a personal commitment to knowledge production. As a collective voice, JSEPA communicates a strong message that social equity matters. For the academic leaders who have committed time, talent, and resources to establishing JSEPA, the manuscripts that are published in this journal give context to the critical issues in public administration at home and abroad. The body of scholarly work acknowledges the hurts and harms that inequity and injustice have caused and the commitment of others to make a way out of no way—to affirm that “injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere” (King Jr. 1963).

JSEPA is a call to action for a community of scholars, policymakers, practitioners, advocates, citizens, and others who support the ideals of democracy and who lean in to advance equity for all. It is our hope that JSEPA will continue to be the scholarly outlet for research that focuses on class inequality, a collaborative pedagogical response that offers tried and true teaching strategies to improve the MPA curriculum to empower public services to dismantle and disrupt systems of oppression. It is our hope that JSEPA will serve as a critical and reflective home for faculty who are committed to public service. It is our hope that JSEPA will always be the leading journal for engaged scholars who are intent on sharing lessons learned, best practices, and breakthrough approaches as we continue to study social problems and seek feasible solutions to address critical issues. It is our greatest hope that JSEPA will rise quickly to be among the first download for anyone who believes in the academic and intellectual activities that foster social equity and for academics, practitioners, or students who claim social equity as an area of research interest or scholarly engagement.

During the pandemic, most of us were working remotely when we bore witness to the callous murder of George Floyd (McNeil 2021). Collectively, we sprang into action to write action statements for professional associations like NAPA, NASPAA, ASPA, ASPA-SDSJ, and our home academic departments. While most of the diversity statements read the same, in our social equity action plans *we* promised to do better. Our collective voice will be found in JSEPA to broaden the path so that

all of us can intentionally do better when we help government and society redress the historical inequities and injustices that persist, despite the fact that some of us look but don't see or hear but don't listen.

Conclusion

The focus and dissemination of social equity scholarship in the field of public administration has certainly come a long way since Frances Harriet Williams authored the first article on the topic published in PAR in 1947. JSEPA proudly stands upon Williams' shoulders today and we are proud to dedicate this journal to her pioneering vision and legacy of social equity scholarship in public administration. Inequity and injustice is a global concern. Solving these inequities is a herculean task, but JSEPA is committed to being a part of the solution. The greatest indication of JSEPA's success will be realized when the study of equity, inequity, and justice is no longer needed because it has indisputably been achieved. This is an audacious goal for sure, but as Nelson Mandela taught us, the impossible can indeed be accomplished. JSEPA offers an important step along this victorious journey.

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A Journal Dedicated to Social Equity and Public Administration

Mary E. Guy
Brian N. Williams

Written by the coeditors-in-chief, this essay introduces the *Journal of Social Equity and Public Administration* (JSEPA) and situates it among other public administration journals. Its mission, aims, and scope are explained. Manuscripts are welcomed that identify and probe societal structures and dynamics that create or perpetuate inequity, or that overcome it. Published for a global audience, it is a theoretically and methodologically inclusive journal. Because social equity is a moving target, always evolving, the pages of this journal will reflect its course.

With this inaugural issue we celebrate a new journal dedicated to the advancement of social equity in all actions and processes related to the pursuit of public purposes. JSEPA serves as the journal of record for social equity theory, research, and practice. It also serves as a catalyst to encourage analysis, deliberations, dialogue, and discourse. In this essay we outline our vision for the journal and its mission, aims, and scope.

While the administrative state has many responsibilities and challenges, one of its most important is social equity—the active commitment to fairness, justice, and equality in public policy, service delivery, and management of public institutions (Johnson and Svava 2011). In fact, social equity is just as important as, if not more important than, the other public administration imperatives of economy, efficiency, and effectiveness. However, there is a large hole to fill in the field's awareness and knowledge of it. This is where JSEPA comes in. The journal will be the resource both scholars and practitioners rely on to learn how to diagnose causes and effects of equity issues and how to foster meaningful, actionable, and inclusive solutions. We aim to make equity assessments as commonplace as cost-benefit analyses already are.

Social Equity as a Subject of Inquiry

Journals are living things. They have a past, a present,

and a future. As editors, we are temporary guardians whose job it is to serve as pilots, navigating thought as it evolves. To do this, we start with the definition of social equity as put forward by the National Academy of Public Administration after its inclusion of social equity as the fourth pillar of public administration in its 2005 Strategic Plan. Developed after much debate and deliberation, the definition emphasizes the many dimensions of the subject in public policy, implementation, management, ethics, and justice:

The fair, just and equitable management of all institutions serving the public directly or by contract; the fair, just and equitable distribution of public services and implementation of public policy; and the commitment to promote fairness, justice, and equity in the formation of public policy (National Academy of Public Administration 2006).

Relatedly, the American Society for Public Administration amplifies the social equity imperative by including “strengthening social equity” as the fourth principle in its code of ethics with this instruction: Treat all persons with fairness, justice, and equality and respect individual differences, rights, and freedoms. Promote affirmative action and other initiatives to reduce unfairness, injustice, and inequality in society (ASPA 2013).

Implementation guidelines tell public service professionals to provide services with impartiality and consistency tempered by recognition of differences, ensure that all persons have access to programs and services to which they are entitled, maintain standards of quality for all who receive the programs and services, reduce disparities in outcomes and increase the inclusion of underrepresented groups (Svara et al. 2015).

Cultures that claim allegiance to equal rights continue to battle their schizophrenic selves, proudly professing democratic principles while crazily engaging in practices that are the antithesis. For example, the late Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg noted that the greatest statement on equality is in the Declaration of Independence, written by a slave owner. Such contradictions are many and continually surround us. It is the taken-for-grantedness that makes them invisible and screams for attention.

As Martin Luther King (1967) said, there are two Americas, one providing “subsidies” for the well-off while the other provides “welfare” for the poor. The former provides socialism for the rich, while the latter provides rugged individualism for the poor. It is up to the artistry of social equity scholars to illuminate inequity through research and discourse. It is up to policy experts and public service professionals to apply an equity lens to their work in order to evaluate the architecture of policies and programs to ensure they are advancing equity, rather than perpetuating inequity. It is up to the citizenry to appreciate and encourage these complementary activities.

While engineers talk about hard infrastructure in the form of bridges, tunnels, and roads, JSEPA’s focus is on the soft infrastructure that connects us with those unlike ourselves. It is civic “bridges, tunnels, and roads” that help communities become a bouquet of humanity and live in harmony. The challenge for nations that pride themselves on being democracies is captured well by poet Amanda Gorman as she spoke at the inauguration for President Joseph R. Biden. She said the mark of a nation is how we step into the past and “how we repair it” (Gorman 2021).

Mission

Published for a global audience, JSEPA’s mission is to provide a learning space, a journal of record, and a place

of introspection and extrospection. One need not look far to find the worldwide legacy of colonialism, imperialism, and anti-indigenous structures. Social equity issues express themselves differently in each culture, but they are there. The journal’s content makes it possible for public service professionals, scholars, and students to take note of what works, what fails, and what opportunities are available to advance justice and reduce disparity. Its pages will lead the way for reforms and examples of reconciliation.

Social equity is a moving target, always evolving. Notions of what is and is not equitable are dynamic. They adjust with the times as demographic changes and economic fluctuations alter patterns of advantage. Systems that used to be equitable may no longer be. Needs change. Circumstances change. As a scholarly resource, JSEPA is designed to help identify and provide information that will aid in repairing inequities and in building more equitable structures.

This focus on promoting positive change is woven into the journal’s history and institutional structure. JSEPA is a peer-reviewed journal sponsored by the Section on Democracy and Social Justice of the American Society for Public Administration and generously supported by three universities: University of Minnesota, University of Nebraska Omaha, and Virginia Commonwealth University. Its goal is to be the leading voice on social equity as it pertains to the pursuit of public purposes. It is the outlet for cutting edge theory, research, and commentary on matters of access, process, quality, and outcomes of administrative actions, policy decisions, and administrative and constitutional law. It is also a voice for reconciliation, restoration, and remediation strategies. JSEPA embodies hope with all of its implications for building a more perfect, just, and equitable union.

Aims

The aim of JSEPA is to bridge the research–practice divide that otherwise stifles progress in overcoming social and structural inequities. The pages of this journal are the place to raise awareness, to pose questions, to test hypotheses, and to debunk shibboleths.

Whatever the policy arena, there are equity issues to explore and to advance. In the United States, for example, backlash is nothing new. The resurfacing of

old prejudices, hostilities, and ambivalences is predictable. As if on a roller coaster—one that barrels forward then unexpectedly regresses backward—advances are followed by pushback. As JSEPA grows into a resource that heightens awareness of ethnocentrism, racism, colorism, homophobia, transphobia, xenophobia, and effects of colonization, it will stand as an outlet not only for identification of problems but for strategies to ameliorate them. And it will not only advance awareness of categories, but sensitivity to the effects of intersectionalities.

Public administration is the software of democracy, encoding values and norms in its institutions. JSEPA's pages will examine the intermingling of power that underlies administrative and policy decisions, historical legacies, and overlooked social justice concerns. *Social justice* and *social equity* are related but different terms. While both focus on the community rather than the individual, social justice contributes to social equity because the latter is the condition that describes access to, distribution of, and outcomes related to public goods. The former, social justice, is instrumental for achieving the latter, social equity. Manuscripts that tackle social justice head-on are welcomed, whether they are encased in questions of how climate change threatens marginalized communities, how refugees are banned from seeking shelter, or how disadvantaged populations are treated as threats. Vital public administration issues facing communities and nations will be explored.

Unconscious bias and so-called “neutral” practices are difficult to challenge. Inattentional blindness is a reality (Mack and Rock 1998), as is inattentional amnesia (Wolfe 1999). Because of this, research that reveals equity myths will provide intellectual “munitions” for altering the course of events. As Rubin and Bartle (2021) demonstrate, budgeting is not gender neutral in its impact. Similarly, HR processes confer advantage to those who have always held it, unless someone mindfully challenges them. As the late Justice Ginsburg observed, when she was a child, there were few women in orchestras. Auditioners thought they could tell the difference between a man and a woman playing, routinely judging men to be better. But once orchestras erected a screen between auditioners and those trying out, women applicants were selected for many positions. In other words, the “neutral” process of selecting musicians for orches-

tras routinely advantaged men because of implicit bias. (See Portillo, Bearfield, and Humphrey 2020 for more on the myth of neutrality.) Today's bands and symphonies include women because someone thought to erect a screen between judge and musician. Similar critiques are now being made of artificial intelligence algorithms that are written based on assumptions of those who build them. These are only a few examples of how research can probe contemporary processes and identify those that perpetuate unconscious bias and suffer from blindness, amnesia, and related social maladies.

Government actions are not the only focus for the nexus of social equity and public administration. Non-profits, as they strive to put the “community” in community-based human services, yield a number of equity considerations (Farwell and Handy 2020). The priorities and decision calculi of grantmakers, board members, and community advisors factor greatly into programs, and research into equity dimensions is sorely needed. So are lessons learned from practices that advance equity as well as those that, intentionally or unintentionally, perpetuate inequity. For example, studies of collective impact models and other collaborative strategies will illuminate how practices accentuate or diminish equity (Dolamore and Kline 2020).

Research that illuminates inequity is the starting point for changing how the levers of advantage turn. Decolonization—a term that focuses on moving beyond ethnocentrism and looks anew at the other, without a hierarchy in mind—is indispensable here. This requires institutional forces to change, whether in programs, professions, or governments. Those who have privilege rarely see it, for they assume it as a given. The first step in decolonization is self-awareness and research that holds a mirror up to communities, programs, and policies to accelerate the process. To decolonize is to examine unquestioned norms by deconstructing them so they can be reconstructed in a way that is more equitable. Analogous to financial audits, equity audits are a means for creating this mirror. By tracking process (due process, transparency, representativeness, and equal rights), access (opportunity to participate in processes and programs), quality (do processes and programs meet standards?), and outcomes (are public services equitable?), equity audits reveal the realities of programs.

Scope

JSEPA's scope of coverage is broad, with manuscripts welcomed that explore, investigate, describe, explain, and critique a wide variety of social equity issues. These issues arise in the context of management, policy, and/or law. They surround access, processes, quality and outcomes of administrative or policy decisions; rulemaking processes that enhance or hinder equity; ethical considerations; and strategies that correct inequity. JSEPA is interested in "smart practices" as well as equity audits, causes and impacts of inequity, and strategies to correct it. Whether the focus is domestic, comparative, or international, manuscripts are welcomed on topics such as the following:

- Benchmarks for success
- Best practices and the policies and conditions that support them
- Challenges to democratic norms and civic participation that result from marginalizing people
- Commentary that explores cause and effects of social, political, economic, and environmental inequities
- Comparative analysis of policies, programs, and outcomes
- Critical examinations of structural and institutional barriers that limit full participation of marginalized communities
- Empirical work examining issues related to social justice across all policy arenas
- Equity audits and best practices for conducting them
- Evaluations of solutions
- Exploration of the lived experiences of directly impacted communities
- Inequities attached to demographic identities
- Intersectionalities and their implications for inequity
- Justice and equity
- Pedagogical techniques for preparing students to engage in social justice work
- Power and its relationship to social equity
- Reparations and strategies for implementation
- Social equity assessments that take access, process, quality, and outcomes into account
- Social equity drivers for public programs (emergency management, housing, education, health care, transportation, law enforcement, and more)
- Social equity for indigenous communities
- Strategies public service professionals can use to dismantle barriers to access and participation

- Theory development with regard to social equity
- Tribal communities and their equity challenges

Manuscripts may focus on any policy domain and target any facet of procedural fairness, which refers to due process, transparency, equal rights, and representativeness. They may also target issues of access, which refers to the opportunity to participate in processes and programs. Quality is also a concern and this refers to evaluation of whether processes meet acceptable levels, and/or outcomes. Questions of interest include: What policy levers work? What administrative structures work? How are administrative burdens and demarketing employed to perpetuate inequity? These are only a few examples of questions the journal is eager to address.

JSEPA is theoretically and methodologically inclusive. The proper method is the one that best provides the information necessary to address the question of interest. Analysis has the capacity to reveal much about the dynamics embedded in inequity when thoughtful measurement and interpretation are employed. For instance, race, gender identity, and sexual orientation are less control variables and better used as independent variables with deep structures and meanings. While the single story or narrative provides details, the perspective from which it is told amplifies insights and illuminates issues otherwise hidden. In other words, data sources are many and range from singular voices to meta-analyses of aggregated data sets.

International Dimensions

A more global understanding of social equity will illuminate the importance of geography, national culture, and policy norms. JSEPA exists to record what social equity issues look like around the globe and to reflect on their incidence and evolution. Whether in Thailand or Germany, the United States or Pakistan, South Africa or South Korea, Mexico or Australia, equity issues reflect cultural characteristics. And these, in turn, affect politics, management, and law. Moreover, priorities differ across countries, as do their relative importance. Whether democracies or authoritarian regimes, the tension between equity and merit bears exploration, especially with regard to the balance that is achieved.

Analysis of historical and intentional exclusions, social injustices, and development of corrective strategies will move the subject of social equity forward, regardless

of continent or country. Social justice is a sophisticated concept embedded in culture with its nuances varying according to national customs.

In Closing

While capital assets depreciate, human assets do not. Social equity is about peoples' lives and clearing paths so they can live their best lives. If public administration is to be the hopeful field it can be, then its goal is to create a bouquet of humanity, where people of all descriptions live harmoniously. It is incumbent on the practice community, the research community, and educational institutions to continuously poke and prod to find where inequities lurk and to modify institutions, processes, and practices that perpetuate it. Achieving equity requires different levels of support based on each individual's or group's needs in order to achieve fairness in outcomes. Research and commentary that helps readers know what that level of support is, how to acknowledge unequal starting places, and how to correct imbalances belong in this journal.

JSEPA's raison d'être is to provide a space dedicated to identifying and probing societal structures that create and perpetuate inequity. It is the journal of record for accounts of strategies that advance equity and report what works and what does not. This journal for social equity research and discourse now takes its place among the pantheon of public administration journals that focus on budgeting, human resources, and performance. It belongs among them because social equity must be infused in all functions that pursue public purposes. The journey toward justice begins with a single step, a single research project, a single change, building on itself along the way.

It takes the efforts of many to produce a journal, starting with journal sponsors, authors, the editorial team, and the production team. We applaud the foresight and effort of Susan Gooden, Richard Gregory Johnson, RaJade Berry-James, and Sean McCandless as they created this journal. For all who have already leaned in to get JSEPA underway, thank you. For all those who are watching, join in and contribute to this noble effort.

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Promoting Social Justice

James E. Wright II

JSEPA offers an innovative format for discussing social justice issues, practices, and experiences. This discussion explains social justice, its place in public administration, and the format for authors to use when submitting manuscripts to the Promoting Social Justice section of the journal.

Gloria Jean Watkins (bell hooks) once said that “privilege does not have to be negative, but we have to share our resources and take direction about how to use our privilege in ways that empower those who lack it” (hooks 1989, 87). What bell hooks articulates to us as a society is to use our privilege for good to create a socially just society, or use our privilege to maintain the status quo and continue with oppression, discrimination, and inequities. Society constantly battles between liberation and oppression as the dominant narrative and lived reality (hooks 2000). However, to become a society of true liberation for under-resourced and traditionally marginalized communities, we must first become a society obsessed with creating social justice for all. The Promoting Social Justice section of this journal is designed to reflect this need.

The Promoting Social Justice section for the *Journal of Social Equity and Public Administration* (JSEPA) offers a one-of-a-kind opportunity for scholars and practitioners to engage with all issues relating and pertaining to issues of social justice. This section offers a platform for moving from words to action. Manuscripts are welcomed that reflect the obstacles and opportunities that come with operationalizing social justice. The section is a dedicated space for contributors to discuss trends (both current and past) and promising strategies. From seeing and saying something to doing something, examples of subject areas range from police brutality to environmental justice to educational inequity to economic disparities to combatting racial injustice, and more.

Voices are sought in the form of notes from the field, best practices, lessons learned, and debates, among other formats. Intended to be thought-provoking, this

section encourages innovative formats that advance dialogue. In terms of authorship, we encourage scholar-practitioner pairings. This collaboration will advance the field’s understanding of nuances and practicalities surrounding social justice. We foresee manuscripts that a) offer different perspectives on the same issue, b) engage in theory versus practice debates, c) provide case studies of justice in action, or d) offer point/counterpoint debates, among other possibilities.

What Is Social Justice?

The concept of social justice is one that is often misunderstood and rarely defined, and it is often conflated with the idea of social equity. There is an increased need to understand policy and administrative issues through a purely social justice lens. According to the John Lewis Institute for Social Justice at Central Connecticut State University, social justice is the

communal effort dedicated to creating and sustaining a fair and equal society in which each person and all groups are valued and affirmed. It encompasses efforts to end systemic violence and racism and all systems that devalue the dignity and humanity of any person. It recognizes that the legacy of past injustices remains all around us, so therefore promotes efforts to empower individual and communal action in support of restorative justice and the full implementation of human and civil rights. Social justice imperatives also push us to create a civic space defined by universal education

and reason and dedicated to increasing democratic participation. (John Lewis Institute 2022)

This definition elucidates the concept of social justice, showing it as not only a process, but also a goal that can be realized when we operate in a society rooted in justice rather than injustice (Adams, Bell, and Griffin 2007). The process of attaining social justice should be democratic and participatory in nature, inclusive, and affirming of human agency and human capabilities for working collaboratively to create change (Adams, Bell, and Griffin 2007). For the process to be truly democratic, we must move beyond the traditional narrative of “seat at the table” and work toward creating a new table large enough to give all individuals equitable say in co-creating solutions. Further, this new table should function like musical chairs, where all the chairs stay at the table but the people occupying these seats rotate so power and relationships constantly shift and evolve. Justice is always the goal. Finally, individual values, group values, and societal values must all operate in a collective sense so justice is rooted, grounded, and ascribed in each environment.

Why Social Justice Matters for Public Administration

The current situation in the United States and across the world is troubling if one cares about issues of justice, particularly, social justice. Politics is riddled with dog whistle politics (Haney-López 2014) and rhetoric and actions return our society to a time in which whiteness was the only identity recognized as a full citizen (Blessett et al. 2016; Starke, Heckler and Mackey 2018). At the federal and state levels, there appears to be an intentional disinvestment in organizations and institutions designed to uplift the most under-resourced and marginalized in society. This includes undocumented immigrants, BIPOC, LGBTQ, and countless others. Further, local, state, and federal actors continue to perpetuate government sponsored violence on these communities at unprecedented levels as a function of the “us” versus “them” mentality (Thomas and Wright 2021).

Currently, there is a reawakening of the moral and social conscience of America, which is something that has not been seen since the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s. As we wrestle with issues of women’s rights, civil rights, and basic human rights, society is calling for

a moral revival to sweep across the globe. Harkening back to the police killings of George Floyd and Breonna Taylor in 2020, which sparked global protests (Chenoweth 2020), individuals are reenergized to fight for the most marginalized and vulnerable communities in society. Individuals question the role of institutions and systems designed to benefit the “few” and disadvantage the “many.” Advocates call for systemic change, hoping for institutions and systems to be upended in the name of creating a more just society. The call demands more than just surface-level change where institutions permit murals on buildings or streets to declare their support for marginalized communities.

At the same time, the movement that started with a few scholars constantly pressuring the discipline to care about social justice has now become a fierce urgency in public administration, in both practice and scholarship. As the movement grows, more in the discipline are concerned with administrative issues from a social justice framework. Scholars are asking questions that intersect social justice with traditional administrative topics, such as budgeting, public personnel management, public-private partnerships, accountability, performance, job satisfaction, and public service motivation. Despite this uptick in scholarship, there are few safe spaces for scholars to ponder these intersections. JSEPA offers this space for scholars and administrators, both theoretically and practically, to ask the questions of why, how, and what the best way is to have a discipline concerned with social justice. Idealized neutrality is anything but neutral. For too long, public administration has existed in a safe space concerned with neutrality, but times are changing. The discipline must be less reactive and more proactive; it must not wait for change to happen. It must create the change by being at the forefront of the social justice movement.

Issues Within Social Justice

Within the Promoting Social Justice section of *JSEPA*, the list of topics is long and invites nontraditional inquiry as well as other methodological tools that are more often employed by other disciplines. All issues must have a clear social justice lens with application for management, administration, policy, or law broadly defined. Furthermore, special attention is encouraged to current events, such that they are analyzed through a social justice perspective. Whether the focus is domestic, comparative, or

international, manuscripts are welcomed on topics, such as (but not limited to) the following:

- Civil Rights
- Voting Rights
- Climate Justice
- Health care and Health care Justice
- Refugee Crisis
- Racial Injustice
- Women's Rights
- LGBTQ Rights
- Income Disparities/Inequality
- Segregation
- Stereotyping
- Ageism
- Ableism and Disability Rights
- Housing and Housing Discrimination
- Algorithm Bias and Dig Data
- Critical Race Theory
- Intersectionality
- Feminist Theory
- Whiteness Theory
- Best Practices in Promoting Social Justice
- Structural and Systemic Racism
- Structural and Systemic Sexism
- Pedagogical Techniques for Teaching Social Justice in Public Administration Classrooms
- Theory Development Around Social Justice

Length of Manuscripts

One of the innovative features of the Promoting Social Justice section is the shorter manuscript length. Submissions should be original essays that range between 3,000 to 4,000 words in total, not including references and appendices. This is roughly equivalent to 15 double-spaced pages. As with traditional manuscripts, these will be subject to double-blind peer-review. These man-

uscripts are shorter than traditional manuscripts, which allows researchers to analyze current issues from a social justice perspective in a more focused fashion. Given the abbreviated length, authors can address topics that are timely, controversial, and thought-provoking while inviting follow-up discussion and commentary. We invite your submissions.

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Representative Bureaucracy and Social Equity: Bias, Perceived Fairness and Efficacy*

Kenneth J. Meier

This article on representative bureaucracy and social equity addresses three normative questions in the literature. First, concerns that active representation creates biases in what are normally unbiased, rational bureaucratic processes both fail to understand the process of bureaucratic representation and have little empirical support. Representative bureaucracy is unlikely to be a threat to orderly democratic government. Second, that what appears to be active representation rarely has negative consequences for others and is difficult to frame as unfair. Third, while the literature on representative bureaucracy may be overly optimistic about its efficacy given the various constraints and limits, it frequently produces results that increase social equity and is a valuable strategy toward that end.

Concerns about bureaucratic representation began as a normative argument that greater demographic representativeness among bureaucrats provided positive benefits for democratic governance (Kingsley 1944), possibly by augmenting the limits of electoral institutions via providing alternative paths for representation (Long 1952). The empirical claim supporting the normative argument was that a bureaucracy broadly representative of the public in terms of the identities linked to social origins and lived experiences would also hold values similar to those of the general population. To the extent that bureaucrats had discretion, therefore, decisions made by the bureaucracy would in general be responsive to the wishes of the population as a whole (Mosher 1968).¹

Although the contentions that bureaucrats exercise discretion and that bureaucratic decisions will reflect the values held by those bureaucrats are likely universally

true, the literature has an inherent social equity component and has focused on the representation of disadvantaged individuals. Norton Long (1952) began his application of representative bureaucracy to the American context by criticizing the lack of representation by political institutions, contending they were simply too small to fully represent all the interests of American society. Long also first clarified the various linkages in the theory by noting that demographic origins and lived experiences contribute to values and values get reflected in bureaucratic decisions.

Although he only devoted a brief three pages to representative bureaucracy in his classic *Democracy and the Public Service*, Mosher (1968) defined both the key empirical and normative parameters of representative bureaucracy. He (1968, 12) defined “passive representation” as concerning “the source of origin of individ-

¹ The causal logic for the theory of representative bureaucracy has been specified by several studies, most recently Riccucci and Van Ryzin (2017).

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uals and the degree to which, collectively, they mirror the total society” in terms of locality of origin, previous occupation, education, family income, social class, race, religion, and other factors. “Active representation” meant that a bureaucrat would “press for the interests and desires of those whom he is presumed to represent, whether they be the whole people or some segment of the people.” (p. 12). Empirically, Mosher (1968, 13) correctly concluded at the time “we know too little about the relationship between a man’s background and preemployment socialization on the one hand, and his orientation and behavior in office on the other.”

As noted below, this empirical gap between passive and active representation became the predominant focus of the study of representative bureaucracy as scholars probed whether the relationship existed; and, if it did, what conditions would be necessary for representation to occur. Mosher posited two other brief arguments, however, that were equally important. First, (p. 13): “While passive representativeness is no guarantor of democratic decision-making, it carries some independent and symbolic values that are significant for a democratic society.” Foreshadowing the later focus on symbolic representation, Mosher noted that a passively representative bureaucracy was a symbol of openness and could contribute to the legitimacy of government action. His other argument was also normative and the concern in this article. “It may be noted that active representation run rampant within a bureaucracy would constitute a major threat to orderly democratic government. The summing up of the multitude of special interests seeking effective representation does not constitute the general interest” (p. 12).

This article seeks to address three normative questions with regard to representative bureaucracy that periodically arise in the literature and have implications for social equity. First, does active representation introduce a bias in bureaucratic decisions that if not constituting “a major threat to orderly democratic government” perverts what is normally an unbiased, rational process? Second, is active representation or what appears to be active representation unfair to those not represented? Third, are our expectations for representative bureaucracy too optimistic, that is, is it subject to extensive constraints and limitations?

The article will develop as follows. First, a brief literature review of representative bureaucracy focused on the linkage between passive and active representation

will be presented to clarify precisely what the empirical literature finds. Second, the actual process of how passive representation gets transformed into outcomes that benefit the represented will be examined to determine if there is any existing empirical evidence of bias in the process. Third, the issue of perceived fairness will be examined, contrasting the modest empirical literature with the various alternative interpretations of those findings. Fourth, the limits of the existing literature will be used to demonstrate that the overall impacts of representative bureaucracy are relatively modest and should not be oversold. At the same time, the case for improving passive representation is strong and offers one of the more consistent methods to increase social equity in bureaucratic outputs and outcomes.

Representative Bureaucracy: What the Literature Finds

The literature on representative bureaucracy has grown exponentially in recent years (see Bishu and Kennedy 2020, Kennedy 2014 for reviews); an online bibliography that is clearly not exhaustive shows nearly 300 individual works (<https://www.kjmeier.com/rb-article-archive>). From its initial focus on class (Kingsley 1944), it has expanded to examine demographic factors such as race (Meier 1984), ethnicity (Rocha and Hawes 2009), sex (Keiser et al. 2002), socioeconomic status (Gilad and Alon-Barkat 2018), and sexual orientation (Theobald and Haider-Markel 2009). In the process it has linked to the literature on social identities and began to focus on the lived experiences (Merritt et al. 2020) associated with different identities including veterans’ status (Gade and Wilkins 2012), prior drug abuse (Park 2020), and bureaucratic roles (Penn 2021; Zamboni 2020). Representative bureaucracy studies have focused substantially on education (Nicholson-Crotty et al. 2016) and police (Schuck 2018), but have also examined other policy areas such as agriculture (Selden 1997), child support enforcement (Wilkins and Keiser 2006), health care (McCrea 2021; Zhu and Walker 2013), substance abuse (Park 2020), corrections (Wade-Olson 2019), discrimination processing (Hindera 1993), and employment counseling (Guul 2018). The literature was originally dominated by studies of the United States, but recent work has examined representative bureaucracies and their impact in Brazil (Dantas Cabral, Peci, and Van Ryzin 2022), China (Xu and Meier 2021;

Zhang 2019), Ghana (Agyapong 2018), India (Dhillon and Meier 2022), Israel (Gilad and Alon-Barkat 2018), South Korea (Song 2018), South Africa (Fernandez 2019), South Asia (Baniamin and Jamil 2021), Tanzania (Park and Mwiambi 2021) and several countries in Western Europe (Doornkamp et al. 2019; Hong 2017; Sievert 2021; Zwicky and Kübler 2019). Recent years have even seen efforts to examine the passive to active representation link in a cross-national perspective (An, Song, Meier 2021; Park and Liang 2021).

Although the literature has a wide range of findings as would be expected from a body of work that varies country, policy area, and the identity being represented, the basic approach and the core findings relevant to this article can be distilled somewhat briefly. The strategy of analysis is to take passive representation (either at the aggregate organizational level or via an individual bureaucrat to client match) and determine if that results in outcomes that benefit the represented client. Positive relationships are then attributed to “active representation.” Such an approach uses a narrower definition of social equity than found in the literature which might be concerned with equity of access or procedures as well as outcomes (Frederickson 2015; Johnson and Svava 2015). Representative bureaucracy is laser-like focused on social equity in terms of bureaucratic outputs and outcomes. Are underrepresented individuals less likely to receive positive outcomes or more likely to suffer negative outcomes?

The empirical findings, however, need to be placed within the context of the theory of representative bureaucracy. Active representation is a process by which a bureaucrat actively seeks to benefit a client who shares an identity (Meier 2019; Mosher 1968; Selden 1997). This has two implications for a positive correlation between passive representation and outcomes that benefit the represented client. First, the outcomes might well have occurred through other processes than active bureaucratic representation; that is, the clients might have received the benefits even if their representatives were not involved in the process. Second, the correlation might actually miss active representation; a bureaucrat

could seek to actively represent the interests of a similar client, but not be able to provide the sought-after outcome because the organization did not allow it, there were insufficient opportunities, the client refused to participate or rejected the opportunity, or a variety of other reasons. Empirically, the first implication would overestimate the extent of the passive to active connection and the second would underestimate it. These two implications also have consequences for the normative challenge to representative bureaucracy and issues of social equity. Recall Mosher (1968) warns about active representation “run rampant,” not whether a bureaucracy produces outcomes that benefit traditionally underrepresented populations. The concern is not the outcomes per se that Mosher and others (Lim 2006; Peters, von Maravic, and Schröter 2015) criticize, but rather the way those outcomes are attained; that is, whether bias is introduced into the process.²

Does Bureaucratic Representation Result in Bias?

The normative argument against active representation as introducing prejudice or bias into the administrative process is best presented by Lim (2006) relying on implied support from Mosher (1968) and other scholars of representative bureaucracy (Thompson 1976). Before proceeding to a rebuttal of the argument, recapping the origins of the prejudice argument is worthwhile. Lim relies heavily on Mosher (1968); but Mosher, in fact, gives little attention to the issue in his book. Other than the statement of concern about active representation “run rampant,” Mosher provides no argument that active representation will necessarily cause harm. He is clearly not opposed to active representation per se. His brief discussion of representative bureaucracy is prefaced by noting the “demand of groups for representation in the structure [bureaucracy] is itself implicit acknowledgment that administration is involved in policy matters” (p. 11). He then notes that many agencies are specifically set up to actively represent the interests of a constituency that is smaller than the entire nation providing

² This might be one reason most empirical studies of representative bureaucracy do not address the issue of bias and similar normative issues. The implied perspective is that underrepresented individuals are underserved (and substantial evidence supports that view) and thus examining when a bureaucracy produces more equitable outcomes is both an important empirical and normative question on its face.

an incomplete list that included the Department of Agriculture, the Department of Labor, the Women's Division (then in the Department of Labor), the Department of Commerce, the Small Business Administration, the then-Children's Bureau, the then-Veteran's Administration, the National Science Foundation, the Bureau of Fish and Wildlife, and the then-Office of Education. Mosher does not object to active representation per se, therefore, but only if it "runs rampant." He does not, however, provide either an example of this or a hypothetical case. Other literature cited by Lim has similar problems. Lim (2006, 200) states "Thompson (1976, 218–19) acknowledges the 'normative complexity' arising from possible 'gross favoritism' (clearly meaning partiality)," but a reading of Thompson shows that these are unconnected phrases relating to the claims of others, not anything Thompson contends or accepts as true.

Rather than delineating a specific hazard from representative bureaucracy, Lim relies on these general assertions attributed to others. His own analysis also focuses narrowly only on active representation that creates a bias in decisions to favor a represented client who otherwise would not qualify for whatever benefit was being bestowed. At the same time, he accepts that partiality is only one explanation for the correlation between passive representation and bureaucratic outcomes (several paths are discussed in the literature and below) but never demonstrates that there is any partiality empirically via examples or statistical evidence.³

Symbolic Representation as Bias?

The correlation between passive representation and outcomes that benefit the represented can occur through either action by the bureaucrat (including active representation) or action by the client (symbolic representation). Symbolic representation is the easiest case for dealing with any normative issues and they can easily be dismissed. Outcomes can change in a bureaucratic encounter via symbolic representation because the client after observing a bureaucrat or bureaucrats who shares

identities with the client then either becomes more cooperative with the bureaucrat (e.g., law enforcement) or engages in greater efforts to coproduce the good in question (e.g., education) (see Riccucci and Van Ryzin 2017 on the theory). It is unclear how there can be a normative objection to a citizen voluntarily cooperating with a bureaucrat or engaging in greater effort to improve one's own situation. From the perspective of the bureaucracy, this is exactly what the bureaucracy and policymakers desire—clients who facilitate implementation; bureaucracies and their overseers would perceive no bias in such results. From the perspective of democratic theory, voluntary cooperation seems to be taking the concept of "consent of the governed" in the most fundamental way.

Given that in the case of symbolic representation, the bureaucrat is not taking any action and that actions by the client even if questionable (and it is unclear they ever would be in this case) do not raise questions of bias, there appear to be no ethical concerns that can be lodged about representation bureaucracy in this context. In addition, it appears that symbolic representation actually improves bureaucratic outcomes without costs to the bureaucracy and thus would be instrumental to effective performance.

Active Representation and Bias?

Active representation may be more open to normative challenges, but those challenges must deal with the complexities of representation and what the data actually show. Passive representation could be associated with outcomes benefitting the represented via the actions of the bureaucrat in at least two different ways. The bureaucrat could press the agency to change policies that currently disadvantage the representative group or the bureaucrat could make a specific decision that benefits an individual client. Each has different normative implications.

In terms of policy change, Roch, Pitts and Navarro (2010), for example, show that schools with more representative faculty shift from punitive disciplinary poli-

³ A seeming undercurrent in the normative criticism of representative bureaucracy is that there are neutral bureaucracies that implement public policies without prejudice or discrimination against individuals for any reason other than how well the clients fit the criteria of the policy in question. An argument could be constructed along these Weberian lines using a hypothetical or ideal-typical case, however, such an argument based on actual empirical cases would be difficult to sustain. Other scholars explicitly reject the idea that bureaucracies are neutral (see Bearfield, Portillo and Humphrey 2020; Meier 2019; Riccucci and Van Ryzin 2017).

cies, such as expulsions and out-of-school suspensions, to ameliorative forms of discipline, such as in-school suspensions and other methods. This shift reduces the negative educational impact of disciplinary policies and generates a net benefit to minority students (and likely majority students as well). Similar organizational policies such as the use of stop-and-frisk tactics for police, the use of standardized tests in education or employment, or gender neutral evaluations in music could also result in less inequitable program outcomes.

The case of policy change moves the key decision from the individual bureaucrat to the organization and seems to deflect the contention of bias unless somehow a minority of bureaucrats convinces an entire organization to adopt a policy biased in their favor. There may be cases of this in the literature, but I am not aware of any. The general expectation is that bureaucracies continually reevaluate their policies to determine how effective they are and make changes accordingly. Advocacy of policy changes that might reduce discrimination or contribute to social equity should not have to meet a higher standard than other organization policies, particularly those might increase discrimination or become more inequitable. The burden of proof remains on the critics to bring forth cases where this bias can be demonstrated.

The case of individual bureaucrats making decisions is more complex and has generated an extensive literature on street-level bureaucracy (May and Winter 2009; Tummers and Bekkers 2014) as well as the literature in representative bureaucracy. Although most studies of representative bureaucracy use aggregate-level data to link passive representation to outcomes and thus cannot tell whether representation effects result from policy changes or individual bureaucratic decisions, several representation studies of individual bureaucratic action exist in the literature (An, Song, Meier 2021; Dee 2005; Guul 2018; Nicholson-Crotty et al. 2016; Xu and Meier 2021).

Because individual decisions are likely to reflect personal values and biases, it is possible that such actions might be adding bias into the bureaucratic process. To determine if that is the case, it is important to distinguish first why the bureaucratic representative might have taken the specific action in question and then to probe what the intent of the bureaucrat was in that instance. To simplify this discussion, I will term a bureaucrat from an underrepresented group as a “minority

bureaucrat” and all other bureaucrats as “majority bureaucrats.”

Why might a minority bureaucrat make a different decision with regard to a minority client than a majority bureaucrat would? The diversity management literature and the recent work on the lived experiences of identities both suggest that minority bureaucrats might possess additional knowledge such as a better understanding of the client and the client’s status or the ability to communicate better based on these shared identities. Such findings are indicated by the literature on the use of former addicts as drug abuse counselors (Park 2020) and the widespread use of incentives that police and schools offer for bilingual employees (Lewis and Ramakrishnan 2007). The police literature that shows minority and female officers, for example, engage in fewer random stops or searches but are more effective at dealing with serious crimes (Calderon 2018; Shoub, Stauffer, and Song 2021). Recent work by Nicholson-Crotty and Li (2022) even indicates that diversity among police units reduces excessive use of force by police (see also Hong 2017).

These examples of different decisions suggest that outcomes may differ because minority bureaucrats make better decisions than majority bureaucrats with regard to minority clients. As a devil’s advocate, one might also ask if there are cases where minority bureaucrats—because of their lived experiences and training—are simply better at their jobs than majority bureaucrats. Two streams in the literature suggest that this might be the case in some situations. First, a series of studies indicate that more representative bureaucracies do not have any distributional consequences; that is, while minority clients are better off, majority clients are no worse off and may also be better off (Andrews, Ashworth, and Meier 2014; Atkins, Fertig, and Wilkins 2014; Guul 2018; Meier, Wrinkle, Polinard 1999; Wilkins and Keiser 2006). Second, it is also possible that minority bureaucrats might be better at their jobs as a result of these different lived experiences or other factors that influence them to self-select into various professions. A consistent finding in the representative bureaucracy literature in education (albeit usually buried in footnotes) is that women are better K–12 teachers than men are (An, Song, and Meier 2021; Keiser, et al. 2002). Mc-Crea (2021) similarly finds that both men and women heart attack patients have better outcomes when treated by female emergency room physicians.

In a somewhat different impact of representation, extensive work on the concept of emotional labor, an effort generally associated with more women in a bureaucracy, shows how such activities facilitate interpersonal relationships both among bureaucrats and between bureaucrats and clients (Guy and Newman 2004; Guy, Newman, and Mastracci 2014). Although most studies of emotional labor examine impacts on such internal concepts as job satisfaction, turnover, and public service motivation,⁴ there are existing studies that link the concept to better overall performance by the entire organization (Hsieh and Guy 2009; Meier, Mastracci, and Wilson 2006). Such links can be interpreted as resulting from better passive representation.

If, as suggested by these streams of literature, that outcomes in some cases change because minority bureaucrats make better decisions than majority bureaucrats, that shifts the burden of proof to the critics of representative bureaucracy to actually provide evidence that more representative bureaucrats make biased decisions in the process of active representation. To provide an argument on more than unsubstantiated claims, the critics should demonstrate two things. First, that more representative bureaucracies actually shift the balance in outcomes from favoring the majority group to favoring the minority group. This is not an easy task—an examination of the literature in the area where the plurality of representative bureaucracies is examined—education—has not to my knowledge produced evidence that majorities are significantly disadvantaged relative to minorities. Second, the critics need to show that the individual decisions of bureaucrats actually reflect bias rather than the consideration of other factors (superior communication, better understanding of the problem, or symbolic representation) that could also account for these outcomes.

This second point means that it is important to understand why the bureaucrats are making the decisions that they are making. Are the bureaucrats engaging in active representation such that they are favoring clients who look like themselves or are they acting on other

values consistent with their profession and organization that would also benefit the client? Such an assessment is being addressed by recent qualitative work. Xu and Meier (2021) find that girls with female math teachers in China do better in math than those with male math teachers. Their interviews with teachers and administrators, however, finds them universally rejecting the notion of active representation based on gender. Rather, both male and female teachers stress that they treat all students equally; additional quantitative analysis indicates that girl students respond better than boys to this type of treatment.⁵ A study of female math teachers in India, the United States, China and the Netherlands shows a similar rejection of representation by female math teachers (Meier, Dhillon, Xu, and von den Bekerom 2022). Using a series of in-depth interviews in a rural Southern school with a large immigrant population, Penn (2021) found that while some teachers adopted a representative bureaucracy orientation that the overwhelming majority of supportive teachers stressed their professional obligation to help all children and did not distinguish between Latinx immigrant children and the other children in the school. Zamboni (2020) in a qualitative study of first responders found that the differential response of bureaucrats was focused on the needs of the clients and that active representation was based on those needs and the necessity to protect the emergency response capacity. Although these early studies cover only a small number of situations, they do indicate that some cases that look like active representation are not, and other cases that arise might be from a variety of factors other than traditional active representation.

Contagion Effects and Bias?

Having examined both symbolic and active representation, one other process of linking passive representation to outcomes that benefit the represented remains to be discussed. It combines symbolic and active representation in a different manner, what has been termed either “contagion effects” (Meier and Xu 2022) or “spillover effects” (Li 2022). Passive representation

⁴ Organizational performance could also improve as emotional labor affects job satisfaction, turnover, and public service motivation which in turn influence performance. Similarly, many original studies of gender show that better representation of women resulted in procedural changes such as flextime, family friendly policies, and other actions that could also improve overall performance (see Guy 1992).

⁵ Xu and Meier (2021) suggest that if girls are treated equally in K–12 education in China that might be better than they are treated by other institutions in China.

could alter the distribution of bureaucratic outcomes not because the represented bureaucrats take any action but rather because their presence in the bureaucracy changes the behaviors of the other bureaucrats. The basic idea of contagion effects comes from the diversity management literature and the contact thesis in psychology. The diversity management literature argues that a benefit of diversity is that more and different ideas and perspectives are brought into the organization and this facilitates improved decisions overall (Ashikali and Groeneveld 2015). Specifically in terms of representative bureaucracy, contact between bureaucrats with different identities should lessen overtly hostile behavior toward underserved populations, allow the exploitation of any policy specific knowledge that the bureaucratic representatives bring to the organization, such as how to serve more diverse clientele, or create new networks with clientele that facilitate service delivery.

Although contagion effects were essentially ignored until recently in the representative bureaucracy literature, a small number of studies document them. Li (2022) finds that white highway patrol officers who work with Latinx officers are associated with less racial profiling of Latinx drivers (she finds null results for whites who work with African Americans). Meier and McCrea (2022) show that male emergency room physicians who work with female physicians have improved outcomes for women suffering heart attacks and that this occurs in cases of atypical symptoms that are more frequently recognized by female physicians. Meier and Xu (2022) find that male math teachers in China who have more female math teachers as colleagues are associated with higher math grades for female students. Meier, An, and Song (2022) find similar math teacher results in a 64-country study. These recent empirical studies corroborate more qualitative evidence on contagion effects found in Atkins and Wilkins (2013) for noneducation outcomes and teachers and Gade and Wilkins (2012) in veteran's services.

Although contagion effects arise from passive representation, whether they raise a normative concern about bias is open to discussion. If majority bureaucrats are advocating more for the interests of minority clients, they might be doing so because they have a better understanding of the challenges that the client faces or they might be more sensitive to their own behaviors that might be insensitive or inappropriate (racial profiling) or they might perceive how social equity is inherent in the mission of their agency. None of these explanations

raise questions of bias with regard to representative bureaucracy.

Based on this review of the literature and examination of the processes by which passive representation could be associated with outcomes that benefit the represented, several conclusions are evident. First, normative objections to representative bureaucracy in terms of bias have not fully traced out the micro-process by which this happens but rather have just made general assertions. Second, the critics have not provided any evidence of a passively representative bureaucracy that has produced disproportionate outcomes such that the represented clients receive the preponderance of the positive outcomes. Some existing evidence, in contrast, shows that as bureaucracies approach parity in outcomes for disadvantaged clientele, that the association between passive representation and outcomes that benefits the represented declines (Fay et al. 2021; Hong 2017; Keiser et al. 2002; Meier, Wrinkle, and Polinard 1999; Nicholson-Crotty, Grissom, and Nicholson-Crotty 2011). Third, no evidence has been presented that representative outcomes have resulted from prejudice or bias rather than a variety of other widely acceptable organizational processes such as superior information, better understanding of the problem, better skills, or symbolic representation. In short, the contention that passive representation fosters bias and prejudice in bureaucratic decisions is at the present time an undocumented assertion and appears to face substantial counterevidence.

Stated more boldly, the striking aspect of many representative bureaucracy findings is that the correlation between passive representation and outcomes that benefit the represented is consistent with the bureaucratic representatives simply doing the job that the organization expects of the bureaucrats. Teachers teach girls to perform better in math (Keiser et al. 2002). Child support enforcement bureaucrats get clients more money that the law says they deserve (Wilkins and Keiser 2006). Police departments arrest more rapists (Meier and Nicholson-Crotty 2006). First responders provide services to individuals who are in need while screening for frivolous use (Zamboni 2020). Patients are more likely to survive a heart attack (McCrea 2021). Police solve more crimes (Hong 2017). This is what we expect bureaucracies to do and substantial evidence suggests that better passive representation contributes to these policy goals.

Is Representative Bureaucracy Perceived as Unfair?

If representative bureaucracy introduces bias into a bureaucratic process that otherwise lacks bias, it is clearly a concern and likely to be perceived by some individuals as unfair. Although there have been a series of experimental studies of whether individuals are more willing to cooperate as bureaucratic representation increases and how they evaluate such bureaucracies, until recently there has been little research on how individuals feel about representative bureaucracy in terms of fairness. One early exception is Dennis Daley's (1984) study of legislators who expressed opposition to the concept of representative bureaucracy. An observational study by Andrews et al. (2005) of English local governments found that citizen's opinions became more negative as local government bureaucracies became more representative even after controlling for the actual performance of local governments.

The question of fairness can also be divided into passive or active representation since it is likely that an individual might consider the symbolic representation benefits of a more diverse bureaucracy a good thing while at the same time be skeptical about active representation. The experimental studies of police (Ricucci, Van Ryzin, and Jackson 2018; Ricucci, Van Ryzin, and Lavena 2014), recycling (Ricucci, Van Ryzin, and Li 2016), emergency preparedness (Van Ryzin, Ricucci, and Li 2017), and criminal justice (Sievert 2021) are indirectly relevant since they focus on either perceived legitimacy or the willingness of individuals to coproduce; and both could be considered an indicator of support for a representative bureaucracy and thus related to perceptions of fairness.

Ricucci, Van Ryzin, and Lavena (2014) specifically show that the perceived fairness of dealing with sexual assault cases increases with more female police officers. They find these results somewhat stronger among women but do not report the results for male respondents. In a study of recycling, Ricucci, Van Ryzin, and Li (2016) find great representation of women increases the willingness of women to recycle but men were less likely to coproduce as women's representation increased. One concern in generalizing from these experimental online surveys is that the experiments need to make sure that the treatment effect (i.e., the degree of representation) is sufficiently large so that it is noticed. At times, this means presenting hypothetical scenarios

where representation levels exceed parity or are well beyond the range of the data in the real world.

Baniamin and Jamil (2021) provide additional evidence with regard to the level of representation with an experimental study of individuals in Bangladesh, Nepal, and Sri Lanka with regard to violence against women. Their findings show that the highest level of support occurs when representation hits parity (that is, half of the officials are women). These findings suggest that representation per se is valued but overrepresentation in either direction has less support. The small number of studies, however, suggests that substantial research is necessary before we fully understand whether or not individuals think that passive representation is fair. The other concern with existing studies is that at times they try to incorporate a level of performance or actual discrimination in the process that also might differ from the experience of individuals. Some qualitative work (Headley, James, and Meier 2021), for example, indicates that the benefits of symbolic representation are limited in cases where the bureaucracy has a history of negative treatment of the underrepresented population (see also Headley and James 2020; Menifield, Shin, and Strother 2019).

These studies deal with passive representation and its symbolic impact; they do not deal with active representation and how that might be viewed. At present, there are no direct experimental tests of active representation although one study of the linkage between passive representation and policy outcomes that benefit the representative has recently been published (Van Ryzin 2021) using two internet vignette studies. The first concerns education and a student who scores lower than expected on a math exam; the teacher then gives the student some extra help and a chance to retake the exam. The study experimentally manipulates the gender of the student and the teacher with a 2×2 design with a control group where gender is not identified for either. Respondents are then asked to evaluate the fairness of the event. While the experiment has several suggestive findings that indicate identifying gender results in a "less fair" judgment than the control situation, the multivariate analysis only generates statistically significant results for male respondents who react negatively when a female teacher helps a female student. Given that male respondents do not appear to be concerned about male teachers helping male students and female respondents do not generate any statistically significant results, the

experiment probably reveals more about males and sexist attitudes rather than an evaluation of the fairness of representative bureaucracy.

The second parallel experiment involves a motorist stopped by a police officer for changing lanes without signaling (the result of a broken taillight); the officer does not ticket the driver. The treatments are to vary whether the driver and the police officer are White or Black with a control group where neither are identified. Although any identification of race led to a less positive assessment of fairness, the key significant finding was lenient treatment of white drivers was considered unfair and this was especially the case among minority respondents. The results of the two experiments with the same subjects cautions against any premature conclusions about the perceived fairness of representative bureaucracy. In one case, education, representative bureaucracy is judged harshly (by men) if women teachers help female students, but in the other case, representative bureaucracy is not judged more harshly given that favorable treatment of whites is viewed more negatively. In the teaching case, it is also unclear which of the two actions by the teacher triggered the reaction—the provision of extra help or allowing the student to take the exam again. One might argue that the provision of extra help for a struggling student is what teachers are expected to do as teachers; getting to take an exam twice probably deviates from normal teaching and could be considered favoritism.⁶

The difference in the two experiments might also reflect the relative visibility of the experimental conditions as they reflect mundane realism. The high salience of race and policing, particularly stops for trivial traffic violations, means that most respondents would be aware of existing discrimination in terms of race. Girls' math scores are less salient and likely less known to the general public particularly since gender disparities in math only arise in adolescence.

This section along with the previous one indicates that any contention about the perceived unfairness of representative bureaucracy has not met a minimum burden of proof. As the section on bias found, the literature does not contain a plethora of examples of more representative bureaucracies skewing bureaucratic outcomes such that the underrepresented population receives a

disproportionate share of the beneficial outcomes. The evidence of how more representative bureaucracies are perceived, particularly in terms of fairness, is fairly mixed; and as Van Ryzin (2021) effectively argues in terms of theory, there are several plausible explanations for the mixed results of his experiment.

How Much Can Representative Bureaucracy Matter?

This article follows recent theoretical work that has proposed to separate the correlation of passive representation with outcomes that benefit the represented from the concept of active representation (Meier 2019). Such correlations could result from active representation, but they could also result from policy change in the organization, symbolic representation by clients, contagion effects that produce actions by other bureaucrats, or even factors exogenous to the organization that can directly affect policy outcomes (Meier, Pennington, and Eller 2005). The empirical work clearly indicates that the correlations between passive representation and outcomes could overestimate the impact of active representation, that passive representation can operate in a variety of ways that do not require a minority bureaucrat to make a decision favorable to a minority client. Further, theoretical reasons exist that such a decision by a minority bureaucrat could well result from factors other than bias or favoritism.

The empirical research on these various other processes of generating outcomes that are more consistent with social equity suggests that we reassess our expectations of representative bureaucracy in two different directions. In one sense the literature on representative bureaucracy may be too optimistic, portrayed as a method of ensuring that government in general—not just bureaucracy—is more responsive to the general public (Kingsley 1944; Long 1952) and supported by the extensive literature that shows positive correlations between passive representation and more equitable outcomes. In another sense the literature might be too pessimistic, with substantial barriers to representation, numerous policy areas and countries where it has not been documented, and limits on what level of passive representation is attainable.

⁶ As an educator, I do not consider it favoritism to provide extra help and encouragement to a student who has performed poorly. At the same time, I would never allow a student to take an exam twice unless there was a university approved excuse for doing so. Without that excuse, allowing a second take of an exam seems fair only if all students have that same option.

The Case Against Optimism

Norton Long (1952) contends that not only can representative bureaucracy improve democratic governance (his case is the United States, and he does not predict beyond that), that it can even correct for the representational shortcomings of the political branches. This theoretical claim is bolstered by extensive empirical literature (Bishu and Kennedy 2020; Kennedy 2014; Riccucci and Van Ryzin 2017) documenting a correlation between passive representation and outcomes that benefit the represented in many policy areas and countries (see the meta-analysis by Ding, Lu, and Riccucci 2021). The frequency that more representative bureaucracies generate more equitable outcomes remains an empirical question. Negative and null results exist in the empirical literature (e.g., in terms of race see Watkins-Hayes 2011; Wilkins and Williams 2008; for gender see Fernandez, Malatesta, and Smith 2013; Selden 1997), but the number of reported cases is relatively rare. One possibility that should be entertained is whether the publication process might be biased against null findings (Franco, Malhotra, and Simonovits 2014) because authors are less likely to submit papers with null results for publication. The net impact of publication bias would then overestimate the impact of a representative bureaucracy.

Two reasons suggest there could be publication bias in the literature on representative bureaucracy. First, scholarship now operates with a fairly precise theory that focuses research on issues where identities are salient and bureaucrats have discretion directly relevant to the identity in question (Keiser et al. 2002). The theory also specified a series of possible interactions between representation and hierarchy, stratification, political representation, critical mass and other factors thus multiplying the possible relationships to probe for representation impacts. This has essentially led most scholars to look for representation in the cases where it is most likely to be found and to then push the positive cases to determine factors that influence the strength of the representation relationship.

Second, although not directly addressing publication bias, a recent paper by An, Song, and Meier (2021) examined gender representation in education in 44 countries and provided some indirect evidence on this question. Although their purpose was to probe the contextual factors that affect the strength of the repre-

sentation relationship, they also reported their results for the individual countries. Using individual level data, they found a significant positive relationship between female math teachers and girls' math scores on international exams in only five countries. Thirty-three countries had null results despite several thousand cases in each country; six countries had significant negative results where girls' math scores were lower if they had a female teacher. These results are particularly striking given that this context has been described in the literature as conducive to gender and representative bureaucracy (Keiser et al. 2002).⁷ The six countries, Bahrain, Jordan, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates have exceptionally poor records on issues of gender quality and representation and might indicate that in highly segregated situations that representation reflects an effort to limit equity rather than increase it. Specifically, a country that has institutionalized gender discrimination could interpret assigning female teachers to girls as segregation and, thus, another way of reinforcing the position of women as second-class citizens.

Two other reasons caution against optimism in the prevalence and outcomes of bureaucratic representation—the numerous theoretical barriers to representation and the unrealistic expectations given the general levels of representation among the disadvantaged. The barriers to representation have long been discussed in the literature and were used as an explanation for the initial null results in the early literature (Meier and Nigro 1976). Every bureaucrat has multiple identities, and these identities reflect a variety of lived experiences resulting from race, ethnicity, gender, socioeconomic status, education, and sexual orientation as well as from professional training, organizational socialization, and the actual process of becoming a bureaucrat (Oberfield 2014) plus countless other factors. Many of these identities can push the bureaucrat to not represent in a specific case or in general. Similarly, organizational factors can limit representation via organizational socialization, limiting discretion via rules, incentives, and social pressures (Watkins-Hayes 2011). Even factors external to the organization such as political pressures (Soss, Fording, and Schram 2011), the degree of representation elsewhere (Meier and Dhillon 2022), and a country's commitment to social equity (An, Song, and Meier

⁷ In fairness to Keiser et al. (2002), they specifically state that gender is an identity that varies across time and space and that gender salience is likely to also vary depending on the location being studied.

2021) provide limits. All of these factors operate within a bureaucratic culture that might range from Confucianism, to elite bureaucrats who represent the state, to bureaucrats imbedded in fragmented systems that require advocacy and representation. Given that only some cases provide an opportunity for representation (the decision needs to involve the identity in question and that identity must be highly salient or even more salient than other identities), the barriers to active representation have to be considered substantial.

The barriers to representation operate in context with what are generally low levels of bureaucratic representation of most disadvantaged groups. Virtually every study of passive representation paints a picture of bureaucracies that overrepresent the “haves” in a society in terms of education, income, and political influence that becomes greater as one moves up the bureaucratic hierarchy (Naff 2018). Given that many of the cases for representative bureaucracy examine individuals who are numerical minorities in the specific context as well as political minorities, the number of representative bureaucrats is often very small.

Because outcome inequities have many determinants linked to structures, inequalities that are related to inequalities in access to education or other resources, expecting a few bureaucrats to change deeply imbedded inequities is unrealistic. Bearfield, Portillo and Humphrey (2020, 8) put the blame in part on the theory of representative bureaucracy stating that: “representative bureaucracy theory implicitly establishes white men as neutral and objective actors, while placing the burden of resolving equity issues on historically marginalized groups.”⁸ Drawing an analogy from the blaxploitation films, Bearfield (2011) characterizes the hopes for representative bureaucracy as similar to waiting for “The Magic Negro,” the superhero who shows up with homespun wisdom and magically fixes everyone’s problems. Deep-seated problems, such as racism in policing or inadequacies within the education system, in Bearfield’s view are unlikely to be corrected by the addition of a few African American police officers or teachers. Bearfield, Portillo, and Humphrey (2020; see also Portillo, Humphrey, and Bearfield 2022) contend that disparate outcomes that characterize many bureaucracies

can only be overcome if they become the responsibility of all bureaucrats. Bearfield’s normative argument has substantial empirical support in the persistence of inequalities; decades of efforts to improve representation in education and policing, the two most studied policy areas in representative bureaucracy, have not produced anything close to parity in policy outcomes. The policing cases, in fact, continue to show that even marginal improvements are difficult to attain (Headley and James 2020; Menifield et al. 2019).

The Case Against Pessimism

Accepting the limits of representative bureaucracy as outlined in the previous section and questioning whether representative bureaucracy is a panacea or likely to work everywhere should not imply that the quest for more representative bureaucracies should be abandoned. There are several reasons to believe that increasing the passive representation in bureaucracies will improve social equity for underrepresented individuals and perhaps even generate advantages that benefit everyone.

First, despite all the barriers to the translation of passive representation into outcomes that benefit the represented, it does occur. Extensive literature reviews (Bishu and Kennedy 2020; Ding, Lu, and Riccucci 2021; Kennedy 2014) show positive relationships in numerous policy areas for multiple identities, and the limited number of countries examined suggests that representative bureaucracy will matter in many, albeit not all, countries. There are simply too many empirical examples where greater passive representation in the bureaucracy is associated with greater social equity in government action to dismiss representative bureaucracy as not contributing to social equity.

Second, improved passive representation of the bureaucracy is likely to bring into the bureaucracy a greater range of lived experiences and thus values. Diversity of values in a government bureaucracy brings additional information and more values to the policy discussions within the bureaucracy. Debates over policy and greater information when making decisions is almost universally supported as a positive goal in the literature on decision-making (Herring and Henderson 2014). The addition of more perspectives can serve as a check on the problems of a “one best way”

⁸ My reading of the literature is that Bearfield et al. (2020) are wrong about representative bureaucracy implicitly establishing white males as neutral objective actors. I cannot find a single case of a representative bureaucracy advocate or scholar who has made that statement or any other statement with that implication. Given that most studies start by documenting the inequalities in bureaucratic outcomes, it is more accurate to state that the representative bureaucracy literature explicitly holds that existing bureaucracies are biased and not objective.

approach to dealing with citizens and serve to bring equity into bureaucratic discussions.

Third, passive representation can lead to contagion effects whereby existing bureaucrats interact with and learn from the newly enfranchised representatives. Given the complexities of contemporary policy and administration, any inputs that promote organizational learning should be encouraged. Fourth, even active representation in terms of advocacy for clients has positive consequences. Many professions such as medicine, law, teaching, counseling, and so forth have advocacy for clients as an inherent element of their professional identity. Similarly, many bureaucracies in the United States were established in part to serve as advocates for a set of interests.

Fifth, the literature has generally not found any redistributional consequences to increased passive representation in a variety of policy areas. The outcomes that bureaucracies seek (unlike their inputs) are not constrained by a fixed sum that requires redistribution. Programs can improve outreach and take-up, they can find better ways to communicate, and they can more accurately assess needs and problems. Passive representation appears to contribute to such improvements in government organizations.

Finally, to return to Mosher (1968), even if passive representation did not produce any of the list of benefits noted, a more representative bureaucracy has a strong symbolic value in a democracy. It is a commitment to equal access and a reflection of the openness of a governing mechanism to the society at large. Just because there are limits to symbolic representation and absent bureaucratic behavior that treats citizens in a discriminatory manner (Headley, James, and Meier 2021), that does not mean symbolic representation has no value.

Conclusion

This article on social equity and representative bureaucracy addressed three normative issues in the literature. First, whether representative bureaucracy generates bias in an otherwise neutral bureaucratic process was examined. Although there are general assertions in the literature as to this claim, the critics fail to present any convincing evidence or really any evidence at all that representative bureaucracy biases a process that otherwise treats clients in a fair, impartial manner. With one exception, the literature fails to grapple with the fact that positive correlations from passive representation and outcomes that benefit the represented could occur in a variety of

ways that do not stem from active representation. Some evidence suggest that such outcomes result from superior knowledge, better communication, more cooperation from the client, and the professional orientation of the bureaucrats. These outcomes result from bureaucrats simply doing their jobs, and sometimes those jobs require understanding, empathy, and even representation.

Second, there is little evidence that the public perceives representation as unfair and that which exists seems to reject representation of privilege (a white officer not ticketing a white driver) or the attitudes of the privileged (male attitudes about female teachers helping female students but not male teachers helping male students). These plus other experiments that seem to support relatively equal gender representation suggest that perhaps psychological framing effects are generating a set of outcomes rather than those outcomes being in response to representation per se.

Third, the article argued that the literature might be too optimistic about the impact of representative bureaucracy. The highly precise theory has successfully predicted cases where representative bureaucracy is likely to exist, and those cases are not representative of all potential cases in terms of identity, policy area, or national context. Some recent cross-national evidence indicates that impacts from representative bureaucracy might be relatively rare. The article cautioned against reacting to the barriers to representative bureaucracy too negatively, and further argued that passively representative bureaucracies were a good thing and should be pursued for two reasons. First, it is one of the few policy instruments that is effective in a wide range of cases (even if not universally so). Second, the symbolic benefits of openness and legitimacy are sufficient by themselves to justify efforts to increase passive representation.

Representative bureaucracy is a field that inherently investigates normative issues such as social equity and representation through empirical analysis. What is striking in the literature is that we do not find cases for representation furthering social inequities. That does not mean that there are not such cases, only that the critics have not provided them. The current article relied heavily on the existing literature which is generally centered in developed democracies with an overemphasis on the United States. It is clear that in the United States representative bureaucracy does not appear to generate any bias or any indication of active representation “run rampant” but rather is a policy lever that in many cases can contribute to greater social equity.

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Structural Racism in the Federal Workplace: An Intersectional Approach to Examining Race-Based Discrimination in Law Enforcement

Helen H. Yu

Law enforcement has historically been an institution resistant to both women and racial minorities, evident by decades of research on workplace discrimination in local policing. Missing, however, from this research are the workplace experiences of minority officers in federal policing, a growing domain in law enforcement scholarship. This article examines perceived encounters of race-based discrimination and its subsequent outcomes to reporting behavior between White and minority officers. Findings suggest that all minority race or ethnic subgroups except one (e.g., Black/African American, American Indian/Alaska Native, Asian, multi-racial, and Hispanic/Latino officers respectively) were more likely to perceive experiencing race-based discrimination in comparison to White officers, although only three of the minority subgroups (e.g., Black/African American, multiracial, and Hispanic/Latino officers, respectively) were more likely to report the unlawful conduct. Likewise, comparisons between officers of color found that Black/African American women were more likely to perceive experiencing race-based discrimination in comparison to men of color.

Introduction

Despite executive, legislative, and judicial efforts across the past 60 years, law enforcement continues to be an institution resistant to both women and racial minorities, evident by decades of multidisciplinary research on workplace discrimination¹ in the police force (e.g., Bolton 2003; Haarr and Morash 2013; Hassell and Brandl 2009; Jollever 2008; Pogrebin, Dodge, and Chatman 2000; Sklansky 2006; Wilson and Wilson 2014). While much of the scholarship has focused on the experiences of female and minority officers in local policing, there has been an upward trend on capturing the workplace experiences of sworn officers in

the federal domain—the largest employer in the United States—in particular, female officers (or agents) in federal law enforcement (e.g., Yu 2020, 2022a). Missing from this growth in federal inquiry are the workplace experiences of minority officers regardless of gender, such as Asian American, Hispanic/Latino, Black/African American, Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, and Native American persons. Given that minority representation has been rising over the past few decades (Brooks 2019; Reaves 2012; Reaves and Hart 2001), capturing these workplace experiences are important because the federal government espouses to be the model employer yet “racial discrimination is the norm in U.S. society, despite rhetorical commitments to equal oppor-

¹ The EEOC (2022a) describes workplace discrimination as “unfair treatment and harassment by managers, co-workers, or others in [the] workplace, because of [one’s] race, color, religion, sex (including pregnancy, gender identity, and sexual orientation), national origin, disability, age (age 40 or older), or genetic information.” Likewise, workplace discrimination includes retaliation when an applicant or employee “complained about job discrimination or assisted with a job discrimination proceeding, such as an investigation or lawsuit” (EEOC 2022a).

tunity and the principles of affirmative action” (Berry-James et al. 2021, 9).

For instance, the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC 2022b) received 20,908 formal complaints alleging race-based discrimination in FY2021 alone.² Likewise, over half a century of policing and public administration research has documented countless occurrences of race-based discrimination in the police force, although many officers do not appear to report these unlawful encounters (Ricucci and Saldivar 2014; Yu 2022a), further masking the magnitude of the problem. Therefore, examining race-based discrimination requires a meaningful understanding of structural racism in the policing culture and its occupational outlook. In addition, intersectionality is a practical and complementary framework for portraying the workplace experiences of minority officers because it “recognizes that systems of power such as race and gender do not act alone to shape [one’s] experiences but rather are inextricably linked and simultaneously experienced” (Burgess-Proctor 2006, 31). Accordingly, the current study aims to gain more insight on the workplace experiences of minority officers in federal law enforcement, to include gender disparities between men and women of color.

Using a sample of sworn federal officers employed by a large federal department ($N = 4,106$), this study examines perceived encounters of race-based discrimination and its subsequent outcomes to reporting behavior between White officers and minority officers. However, recognizing that officers of color are not a homogeneous group, a one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) model between White officers and each minority race or ethnic subgroup, respectively (e.g., Black/African American, Hispanic/Latino, Asian American, Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, American Indian/Alaska Native, and multi-racial) are generated to accurately distinguish the workplace experiences of all officers of color. Likewise, gender comparisons

between men and women of color are made. This approach supports the reality that each minority race or ethnic subgroup do not convey the same workplace experiences as White officers or other minority subgroups (Breslin, Pandey, and Riccucci 2017; Lee 2020; Nelson and Piatak 2021; Yu 2022a). Thus, the purpose of this study is to answer the following research questions. First, how often do federal officers perceive experiencing race-based discrimination in the workplace? Second, are there differences between reports of perceived racial discrimination among White officers and the various minority race or ethnic subgroups? Third, if they do experience race-based discrimination, do they report the unlawful encounter? If no, why not? If yes, were they satisfied with the outcome? Finally, do women of color experience higher degrees of race-based discrimination than men of color?

These questions are important for several reasons. First, as the largest employer in the country, race-based discrimination has not been fully examined in the federal sector for law enforcement personnel. Thus, scholarship must develop a deeper understanding of the structural racism that permeates traditionally White occupations such as policing and its impact on minority employees and public organizations. Second, the recent directives of Executive Order 13985 (January 20, 2021)—*Advancing Racial Equity and Support for Underserved Communities Through the Federal Government*—and Executive Order 14035 (June 25, 2021)—*Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility in the Federal Workforce*—demands a workforce where all employees are treated with respect, and where “all employees should receive fair and equitable treatment in all aspects of personnel management” (5 U.S.C. 2301(b)(1)(2)). Finally, incorporating the intersectionality of race and gender provides a more comprehensive examination of the experience minority officers encounter with race-based discrimination and their decision to report or not report the unlawful conduct.

² The EEOC (2022c) describes race-based discrimination as involving any facet of employment unfavorably, including “hiring, firing, pay, job assignments, promotions, layoff, training, fringe benefits, and any other term or condition of employment,” because of an applicant or employee’s race. In addition, race discrimination includes “personal characteristics associated with race, such as hair texture, skin color, or certain facial features” (EEOC 2022c). Likewise, racial harassment is a mode of race-based discrimination and includes “racial slurs, offensive or derogatory remarks about a person’s race or color, or the display of racially offensive symbols [that] is so frequent or severe that it creates a hostile or offensive work environment or when it results in an adverse employment decision” (EEOC 2022c).

This article proceeds with an overview on structural racism and intersectionality to explain why racism still exists in law enforcement. Second, data and methodology are introduced, followed by empirical results. Finally, this article concludes by offering discussion, practical and theoretical implications for the findings, and limitations of this study.

Structural Racism

Over the past 60 years, one of the most notable changes in law enforcement is its racial and ethnic diversity. The nearly all-White policing institutions of the 1950s and 1960s have given way to varying increases in minority officers due to the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as well as numerous consent decrees from the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s to remedy past injustices (Sklansky 2006). One of the most prominent consent decrees involved the Alabama Department of Public Safety (i.e., Alabama Highway Patrol) in *United States v. Paradise* (1987). Previously, the District Court in *Paradise v. Allen* (1972) issued a hiring quota (i.e., one qualified Black trooper for every White trooper hired until the force reached 25% Black troopers) and an order to refrain from further discriminatory practices upon learning that for nearly four decades, the Alabama Department of Public Safety had systematically excluded every Black applicant from employment as state troopers. Furthermore, the District Court imposed two affirmative promotion plans in 1979 and 1983 upon learning that Black troopers were not allowed to advance due to unfair promotion exams. The District Court would require that at least 50% of all promotions to corporal and above must be given to Black troopers if qualified Black troopers were available. The Circuit Court would later affirm the District Court's decision in 1985, and the Supreme Court would uphold the race-based promotion plan in 1987. By 2016, the Alabama Highway Patrol would have the 12th most diverse state policing agency in the country, despite upholding a police force that remains 82.9% White (Bureau of Justice Statistics 2020).

While this is just one example of the structural racism—that is, “a system in which public policies, institutional practices, cultural representations, and other norms work in various, often reinforcing ways to perpetuate racial group inequity” (The Aspen In-

stitute 2021)—that has been on display in policing, federal law enforcement agencies appear to fare better than its state and local counterparts regarding minority representation. For example, during the latest census of law enforcement personnel prepared by the Bureau of Justice Statistics, 37.9% of all federal law enforcement officers are non-White, in comparison to just 16.1% of all state highway or patrol officers and 28.5% of all municipal police officers, mostly attributable to an increase in the percentage of Asian and Hispanic/Latino federal officers during the past couple of decades (Brooks 2019; Bureau of Justice Statistics 2020; Hyland and Davis 2019). Although this may appear encouraging at first, studies on workplace discrimination have shown that improved rates of minority representation within an organization are also associated with higher degrees of race-based discrimination (Alteri 2020; Rubin and Alteri 2019), truncating the careers of otherwise qualified minority candidates regardless of intergovernmental level (Bolton 2003; Gau, Paoline, and Roman 2021; Jollevet 2008; Schroedel et al. 1994; Wilson and Wilson 2014).

For example, in 2018, the United Black Police Officers Association, the Hispanic National Law Enforcement Association, and 12 minority police officers filed a lawsuit against the Prince George's County Police Department, a disproportionate White police force—that is, the population is 12.3% White, yet 45.3% of all sworn officers are White (Bureau of Justice 2020; Census Bureau 2021)—asserting a work environment pervaded by race-based discrimination and retaliation (Wainman 2021). Furthermore, in 2019, the Department of Justice filed a lawsuit against the Baltimore County Police Department, another disproportionately White police force in Maryland—the population is 55.8% White, yet 82.3% of all sworn officers are White—alleging race-based discriminatory practices on entry-level procedures by grounding hiring decisions on exams that were not job related, which disproportionately excluded minority (i.e., African American) applicants (Bureau of Justice 2020; Census Bureau 2021; Shalal and Landay 2020). Both lawsuits would later reach settlements of \$2.3M and \$2M, respectively, to include reform initiatives for both police departments (Shalal and Landay 2020; Wainman 2021).

Up to this point, nearly all the research on race-based discrimination in policing has focused on Black/Afri-

can American officers, with Hispanics/Latinos, Asians, and other minority subgroups receiving very little to no consideration (e.g., Carter 1986; Gallardo 2020; Gau, Paoline, and Roman 2021; Holder, Nee, and Ellis 2000; Schroedel et al. 1994; Yu 2022b). While there is basis for this targeted approach—for example, criminal justice reform initiatives such as President Johnson’s *Commission on Law Enforcement and Administration of Justice* (1967) and President Obama’s *Task Force on 21st Century Policing* (2015) were both enacted during periods of crisis between the police and the Black communities, respectively and concentrated on improving racial diversity in the police force with Black/African American officers (Skogan 2018)—race-based discrimination can extend to all race or ethnic subgroups, although research found that racial minorities were more likely to perceive workplace discrimination than White employees (Alteri 2020; Bradbury, Battaglio, and Crum 2010; Lee 2020; McCord et al. 2018; Ortega et al. 2012; Triana, Del Carmen, and Pieper 2015; Yu 2022a). For example, Carter (1986) and Gallardo (2020) reported in their studies on Hispanic police officers’ workplace environment that race-based discrimination was prevalent throughout the department’s recruitment, hiring, and promotion practices and this negatively impacted non-White officers.

There are two streams of scholarship in response to this shift on racial and ethnic demographics. The first is that the nature of policing and its White occupational culture have remained mostly intact (Bolton 2003; Demeester and Lamagdeleine 2016; Gaynor 2018; Jollevet 2008; Sklansky 2006). Findings from independent audits demonstrate that the culture is so engrained and standardized within the profession that most law enforcement organizations are unaware that unconscious (and conscious) bias even exists in their departments or agencies, adversely impacting the recruitment, promotion, and retention processes of most police organizations, including from those whose senior leaders are proactively trying to revamp the culture (Bolton 2003; Jollevet 2008; National Coalition of Law Enforcement Organizations 2016). This bias inhibits a truly equitable workforce and impedes progress toward achieving racial equity in public organizations. It is revealed at every phase of the employment process and is an acknowledgment of what Gooden (2014) calls a “nervous area of government.” This form of structural racism is described

as “discrimination in contract” because it refers to the “standardization of racial bias through public structures” (Gooden 2014, 11).

Sklansky (2006, 1211) further claims that “officers of all backgrounds are assumed either to [assimilate and] make peace with the White [and] masculine ethos of policing or have difficulty lasting” in what is commonly referred to as the blue brotherhood, while many White male police officers continue to resist efforts at desegregation, as well as diversity training efforts designed to eliminate discrimination both in and outside the organization (Bolton 2003; Conti and Doreian 2010; Demeester and Lamagdeleine 2016; Jollevet 2008; Wilkins and Williams 2008). In addition, scholars argue that minority officers “are socialized by the organizations they work in and adopt behaviors and preferences that are consistent with [White] organizational goals, thereby minimizing the influence of their own personal values [and] racial identity” (Conti and Doreian 2010; Gooden 2014; Wilkins and Williams 2008, 656). These oppressive efforts by White actors continue to exploit and marginalize those individuals who are negatively socially constructed to maintain state-sanctioned injustices that impact organizational justice and equity (Gaynor 2018; Gooden 2014). Furthermore, Heckler (2017, 176) suggests that “Whiteness is a part of the institutional setting of public organizations” to maintain White supremacy by devaluing the experiences of racial and ethnic minorities. As a result, minority officers are overwhelmingly deployed to neighborhoods of color, denied positions that lead to career advancement, held victim to racial jokes and slurs, and are subject to harsher punitive actions in comparison to White officers (Bolton 2003; Gau, Paoline, and Roman 2021; Jollevet 2008; Schroedel et al. 1994; Sklansky 2006; Wilson and Wilson 2014).

Thus, structural racism is entrenched in the blue culture because the police culture is White culture (Bolton 2003; Bolton and Feagin 2004; Demeester and Lamagdeleine 2016; Holdaway and O’Neill 2004). Hence,

White culture is held together by informal relationships and associations through which information is disseminated that is critical to advancement in the system. The network provides mentoring and entrée into line positions that are necessary for advancement. This informal system is a barrier to the advancement of minority police officers in several

ways. First, it is racist. When Blacks complain about racism they are sanctioned and punished. When pressured about discrimination, White officers engage in self-pity and claim ‘reverse discrimination.’ Blacks who point out racism are vilified and retaliated. Second, police culture is exclusionary. By excluding minority officers, Whites have an advantage in job assignments, promotions, and advancement. Ironically, once African American officers are promoted into executive positions, they are normatively constrained from developing networks among African Americans and mentoring promising African American talent. They tend to become isolated from other African American officers and are admonished that their responsibilities are for the entire police force, whereas White executive officers are not so constrained. (Jolivet 2008, 18)

Furthermore, in one of the most expansive studies on the continuing barriers in law enforcement, Bolton (2003) found that structural racism and systematic barriers also impacted the career longevity of Black officers. Specifically,

These barriers have both attitudinal and organizational dimensions and vary in form from subtle to covert to overt. [The] racial attitudes of many White officers create hostile working environments ripe with resentment and intimidation. These racial attitudes shape the organizational structure of police agencies to the extent that White officers are more numerous than their Black counterparts and/or disproportionately fill supervisory and command positions. Many [Black officers] lament a lack of support networks, feel unable to turn to police unions for remediation and often consider opting for early retirement due to continual conflict and stress. Many [Black officers] feel that the reason White officers are not used to Black officers, do not particularly want them in policing and do not know how to address and form a conversation with them is due to persistent patterns of racial segregation in the USA. Because White and Black people are largely separated from intimate contact with each other, officers understand that much racism is not conscious and intentional but rather unconscious and unintentional. Racial attitudes seem customary, right and inoffensive, reflecting

the socialization of White officers that has shaped their worldviews. (Bolton 2003, 389)

Unfortunately, it does not appear much has changed in the past couple of decades. More recently, racial tension both internally and outwardly have been heightened by several tragic events that spurred and renewed the *#BlackLivesMatter* movement (Agho 2022), as well as the latest *#StopAsianHate* or *#StopAAPIHate* movements brought on by the recent killing spree in Georgia and the COVID-19 pandemic (Yu 2022b). In addition, four years of the Trump administration normalized racism and bullying (Ruiz, Edwards, and Lopez 2021). This included Trump’s attack on Kimberlé Crenshaw, one of the foremothers of critical race theory, which is a long-standing “body of legal scholarship [that is] ideologically committed to the struggle against racism, particularly as institutionalized in and by law” (Bell 1995, 898). The bullying empowered state and local political leaders and government officials to overtly dismiss the current and historical experiences and needs of minority employees and citizens. For example, although Trump’s “Equity Gag Order” (i.e., Executive Order 13950 which banned federal departments and agencies, contractors, and grant recipients from conducting training and programs that address systematic racism and sexism) has since been rescinded by President Biden (Executive Order 13985), a total of 16 states have recently signed into legislation bills restricting education on race in classrooms or state agencies, with another 19 states actively considering similar bills or policies (Alfonseca 2022).

The second stream of scholarship in response to this shift on racial and ethnic demographics suggest that police officers are far more disjointed than in previous decades, weakening both the solidarity and informal insularity of the White culture and changing its internal dynamics (National Coalition of Law Enforcement Organizations 2016). Sklansky (2006) describes these organizational effects into three categories: 1) one-on-one interactions (e.g., changing the negative attitudes and behavior of other sworn officers around them), 2) rival trade groups (e.g., membership in professional associations that represent the interest of minority officers such as the Hispanic American Police Command Officers Association (HAPCOA), the National Organization of Black Law Enforcement Executives (NOBLE), and the National Asian Peace Officers’ Association (NAPOA),

just to name a few), and 3) social fragmentation (e.g., the decline of the monolithic White police culture). Though these changes can generate positive impact, they can also convey “division, distrust, and resentment, not only between White officers and minority officers, but also between . . . Black officers and Latino officers, Latino officers and Asian American officers, and so on” (Sklansky 2006, 1232).

Despite these two opposing views in the literature, most scholars and practitioners believe the monolithic White culture prevails in today’s law enforcement institutions, resulting in both unintentional and intentional discriminatory practices. While there are no prior studies that have exclusively examined race-based discrimination in federal law enforcement, those current and early experiences by minority officers in local policing may draw parallels. In addition, according to the 2010 Merit Principles Survey performed by the Merit Service Protection Board, Black/African American employees reported the highest levels of discrimination in the federal government at 8%, followed by Asian employees at 5.5%, Hispanic/Latino employees at 5%, and Whites who reported the lowest levels of discrimination at 2.2% (Alteri 2020). Accordingly, this study expects minorities by their respective race or ethnic subgroup to have differences in experiencing race-based discrimination in comparison to White officers. Thus,

Hypothesis 1: Minority officers by their respective race or ethnic subgroup are more likely to perceive experiencing race-based discrimination in comparison to their White counterparts in federal law enforcement.

Likewise, since the enactment of the Notification and Federal Anti-Discrimination and Retaliation Act of 2002 (i.e., No FEAR Act), the reporting behavior of employees who experience workplace discrimination has generated renewed attention in the literature (e.g., Alteri 2020; Lee and Yu 2020; Reese and Lindenberg 2005; Riccucci and Saldivar 2014; Rubin and Alteri 2019; Yu 2022a; Yu and Lee 2020). This topic continues to be important because as mentioned previously, the EEOC (2022b) received 20,908 formal complaints alleging race-based discrimination in FY2021 alone, the third most frequently charged basis of unlawful conduct in the workplace next to retaliation- (34,332) and disability-based (22,843) accusations. Yet, these

figures are beyond any unsuccessful (or dissatisfied) direct filing required by a federal applicant or employee with their federal agency pursuant to the *Federal Sector Equal Employment Opportunity Complaint Processing Procedures* (29 CFR Part 1614) and does not include charges filed with state or local Fair Employment Practice Agencies (EEOC 2022b), likely underreporting the actual number of race-based allegations.

However, a body of literature also suggests that law enforcement officers do not report workplace discrimination due to fear of retaliation or stigma, a unique occupational code of silence, or agency inaction upon receiving an allegation (Chaiyavej and Morash 2009; Collins 2004; Ivkovic, Haberfeld, and Peacock 2018; Jollevet 2008). To illustrate, in a recent study on reporting behavior, 85.5% of sworn officers chose not to report the unlawful encounter, yet officers of color, specifically Black/African American and Hispanic/Latino officers respectively, were more likely to report workplace discrimination in comparison to White officers (Yu 2022a). Although the study captured the reporting behavior of female officers who experienced sex-based discrimination, there are likely similar parallels with race-based discrimination. Accordingly, this study expects minorities by their respective race or ethnic subgroup to have differences in reporting behavior in comparison to White officers. Thus,

Hypothesis 2: Minority officers by their respective race or ethnic subgroup who perceive experiencing race-based discrimination are more likely to report workplace discrimination in comparison to their White counterparts in federal law enforcement.

Intersectionality

Finally, intersectionality is a practical and complementary framework for portraying the workplace experiences of minority officers because “there are implications for using broad categories such as ‘people of color’ rather than looking at subgroup differences in terms of specific racial or ethnic categories and their intersections with gender when trying to understand the nuances” of the workforce (Blessett et al. 2019, 284). In addition, intersectionality “is a disruption of the norm [and] public administration as a field must develop a willingness to embrace inclusive perspectives, ideologies, and

methodologies” when combating discrimination by state actors and institutions (Blessett, 2020, 4). Whilst intersectionality typically examines other social and individual variables such as age, class, education, religion, sexual orientation, and tenure to interact with race and gender (e.g., Acker 2006; Alteri 2020; Gaynor 2018; Hamidullah and Riccucci 2017; Hassell and Brandl 2009; Holvino 2010; Luna 2016; Potter et al. 2018), this article will focus primarily on race and gender in its approach.

The framework was pioneered by Crenshaw (1989) in her evaluation of anti-discrimination doctrine, feminist theory, and anti-racist politics that erased the experience of racial minorities, especially Black/African American women. She contends that “the intersectional experience [of race and gender] is greater than the sum of racism and sexism [and] any analysis that does not take intersectionality into account cannot sufficiently address the particular manner in which Black [or other minority] women are subordinated” (Crenshaw 1989, 140). This is particularly relevant with the target population of this study, who as mentioned previously have historically been resistant to both women and racial minorities (see Rief and Clinkinbeard 2020; Yu and Lee 2020). However, this article would be remiss to examine intersectionality without mentioning bell hooks, a prominent scholar in her own right, who also suggests that oppression such as racism and sexism “are interrelated and inseparably connected to each other through [various] interlocking webs of oppression” (Biana 2020, 13, citing hooks 1984). Her writings are rooted deeply in second-wave feminism, an era that sought space for non-White feminist thought with consideration of race-related subjectivities (Burgess-Proctor 2006; Collins 2000; Harnois 2005; Yu 2022a; Zinn and Dill 1996). Both theorists suggest that the duplicative disadvantages of being both a woman and a member of a race or ethnic minority brought about heightened adverse experiences exacerbated by their individual race or ethnic background (Crenshaw 1989; hooks 1984).

In addition, intersectionality creates inequalities and systematic disparities in work organizations (Acker 2006). Women and men of color have historically been “confined to the lowest-level jobs or excluded from the most powerful (White [and] male) organizations that were central in shaping the racialized and gendered class structure of the larger society” (445). For example, as mentioned previously, policing institutions were virtu-

ally all White until the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, and women were explicitly excluded from most police departments until the subsequent enactment of the Equal Employment Opportunity Act of 1972 (Felkenes and Schroedel 1993; Sklansky 2006). As a result, the incursion of racial minorities and women into law enforcement was met with great hostility and their respective differential treatment in the workplace (Acker 2006; Bolton 2003; Burgess-Proctor 2006; Hassell and Brandl 2009; Holder, Nee, and Ellis 2000; Jollevet 2008). However, different orientations produce diverse experiences (Feeney and Camarena 2021; Gaynor 2018; Yu 2022a). For example, White female officers will experience the workplace differently than White male officers. Likewise, Black/African American officers will experience the workplace differently than other minority officers, and those at the intersection (e.g., women of color) will have a different orientation than both White female officers and minority male officers, respectively.

Consequently, women of color would likely encounter higher degrees of workplace discrimination in comparison to men of color, as well as White women (Breslin, Pandey, and Riccucci 2017; Dodge and Pogrebin 2001; Feeney and Camarena 2021; Haarr and Morash 2004; Hamidullah and Riccucci 2017; Hsieh and Winslow 2006; Lee, Robertson, and Kim 2020; Nelson and Piatak 2021; Yu 2022a). Accordingly, this study expects women of color to have differences in experiencing race-based discrimination in comparison to men of color. Thus,

Hypothesis 3: Women of color are more likely to perceive experiencing race-based discrimination in comparison to men of color in federal law enforcement.

Data and Methods

To test these hypotheses, this study draws its sample from sworn officers employed by the largest cabinet employer of all full-time law enforcement officers in the federal domain (Brooks 2019). An online Qualtrics survey was sent to all potential research participants nationwide in 2021 and was open for 35 days with a reminder email sent mid-study. The survey link was password protected and sent by a senior representative from the Office of the Secretary describing their collaboration on the research study and encouraging maximum voluntary participation. In addition, to minimize self-selection bias, all po-

tential research participants were guaranteed anonymity and ensured their data would be statistically summarized with the responses of others and would not be attributable to any single individual. These efforts yielded an overall 11.9% response rate, an acceptable rate of return for an organizational survey of its size. Furthermore, research participants had the option to skip any question they felt uncomfortable answering. Thus, cases where participants omitted questions containing the primary research variables (e.g., race or ethnicity, gender, and experiencing race-based discrimination) were excluded from the current study, resulting in a final sample size of $N = 4,106$. Finally, due to the sheer magnitude of data collected in this broad organizational survey, questions outside the scope of the current study were not included in this article and will be discussed in separate papers.

Independent Variable

The primary independent variable in this study was *race or ethnicity*. Each race or ethnic subgroup—White (59.2%), Black/African American (6.3%), Hispanic/Latino (23.7%), Asian American (2.7%), Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander (0.6%), American Indian/Alaska Native (1%), and multiracial (6.4%)—was coded and analyzed as a nominal variable. In this study, multiracial was defined as two or more races, a standard classification typically used by the Census Bureau (2021). In addition, gender identity (0 = male [78%]; 1 = female [22%]) was interacted with race or ethnicity to provide a more accurate examination of workplace experiences. Though other classifications of gender identity were collected in this study (e.g., transgender male and transgender female), they were excluded from further analysis due to their small sample sizes, respectively.

Dependent Variables

The primary dependent variables were (1) *experiencing* race-based discrimination and (2) *reporting* race-based discrimination. They were coded as binary variables and operationalized by asking the following question: “I experienced race-based discrimination at my agency” (0 = no [80.6%]; 1 = yes [19.4%]). To mitigate individual bias, the definition of race-based dis-

crimination was contained with the survey question.³ If research participants answered yes to experiencing race-based discrimination, they were presented with a follow-up question (i.e., “Did you report it?” [0 = no (75.9%); 1 = yes (24.1%)]). To drive discussion and uncover new themes, if research participants answered no to the previous question, they were given another fixed-choice follow-up question (i.e., “Why did you not report it?”) with a selection to “write-in” an option not listed. Participants also had the ability to select more than one option. In total for those participants who did not report the matter, these included: 1 = retaliation (26.6%); 2 = nothing would be done (41.8%); 3 = ruined reputation or unwanted attention (28.9%); 4 = difficulty in proving alleged offense (1.2%); 5 = confronted alleged perpetrator (0.4%); 6 = unaware of reporting process (0.4%); and 7 = unbothered by the alleged race-based encounter (0.6%). If research participants answered yes to reporting the alleged encounter, they were provided an alternative follow-up question (i.e., “Were you satisfied with the official outcome?” (0 = no [94.7%]; 1 = yes [5.3%]) to measure procedural justice (i.e., fairness in the process that resolve disputes). See Tables 1 and 2 for a descriptive summary of the primary variables.

Analysis

A one-way ANOVA model between White officers and each minority race or ethnic subgroup respectively was generated to accurately distinguish the workplace experiences of all officers. Likewise, a supplemental ANOVA model was generated to differentiate the experiences between men and women of color. The SPSS® software platform was employed for all analyses.

Findings

Tables 3 and 4 provide the results on a one-way ANOVA and post hoc test between White officers and minority officers, regardless of gender. The post hoc comparisons using the Tukey-Kramer test found there were statistically significant differences in response between White officers and five of the minority race or ethnic sub-

³ In the survey instrument, race-based discrimination is defined as the practice of letting a person's race unfairly become a factor when deciding who receives an initial job offer, promotion, training opportunity, job assignment, compensation, or other employment benefit.

Table 1. Descriptive Summary Statistics

	Experienced Race-Based Discrimination		Reported Race-Based Discrimination		If Reported Satisfied w/Outcome	
	No (n = 3,309)	Yes (n = 797)	No (n = 603)	Yes (n = 191)	No (n = 180)	Yes (n = 10)
White	2,103	329	283	43	42	1
Male	1,651	283	247	33	32	1
Female	452	46	36	10	10	0
Hispanic	765	207	144	63	60	3
Male	599	163	112	51	48	3
Female	166	44	32	12	12	0
Multiracial	195	68	47	21	19	1
Male	146	51	32	19	17	1
Female	49	17	15	2	2	0
Black	120	140	93	47	42	5
Male	80	88	65	23	19	4
Female	40	52	28	24	23	1
Asian	81	31	21	10	10	0
Male	60	25	18	7	7	0
Female	21	6	3	3	3	0
AI/AN	28	15	10	5	5	0
Male	22	12	9	3	3	0
Female	6	3	1	2	2	0
NH/PI	17	7	5	2	2	0
Male	16	6	4	2	2	0
Female	1	1	1	0	0	0
Total %	80.6%	19.4%	75.9%	24.1%	94.7%	5.3%

Table 2. Why Officers Did Not Report

	n	%
Nothing would be done	472	41.8%
Ruined reputation or unwanted attention	326	28.9%
Retaliation	300	26.6%
Difficulty in proving alleged offense	14	1.2%
Unbothered by the alleged race-based encounter	7	0.6%
Unaware of reporting process	5	0.4%
Confronted alleged perpetrator	4	0.4%

Note. Officers were able to choose more than one response; % will not equal 100 due to rounding.

groups, suggesting that Black/African American officers (54%), American Indian/Alaska Native officers (35%), Asian officers (28%), multiracial officers (26%), and Hispanic/Latino officers (21%), respectively were more likely to perceive experiencing race-based discrimination in comparison to White officers (14%), partially

supporting hypothesis 1. There was no statistically significant difference in response between White officers and Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander officers ($p = .419$).

Regarding reporting behavior, there were statistically significant differences in response between White officers and three of the minority race or ethnic sub-

Table 3. One-Way ANOVA for Experiencing and Reporting Race-Based Discrimination

	<i>SS</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>MS</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>Sig.</i>
Experiencing race-based discrimination (N = 4,106)					
Between groups	42.079	6	7.118	48.662	.000
Within groups	599.589	4099	.146		
Total	642.297	4105			
Reporting race-based discrimination (n = 794)					
Between groups	6.628	6	1.105	6.280	.000
Within groups	138.427	787	.176		
Total	145.054	793			

Note. Significant items are in bold.

Table 4. Post Hoc for Experiencing and Reporting Race-Based Discrimination

	<i>n</i>	<i>M (SD)</i>	<i>M Diff.</i>	<i>Sig.</i>
Experiencing race-based discrimination (N = 4,106)				
Reference group				
White	2,432	.14 (.342)		
Comparison groups				
Hispanic	972	.21 (.410)	-.078	.000
Multiracial	263	.26 (.439)	-.123	.000
Black	260	.54 (.499)	-.403	.000
Asian	112	.28 (.449)	-.142	.003
AI/AN	43	.35 (.482)	-.214	.005
NH/PI	24	.29 (.464)	-.156	.419
Reporting race-based discrimination (n = 794)				
Reference group				
White	326	.13 (.339)		
Comparison groups				
Hispanic	207	.30 (.461)	-.172	.000
Black	140	.34 (.474)	-.204	.000
Multiracial	68	.31 (.465)	-.177	.027
Asian	31	.32 (.475)	-.191	.192
AI/AN	15	.33 (.488)	-.201	.536
NH/PI	7	.29 (.488)	-.154	.962

Note 1. Multiracial=two or more races; AI/AN=American Indian/Alaska Native; NH/PI=Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander.

Note 2. Significant items are in bold.

Table 5. One-Way ANOVA for Minorities Experiencing and Reporting Race-Based Discrimination

	<i>SS</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>MS</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>Sig.</i>
Experiencing race-based discrimination (n = 1,674)					
Between groups	22.374	11	2.034	10.739	.000
Within groups	314.787	1662	.189		
Total	337.161	1673			
Reporting race-based discrimination (n=468)					
Between groups	3.038	11	.276	1.283	.231
Within groups	98.158	456	.215		
Total	101.197	467			

Note. Significant item is in bold.

groups, suggesting that Black/African American officers (34%), multiracial officers (31%), and Hispanic/Latino officers (30%), respectively were more likely to report workplace discrimination if they perceived experiencing race-based discrimination in comparison to White officers (13%), partially supporting hypothesis 2. There were no statistically significant differences in response between White officers and Asian officers ($p = .192$), American Indian/Alaska Native officers ($p = .192$), and Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander officers ($p = .962$), respectively.

Likewise, Tables 5 and 6 provide the results on a supplemental one-way ANOVA and post hoc test between men and women of color. The post hoc comparisons found there were statistically significant differences in response between several combinations of minority subgroups interacting with gender. First, there were statistically significant differences in response between Black/African American male officers and three minority female subgroups. However, Black/African American male officers (52%) were more likely to perceive experiencing race-based discrimination in comparison to Hispanic/Latina officers (21%), multiracial female officers (26%), and Asian female officers (22%), respectively, rejecting hypothesis 3. There were no statistically significant differences in response between Black/African American male officers and Black/African American female officers ($p = 1.000$), American Indian/Alaska Native female officers ($p = .982$), and Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander female officers ($p = 1.000$), respectively.

On the other hand, there was a statistically signif-

icant difference in response between Black/African American female officers and three minority male subgroups, suggesting that Black/African American female officers (57%) were more likely to perceive experiencing race-based discrimination in comparison to Hispanic/Latino male officers (21%), Asian male officers (29%), and multiracial male officers (26%), respectively, partially supporting hypothesis 3. There were no statistically significant differences in response between Hispanic/Latino male officers and Hispanic/Latina officers ($p = 1.000$), multiracial female officers ($p = 1.000$), Asian female officers ($p = 1.000$), American Indian/Alaska Native female officers ($p = 1.000$), and Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander female officers ($p = .999$), respectively.

Likewise, there were no statistically significant differences in response between Asian male officers and Hispanic/Latina officers ($p = .937$), multiracial female officers ($p = 1.000$), Asian female officers ($p = 1.000$), American Indian/Alaska Native female officers ($p = 1.000$), and Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander female officers ($p = 1.000$), respectively. Similarly, there were no statistically significant differences in response between multiracial male officers and Hispanic/Latina female officers ($p = .933$), multiracial female officers ($p = 1.000$), Asian female officers ($p = 1.000$), American Indian/Alaska Native female officers ($p = 1.000$), and Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander female officers ($p = 1.000$), respectively. Moreover, there were no statistically significant differences in response between American Indian/Alaska Native male officers and any of the minority female officers, as well as between Native Hawaiian/

Table 6. Post Hoc for Minorities Experiencing Race-Based Discrimination (n=1,674)

	n	M (SD)	M Diff.	Sig.
Reference group 1				
Black male	168	.52 (.501)		
Comparison groups				
Hispanic female	210	.21 (.408)	.314	.000
Black female	92	.57 (.498)	-.041	1.000
Multiracial female	66	.26 (.441)	.266	.002
Asian female	27	.22 (.424)	.302	.040
AI/AN female	9	.33 (.500)	.190	.982
NH/PI female	2	.50 (.707)	.024	1.000
Reference group 2				
Hispanic male	762	.21 (.410)		
Comparison groups				
Hispanic female	210	.21 (.408)	.003	1.000
Black female	92	.57 (.498)	-.351	.000
Multiracial female	66	.26 (.441)	-.044	1.000
Asian female	27	.22 (.424)	-.008	1.000
AI/AN female	9	.33 (.500)	-.119	1.000
NH/PI female	2	.50 (.707)	-.286	.999
Reference group 3				
Asian male	85	.29 (.458)		
Comparison groups				
Hispanic female	210	.21 (.408)	.085	.937
Black female	92	.57 (.498)	-.271	.002
Multiracial female	66	.26 (.441)	.037	1.000
Asian female	27	.22 (.424)	.072	1.000
AI/AN female	9	.33 (.500)	-.039	1.000
NH/PI female	2	.50 (.707)	-.206	1.000
Reference group 4				
Multiracial male	197	.26 (.439)		
Comparison groups				
Hispanic female	210	.21 (.408)	.049	.993
Black female	92	.57 (.498)	-.306	.000
Multiracial female	66	.26 (.441)	.001	1.000
Asian female	27	.22 (.424)	.037	1.000
AI/AN female	9	.33 (.500)	-.074	1.000
NH/PI female	2	.50 (.707)	-.241	1.000
Reference group 5				
AI/AN male	34	.35 (.485)		
Comparison groups				
Hispanic female	210	.21 (.408)	.143	.828
Black female	92	.57 (.498)	-.212	.386
Multiracial female	66	.26 (.441)	.095	.997
Asian female	27	.22 (.424)	.131	.991
AI/AN female	9	.33 (.500)	.020	1.000
NH/PI female	2	.50 (.707)	-.147	1.000
Reference group 6				
NH/PI male	22	.27 (.456)		
Comparison groups				
Hispanic female	210	.21 (.408)	.063	1.000
Black female	92	.57 (.498)	-.292	.168
Multiracial female	66	.26 (.441)	.015	1.000
Asian female	27	.22 (.424)	.051	1.000
AI/AN female	9	.33 (.500)	-.061	1.000
NH/PI female	2	.50 (.707)	-.227	1.000

Note 1. Multi-racial = two or more races; AI/AN=American Indian/Alaska Native; NH/PI=Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander.

Note 2. Significant items are in bold.

Pacific Islander male officers and any of minority female officers. Finally, post hoc comparisons were not employed with reporting workplace discrimination between officers of color interacting with gender because the findings from ANOVA were not statistically significant.

Discussion and Conclusion

Although the findings in this study were not a complete surprise, they continue to demonstrate the barriers minority officers experience in the workplace. It sought answers to several research questions unique to federal law enforcement, resulting in both practical and theoretical implications to policing and the field of public administration. First, how often do federal officers experience race-based discrimination in the workplace? And are there differences between reports of perceived racial discrimination among White officers and the various minority race or ethnic subgroups? Unfortunately, almost one-fifth (19.4%) of the officers in this study encountered perceived instances of race-based discrimination, suggesting that law enforcement executives and leaders in the federal domain have more work to do in this area if they hope to be the model employer that the federal government espouses to be. While past research had found varying degrees of reverse discrimination allegations (e.g., Jollevet 2008; Riccucci and Saldivar 2014), with this study being no exception, all minority race or ethnic subgroups in the current study were more likely to perceive experiencing race-based discrimination in comparison to White officers, though only five out of six subgroups were statistically significant. While most of the policing literature has understandably focused on Black/African American officers, the significant differences in response between other minority race or ethnic subgroups in this study and White officers indicate the need for expanding the dialogue on workplace experiences beyond one specific group, especially since Asian and Hispanic/Latino officers represent the greatest increase among all minority groups in federal law enforcement (Brooks 2019).

Furthermore, creating an inclusive workplace environment has never been more pressing than it is today, underscored by highly visible campaigns such as *#MeToo*, *#BlackLivesMatter*, *#StopAsianHate*, and other historic movements for racial and immigrant justice. Although workplace discrimination has long been re-

garded as a significant barrier to creating such environments (Berry-James et al. 2021; Lee 2020; Oliver 2017; Rubin and Alteri 2019; Yu and Lee 2020), law enforcement executives and leaders must continue to aggressively root out the inherent structural racism embedded in the policing culture that serve as barriers to equal opportunity, an undeniable responsibility that has not yet been fully realized. Furthermore, “by advancing equity across the federal government, [agencies] can create opportunities for the improvement of communities that have been historically underserved,” (Executive Order 13985) which further echo the principles from the Social Equity Manifesto (developed by a group of scholars at the Minnowbrook at 50 conference) that calls upon the field of public administration to “engage in intentional, [sustained], active, and ethical efforts to serve and safeguard all people, especially the most vulnerable in society” (Blessett et al. 2019, 296–297).

Likewise, this article focused on reporting behavior to determine if federal officers who perceived experiencing race-based discrimination reported the encounter. If no, why not? If yes, were they satisfied with the outcome? Consistent with past research, a vast majority (75.9%) of the officers did not report the unlawful conduct through official channels for several reasons. For one, they believed nothing would be done by the agency and accepted the unlawful conduct as part of the organizational culture in law enforcement. However, culture had different meanings for different race or ethnic groups. For example, while many White (male) officers claimed reverse discrimination as the new culture in federal policing due to diversity efforts on the part of the agency, minority officers attributed their views of agency inaction to the old yet monolithic White culture that reigned supreme for decades. Likewise, officers feared a ruined reputation (or unwanted attention) that might impact future opportunities, as well as retaliatory actions by their supervisor and peers had they reported the discriminatory act. Despite reality to both viewpoints, law enforcement executives and leaders must do more to promote an inclusive culture.

For those officers who did report the unlawful encounter, again, all minority race or ethnic subgroups in this study were more likely to report race-based discrimination in comparison to White officers, although only three subgroups were statistically significant (i.e., Hispanic/Latino, Black/African American, and multi-racial). However, a resounding margin (94.7%) were

not satisfied with the outcome, which further corroborates why so many officers believed nothing would be done and did not report initially. The current study did not expand upon this line of inquiry beyond this one question. However, future research should continue this stream of study and examine the reporting process for procedural justice (or injustice).

Finally, the last question from this study sought to determine if women of color experienced higher degrees of race-based discrimination than men of color. Employing the framework of intersectionality, the responses were mixed by reference group and significance. Specifically, only Black/African American female officers were more likely to perceive experiencing race-based discrimination in comparison to men of color, namely Asian male officers, multiracial male officers, and Hispanic/Latino male officers. In comparison, only Black/African American male officers were more likely to perceive experiencing race-based discrimination in comparison to Hispanic/Latina officers, multiracial female officers, and Asian female officers. This suggests that subgroup differences of race or ethnicity interacting with gender portrayed a more accurate depiction of the experience officers encounter in federal policing. On the other hand, women of color might struggle to determine whether instances of race-based discrimination were actually related to race, gender, or a combination thereof. Therefore, questions specifically about race-based discrimination might be difficult to report using an intersectional perspective and may explain the limited support for hypothesis 3. Unfortunately, the current study is unable to further address these variances. Thus, future research should continue this stream of scholarship to explain the differences between men and women of color within racial or ethnic subgroups.

Despite the counterargument, these findings have theoretical implications because oppositional frameworks such as intersectionality incorporate “a wider array of knowledge into the discipline [and can] influence administrative actions, particularly as information is situated within the real-world context of public administrations research and practice” (Blessett 2020, 2). Therefore, this article responds to the call to expand beyond traditional perspectives (such as representative bureaucracy) and integrate other theoretical frameworks such as intersectionality because it embraces differences and multiplicity

in the workplace beyond the standard male-female or White-Black orientation (Blessett 2020; Breslin, Pandey, and Riccucci 2017).

Likewise, these findings have theoretical implications to the study and opposition of structural racism because eliminating race-based discrimination needs to remain at the forefront in public administration scholarship when examining the inequities of the administrative state (Agho 2022; Alexander and Stivers 2020; Blessett 2020; Demeester and Lamagdeleine 2016; Gooden 2014; Lee 2020; Yu 2022a). If not, the “legitimacy of the administrative state [will] constantly be threatened by systems of domination that seek to marginalize people” from underserved communities in the public workforce (Blessett 2020, 1). In addition, according to Berry-James et al. (2020, 5), the field of public administration is at a “reckoning [to] step up to the plate” because “structural racism and anti-Black racism have become embedded practices impacting outcomes in the economy, housing, education, healthcare, environment, criminal and juvenile justice, politics, transportation, and more,” leading to racial inequities across public organizations such as federal law enforcement. As the fourth pillar of public administration (i.e., equity), scholarship must continue to advance the effects of racism and discrimination in the workplace to promote change and awareness.

Despite the importance of these findings, they are not without limitations. First, the current study represents those federal officers from one cabinet organization. This limits the sampling frame and may not be generalizable to all federal officers or law enforcement agencies. However, as stated previously, they are the largest cabinet employer of all full-time law enforcement officers in the federal domain (Brooks 2019). In addition, the sample was overrepresented by both women and racial minorities apart from Black/African American officers in comparison to current employment figures (Brooks 2019). Thus, caution should be taken when interpreting these results. For example, 22% of the officers in this study were women, although they comprise just 12% of female officers in this department and 13.7% of all women in federal law enforcement (Brooks 2019). Likewise, 40.8% of the officers in this study were non-White in comparison to 37.9% of all racial minorities in federal law enforcement, with the largest

discrepancy in overrepresentation occurring among those who identify as Hispanic or multiracial (Brooks 2019). This is not a complete surprise due to the primary mission of the department. On the other hand, 5.6% of the officers in this study were Black/African American in comparison to 6.1% within this department and 10.5% among all Black/African American officers in federal law enforcement (Brooks 2019). The latter is particularly relevant because their underrepresentation may mask the magnitude of race-based discrimination in the department and the field. Despite the over- and underrepresentation by the independent variables, this study remains one of few in public administration scholarship that captures intersectionality using gender and more than two ethnic or racial subgroups.

Third, the proportions of officers from Asian American, Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, and American Indian/Alaska Native subgroups were relatively small in this study and became smaller and less statistically significant when parsed into gendered subgroups. However, despite their small sample sizes respectively, their inclusion is important as most studies omit these race or ethnic subgroups. When data becomes available, future studies might consider oversampling these subgroups to achieve a more accurate inclusive intersectionality approach. Fourth, the perceived encounters of race-based discrimination do not necessarily express actual instances of proven workplace discrimination and may be subject to personal bias. However, examining perceived discrimination is an appropriate mode of study because it provides a complete picture of workplace practices and “can help scholars identify pressing issues of workplace discrimination and potential remedies to them in a way that supplements the study of [proven] discrimination” (Lee 2020, 3). Furthermore, while this study focuses on a particular occupational workgroup, it has far-reaching implications for other federal workgroups advancing inclusion and equity across the federal government. Despite these limitations, this study reveals that all law enforcement agencies have room for improvement regardless of intergovernmental level and must hold themselves accountable to a discrimination-free environment.

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Rising Gender Inequities in India: The Case of Authoritarian Patriarchy*

Meghna Sabharwal

In 2014, India elected a populist government, the Bharatiya Janata Party, headed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi. In line with other populist leaders, such as the former U.S. President, Donald J. Trump, President Jair Bolsonaro of Brazil, Prime Minister Viktor Orbán of Hungary, and President Erdoğan of Turkey, Narendra Modi has brought about a rise in Hindu nationalism that promulgates values steeped in fundamental religious practices promoting the interests of the majority Hindu community at the expense of religious minority groups and marginalized and disenfranchised people of lower castes. A rise in gendered conservative norms deeply embedded in patriarchy and ethnonationalism has created a clear division in gender roles in nation-building. This study will utilize a social equity framework to examine ways in which systems of oppression, inequities, discrimination, and bias are maintained across gender, caste, and religion and perpetuated under the name of authoritarian patriarchy in India.

Gender Roles in India: A Historical Overview

The symbolic role played by women in Indian society, who are elevated to the level of goddesses with ultimate divine powers, is juxtaposed with how women are often treated. Womanhood in India is a construction of archetypal roles embodied by various goddesses revered by Hindus—these roles typically include those of mother (*mata*), nurturer, life-giver, protector, wife, daughter, and provider. These goddesses are always associated with a male figure and shown as the wife, daughter, sister, or mother. At the same time, according to a recent survey of 30,000 adults in India, 64% of women and men overwhelmingly agree that a wife must obey her husband, while close to 25% believe that women face discrimination (Evans et al. 2022). Thus, on the surface, women in India are revered, while their roles in society are, in reality, deeply gendered and restricted to the familial responsibilities of childbearing and caregiving (Bose 2010).

To understand the role of women, one must have some insight into the ancient texts and scriptures that form the basis of the society's structure and organization and the ways in which upper-caste masculine social dominance (Brahmanical patriarchy) is maintained. While it is beyond the scope of this article to go into any depth on this subject, a brief account of the rules and regulations of the time as they relate to caste and gender structures

are highlighted. The Hindu classical texts and religious scriptures and the two greatest epics (the *Mahabharata* and *Ramayana*), laid out the role of women in the society with an emphasis on *pativrata* (devotion/loyalty of a wife to her husband). However, these texts also denounce the dowry and disrespect of women (Adhikari 2020a; Gupta 1994). The scriptures and texts are also written in Sanskrit and open to interpretation, often by Hindu fundamentalists, who use them to their own benefit.

India's moral and ethical code is described in an ancient text written around the second century BC, the *Manu Smriti* (also known as the *Mānava-Dhârmashastra* or the "Textbook of Human Ethics"). It was written by Manu, a mythological figure believed to be the son of God Brahma and the first human on earth (Jaishankar and Halder 2019; Olivelle and Olivelle 2005). Hinduism is heavily influenced by the principles described in the 2,700 verses and 12 chapters of the *Manu Smriti* along with other texts, such as the Vedas, Upanishads, *Bhagavad Gita*, 18 Puranas, Dharmashastras, *Mahabharata*, and *Ramayana*, which provide the basis for the social, cultural, political, and religious practices that constitute the "Hindu way of life." The *Manu Smriti* is often criticized by scholars and statesmen, who blame the current suffering of women in India and the structures that continue to divide the society into four castes (*varnas*) on

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the sexist and casteist description in the text (Adhikari 2020a; Elst 2008; Mahey 2003). The four castes include the Brahmins (the highest caste and the writers of these texts), Kshatriyas¹ (the second caste made up of the warriors), Vaishyas (the third caste made up of the traders/merchants), and Shudras (the fourth caste made up of the laborers). In addition to these, the Scheduled Castes (Dalits) and the Scheduled Tribes (Adivasis) are classified as Avarna (outside the *varna*/caste system).

The *Manu Smriti* was not translated until 1794, when William Jones, a British judge of the Bengal Supreme Court, came across this ancient book. With the help of Sanskrit scholars, he translated the text and incorporated components of it into Hindu law. The significance of the text is described by Savarkar (2000) as follows:

The Manusmriti is that scripture which is most worshipable after Vedas for our Hindu Nation and which from ancient times has become the basis of our culture-customs, thought and practice. This book, for centuries, has codified the spiritual and divine march of our nation. Even today, the rules which are followed by crores (millions) of Hindus in their lives and practice are based on the Manusmriti. Today The Manusmriti is the Hindu Law. That is fundamental. (Savarkar 2000, 415–416)

The majority of the text describes the duties and roles of the first two *varnas*, while only two of the 10 verses are dedicated to Vaishyas and Shudras. Clearly, the focus of the text was to provide guidelines to maintain a Brahmanical patriarchy, in which upper caste-men safeguard the purity of upper-caste women by controlling their sexuality to prevent their union with men of lower castes. Men were also given authority over women's conduct based on the concept that "the wicked and essential nature of women then must be subordinated and conquered by the virtue of the ideal wife. Once the tension between 'nature' and 'culture' is resolved women can emerge triumphant as paragons of virtue" (Chakravarti 1993, 583). Chapter 9 of the text provides instructions for men to always guard their women, writing explicitly that women should not be

given any independence. Fathers protect and guard them in their childhood, husbands in their youth, and sons in their old age. This form of social control and paternalism is evident in today's India, where moral police (or Anti-Romeo) squads patrol the streets of the largest state Uttar Pradesh to provide security to women. Furthermore, the *Manu Smriti* legitimizes the oppression and exploitation of lower-caste women.

I will return to the discussion of these extreme measures in the section describing violence against women (which can be triggering for some readers, in which case I not only provide trigger warnings, but also encourage taking pauses and walking away if necessary and returning to the discussion at your own pace). It is important to note that gender and caste-based violence against women is an age-old problem, and much has been documented by scholars from the global south (see Bansode 2021; Datta and Satija 2020; Deshpande 2002, 2007; Kumar 2021; Rege 1996, 1998; Sabharwal and Sonalkar 2015). Thus, the oppression faced by women belonging to lower caste and religious minority groups is not a result of the current government, but as highlighted in this article, are exacerbated by the majoritarian and authoritarian political forces that rule India today.

To examine some of the gender inequities that currently exist in Indian society and are deepening under the current political regime, this study will apply Susan Gooden's (2014) social equity framework to build on a three-pronged approach that emphasizes (a) identifying the inequity/ies (name), (b) examining the root causes of the inequity/ies (blame), and (c) suggesting ways to take meaningful action to eliminate the inequity/ies (claim). I also utilize the intersectionality lens (see research by Crenshaw 1989, 1991) to study complex issues of gender, caste, religion, and class in India. The next section will identify the major current issues and causes of gender inequities in India and suggest ways forward.

Gender Inequities in India (Identifying the Inequities)

India is the largest democracy in the world and espouses

¹ In full disclosure, I was born into a Kshatriya Hindu family and have enjoyed the privileges of belonging to a dominant upper-caste section of the society where I did not have to live at the intersections of class, caste, and religion (minoritized and oppressed groups). When I emigrated to the United States for graduate education, I traversed from a state of privilege to one of underprivilege. As a foreign-born Asian minority female with an accent, I immediately recognized my marginalized status in the society, and my lack of privilege was evident in my experience of otherness. I also acknowledge that it is not my place to retell the stories of the oppressed, and it is not my intent to co-opt the struggles faced by Dalit women and minorities. While I write from a point of privilege, I am deeply concerned by the state of women at the intersection of caste, religion, and class in current day India.

the values of freedom and equality of rights to its citizens. By several indications, violence against women (including rape and murder) are on the rise, especially among women of lower castes and minority communities. This study will also examine the most recent ban on the hijab and the lack of religious freedom in a secular nation alongside the issue of declining labor participation.

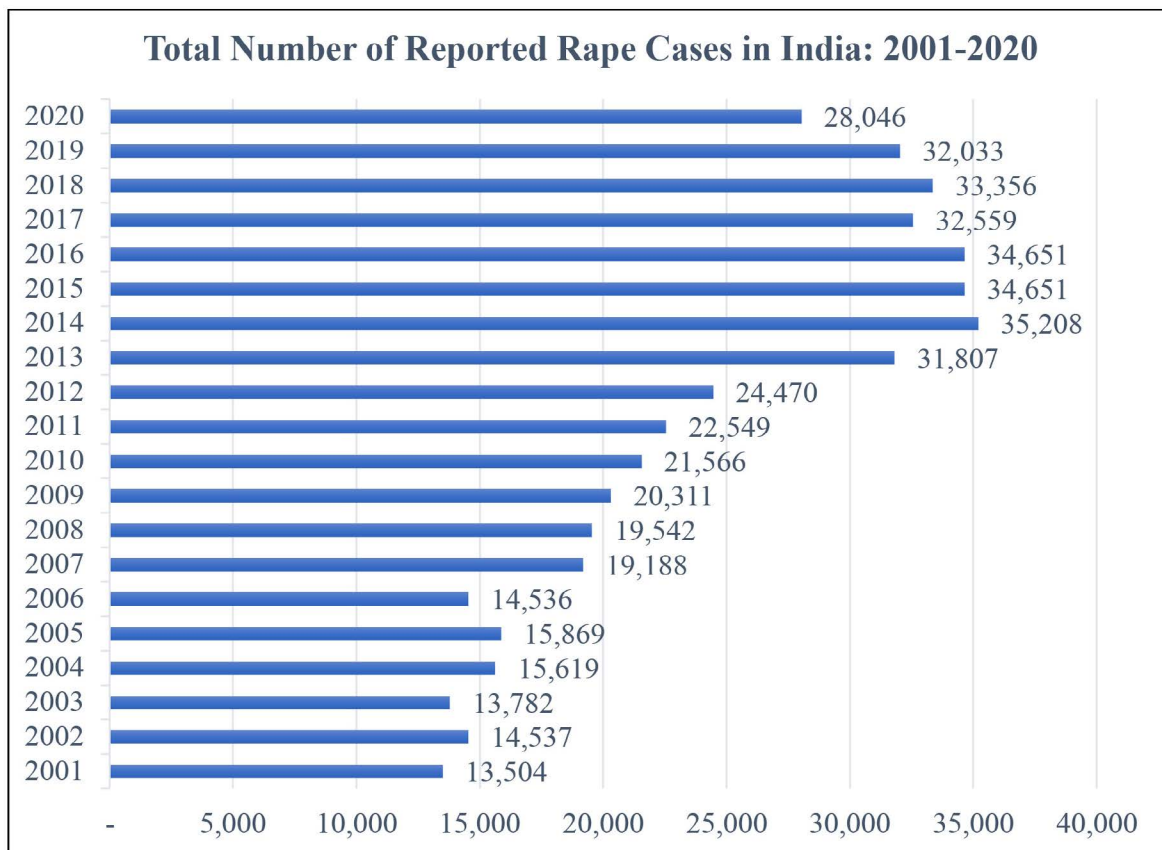
Violence Against Women

In 2015, the United Nations (UN) developed and adopted the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), among which two goals explicitly focus on social equity and justice. In particular, Goal 5 calls for gender equality, with the aim of empowering women and girls by ending all forms of violence and discrimination by 2030, while Goal 10 broadly focuses on reducing inequities among the most vulnerable populations, including women, Indigenous people, people with disabilities, children, and older people (UN 2021). Progress on both of these goals is assessed here using data

that track the number of violent crimes against women and against the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes.

The number of reported rape cases escalated in 2014 (coinciding with the election of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) government), with an 11% jump from 2013 to 2014. The number has been rising ever since, though there was a decrease in 2020. Figure 1 shows a graph depicting the total number of rape cases reported across all states in India from 2001 to 2020. Many political leaders across states have responded to the rise in the number of rape cases by curtailing the autonomy of women. Shivraj Chouhan, the chief minister of Madhya Pradesh, a large state in Central India with a strong BJP majority, suggested that women register with the local police every time they choose to step out of their homes. Additionally, Yogi Adityanath (a Hindu monk), chief minister of the largest and most populous state in India, Uttar Pradesh, and that with the highest rates of violence against women, ordered the creation of Anti-

Figure 1. Total number of reported rape cases in India: 2001–2020.



Data sources: <https://data.gov.in/> and the National Crime Records Bureau (<https://ncrb.gov.in/en/crime-india>).

Romeo squads to protect women (Krishnan 2021). These vigilante groups are made up of police officers and are notorious for harassing consenting couples and arresting Muslim men suspected of dating Hindu women.

[Heavy Content: Trigger Warning] Asifa Bano, an eight-year-old Muslim girl belonging to a nomad tribe, the Bakarwals, in the village Kathua in Jammu, went missing on January 10, 2018. Her father filed a complaint with the police, and after a week-long search, her body was found in a nearby forest. The results of the postmortem indicated that she was drugged, raped repeatedly, hit on the head twice, and strangled to death before her body was discarded in the jungle. The girl was abducted and taken to a secluded Devasthan (a place of worship for a Hindu goddess), where she was held hostage for four days before being brutally killed. With extreme pressure from the media and civil society, the custodian of the temple Sanji Ram, a retired bureaucrat and member of the right-wing Hindu fascist group Hindu Ekta Manch, along with seven other Hindu men, four of whom were police officers, were arrested (Nigam 2019). Sanji Ram, the mastermind of the plot, and two others were sentenced to life in prison, while three others were sentenced to five years in prison for their role in destroying evidence. One was a minor and tried in juvenile court, while Sanji Ram's son was acquitted on the basis of inconclusive evidence. Two of the men sentenced to five years in prison were released on bail in December 2021. The motive underlying this monstrous act was to create fear and terrorize the poor nomadic Muslim tribe in Jammu in order to drive them out of the region. The recent bail of two of the perpetrators and the support received from members of the BJP exposes the deep-rooted fascism, misogyny, toxic masculinity, and Hindu hyper-nationalism rampant in India today.

Dalit women are among the largest socially segregated groups in the world and are extremely disenfranchised based on the intersectionality of gender, caste, and class identities (Sabharwal et al. 2015). In fact, they exist outside the *varna* system of social hierarchy described earlier in the article and are relegated to the lowest of the lowest social order in Indian society. Accordingly, they continue to be subject to untouchability by the upper castes (Singh and Vashistha 2018). Dalits manually scavenge human waste with their bare hands, cremate dead bodies, and skin dead animals, and for centuries, they have experienced oppres-

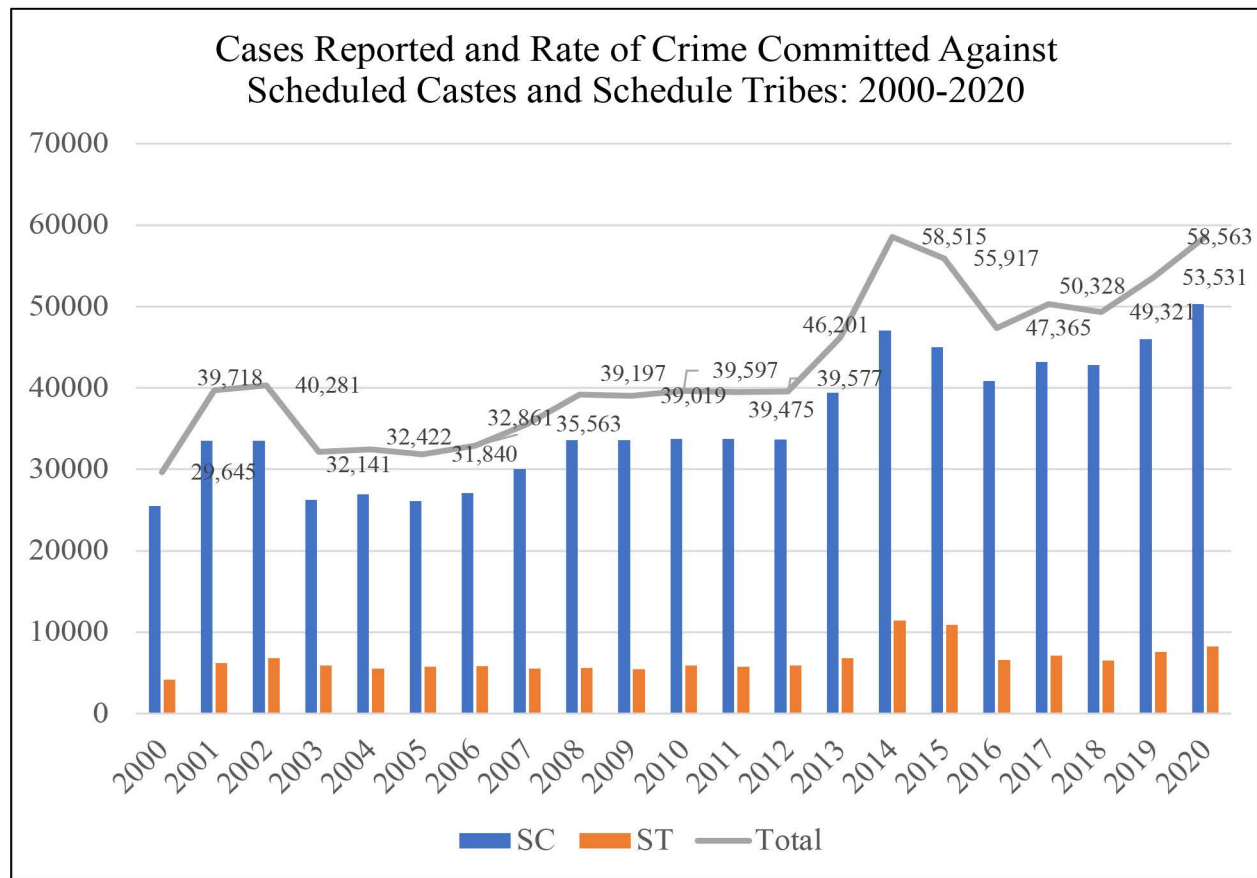
sion, exploitation, violence, and colonization from the outside invaders and the upper caste. Article 17 of the Indian Constitution abolished untouchability and provides equal rights to all citizens, while Article 15 prohibits "discrimination on grounds of religion, race, caste, sex, and place of birth, and Article 16 on additional grounds of descent and residence" (Mittal 1965, 424) in public employment. Despite these legal protections, caste is deeply entrenched in the social, cultural, economic, and political fabric of the nation and provides the foundation for the discrimination, harassment, and violence experienced by Dalits on an ongoing basis. The most ardent champion for the rights of Dalits was the framer of the Indian Constitution, and a Dalit himself, Dr. B. R. Ambedkar, who fought hard to abolish untouchability in India. On December 25, 1927,² he publicly burned the *Manu Smriti*, which he saw as a symbol of the oppression, inequality, and injustice experienced by women and Dalits.

Crime data from the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) indicate that crimes against Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, who constitute 25% of India's population, are on the rise (see Figure 2). As shown in Figure 2, there was a 21% increase in the crimes reported against the most disadvantaged groups in India from 2013 to 2014. The number continued to rise after 2014, with a decline reported in 2016, before a peak was reached in 2020. Over the past two decades, crimes against Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes have risen by 50%. While these data are unavailable by gender, the trends reported are concerning.

The sexual violence experienced by Dalit women is legitimized in the *Manu Smriti*, which states that "A Brahman, Kshatriya, or Vaishya Man can sexually exploit any shudra woman (Manusmriti IX.25)" (Mahey 2003, 150). According to a recent report by the NCRB (2019), approximately 10 Dalit women were raped in India every day. Such cases are countless, and most go unreported or are dropped due to the stigma, shame, and blame associated with rape. [Heavy Content: Trigger Warning] The rape and murder of a nine-year-old Dalit girl on August 3, 2021, in New Delhi is among the most recent of the heinous violent crimes against Dalit girls/women that led to several days of protests by the Dalit community across the nation. The girl was raped by a Hindu Priest (of high caste and a protector of religious values), who forcibly cremated her body despite protest by the parents

² The day is now celebrated as *Manusmriti Dahan Divas* (Crematorium for *Manusmriti*), a day of emancipation and empowerment for the Dalits and women.

Figure 2. Cases reported and rates of crime committed against Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes: 2000–2020.



Source: National Crime Records Bureau (<https://ncrb.gov.in/en/crime-india>).

of the victim. Justification of the rape and killing of Dalit women is a form of dominance exhibited by the upper caste to maintain social order and purity (Banarjee 2016) and is part of the hegemonic Brahmanical patriarchal discourse (Pandey and Mishra 2021).

Former Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh was the first to compare the situation of Dalits in India to Apartheid in South Africa (Ghatak and Ugodu 2012; Khobragade 2014). While such ideologies have always existed in Indian society, they are currently being fueled by a Hindutva (Hindu nationalist) state in which several BJP ministers are perpetrators and facilitators of a Brahmanical patriarchy fraught with misogynistic belief systems that blame women for rape. One BJP member

of legislative assembly (MLA) suggested that rape can be prevented if girls are taught *sanskaar* (values and culture), while emphasizing that it is not the responsibility of the *shasan* (government) or *talwar* (sword or might) (Adhikari 2020b). Here again, we see the influence of religious texts suggesting that women are promiscuous, sly, and evil and that their bodies are objects that must be controlled (N.M. and Kuruvilla 2022).

Honor Killing

Violence against women is taking another ugly turn with the increase in the number of honor killings. This is taking place mostly in the north and northwestern states of India that have kangaroo courts, the Khap Panchayats,³ which disallow inter-caste marriage, one

³ Khap Panchayats are informal social institutions that help mediate and resolve disputes in communities or tribes and are composed of local powerful men from a high caste. While informal in nature, their decisions are binding, although they are not recognized by the Indian judicial system. They have been around since the 14th and 15th centuries as “an informal but well-established social institution in the Jat-dominated areas that fall in present-day Haryana, western Uttar Pradesh and parts of Rajasthan” (Kumar 2012, 59). For more information on the historical origins and functions of Khap Panchayats, see the works of Kumar (2012) and Singh (2014).

of the most significant reasons for honor killings in India (Dhamodharan 2020; Vishwanath and Palakonda 2011). According to Singh (2014), “Honour crimes are acts of violence, usually murder, especially committed by male family members against female family members either or, who (*sic*) are held to have brought dishonour upon the family” (28).

Honor killing is a practice most commonly found in collective and patriarchal societies that view women’s bodies as objects and a source of honor to the family/clan/community. Honor killings generally occur in response to any transgressions in the form of a pre-marital relationship, marriage outside the caste/religion, marriage within the same clan (*gotra*), relationships against the consent of the parents, adultery, or divorce. In India, honor (*izzat*) of the family/community is a burden disproportionately shouldered by women, who are usually the targets of honor killings. Khap Panchayats make most of the decisions regarding women’s clothing and freedoms. For example, they have passed diktats banning women from wearing jeans and carrying cellphones in villages in Haryana, Uttar Pradesh, and Rajasthan as jeans

and cellphones are seen as Western objects at the root of destroying the sanctity of Indian culture and values. [Heavy Content: Trigger Warning] In a recent case in Uttar Pradesh, a father beheaded his 17-year-old daughter when he found out she was in a relationship with a man of whom he did not approve. Such brutality in the name of honor killing is on the rise. According to the NCRB, “a total of 28 cases in 2014, 251 cases in 2015 and 77 cases in 2016 were reported with motive as Honour Killing (which includes cases registered under murder (section 302 IPC) & culpable homicide not amounting to murder (section 304 IPC) in the country” (Ministry of Home Affairs 2018). Khap Panchayats violate human rights and are against the democratic principles of equality, liberty, and dignity. A photograph of a Khap Panchayat is shown in Figure 3.

Honor killings violate the UN’s 1993 Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women and go against the UN SDGs set for 2030. Various reports have tracked the progress regarding the status of women based on the UN’s SDGs. India ranks 148th out of 170 countries on the global Women, Peace, and Security (WPS)

Figure 3. A Khap Panchayat (informal judicial making body), a symbol of patriarchy in India.



Index, which measures the status of women's empowerment globally (Georgetown Institute for Women, Peace and Security 2021). Additionally, the UN Development Program placed India 131st out of 189 countries on the 2019 Gender Inequality Index (GII), which ranks countries based on three key measures regarding women: reproductive health, empowerment, and labor force participation. Over the past decade, India has slipped eight spots on the GII (Human Development Reports 2020).

One of the key measures of socioeconomic well-being and a nation's success is women's participation in the labor force. Despite the tremendous growth in India's gross domestic product (GDP) over the last few decades, it has not been associated with an increase in the labor force participation rate⁴ among women (Lahoti and Swaminathan

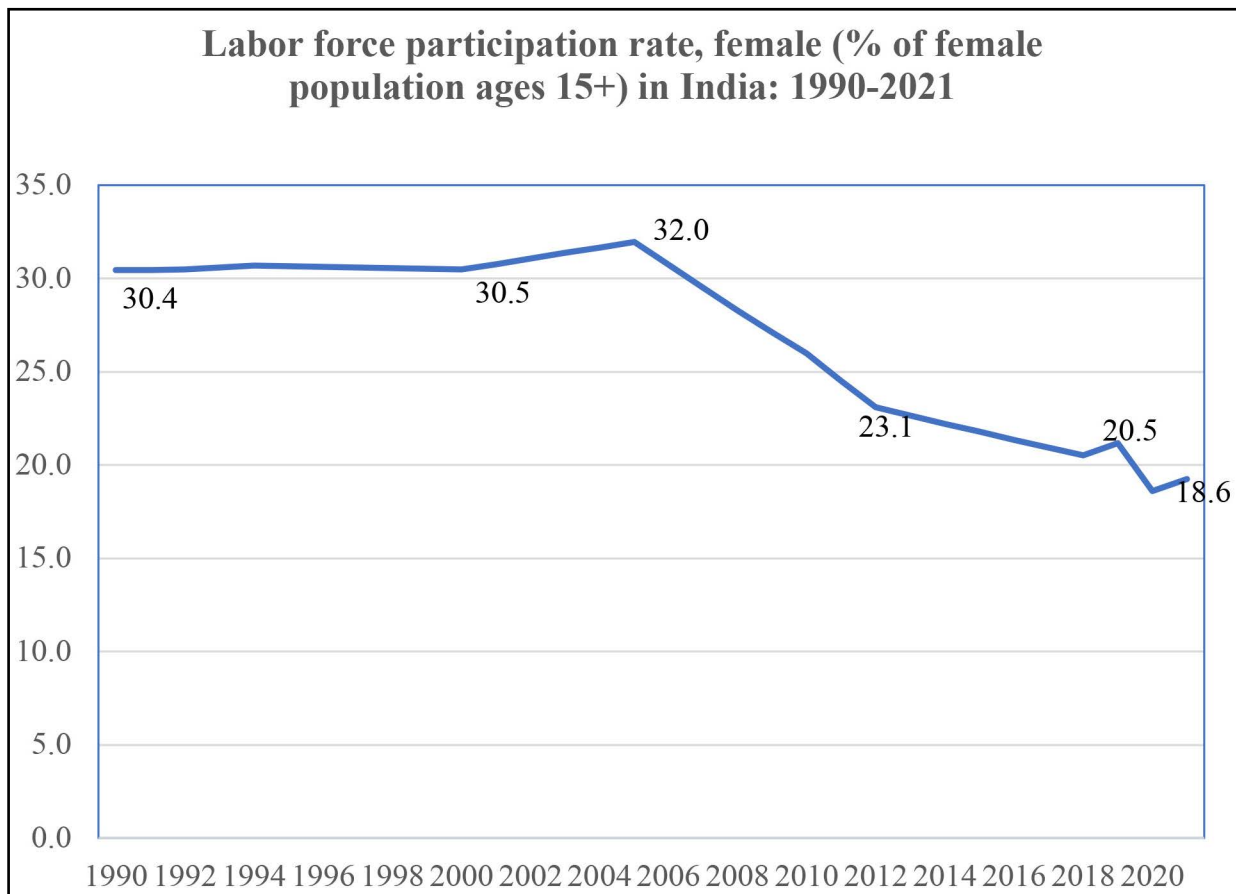
2016; Mehrotra and Parida 2017). While more than a dozen national schemes have been initiated by the BJP government to empower women, they have not helped reduce violence against women or increase their labor force participation, which, in 2020, was at its lowest rate since 1990 at 18.6% (see Figure 4). Several of these women-oriented welfare schemes also perpetuate and reinforce preexisting gender and caste norms in the society, further restricting them to domestic activities (Patnaik and Jha 2020).

Lack of Religious Freedom for Women

Freedom of Choice

Interfaith marriages between a Hindu woman and a Muslim man have become targets of a Hindu national-

Figure 4. Labor force participation rate of women (% of female population ages 15+) in India: 1990–2021.



Source: World Bank Data (<https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SL.TLF.CACT.FE.ZS?locations=IN>)

⁴ The labor force participation rate is calculated as the labor force divided by the total working-age population. The working-age population is defined as including people aged 15 to 64 (OECD, <https://data.oecd.org/emp/labour-force-participation-rate.htm>).

ist political movement called “Love jihad,” a conspiracy theory that alleges that Muslim men are coercing Hindu women into marriage and forcibly converting them to Islam (Tyagi and Sen 2020). This has triggered the passage of anti-conversion laws in Uttar Pradesh, Himachal Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, and Orissa that ban religious conversion for the purposes of marriage (Torri 2020). Marriage between a Muslim man and a Hindu woman is under strict scrutiny under Modi’s Hindutva regime and is in many cases being stopped at the altar (Torri 2020). While a marriage between a Hindu man and a Muslim woman is seen as a union of love, the reverse is considered a crime.

The Case of Love Jihad: Shafin Jahan vs. Asokan K.M. and Ors.

[Heavy Content: Trigger Warning] In 2018, the Supreme Court of India upheld the religious freedom, liberty, and autonomy of a young woman named Hadiya in the southern state of Kerala. Born to Hindu parents, Akhila Ashokan (a name given by her parents) chose to convert to Islam and was married to Shafin Jahan, a Muslim man, of her own free will. It should be noted that her decision to follow a religion of her choice preceded her marriage and was not a result of her wedding to Shafin. The parents of the girl filed a lawsuit with the Kerala High Court stating that their 24-year-old daughter was brainwashed and coerced into marriage—a case of Love jihad (Tyagi and Sen 2020). Her father alleged that Hadiya’s husband had ties with Islamic extremist groups and had plans to use her as a human bomb in Syria. While these allegations were baseless, the court annulled the marriage performed in accordance with Islamic traditions as a “sham.” Hadiya was forced to separate from her husband and ordered to live with her parents, who attained legal guardianship over her on the pretext that she was incapable of acting on her own behalf and making informed decisions despite being an adult. She was not allowed to meet with anyone or go to college, where she was studying to be a homeopathic doctor. The case was taken before the highest court in the land, the Supreme Court, which under Article 25 ruled that “all persons are equally entitled to freedom of conscience and the right freely to profess, practise and propagate religion” (Kalidasan 2021, 55). Additionally, the right to marry a per-

son of one’s choice is guaranteed under Articles 19 and 21 and is an integral part of an individual’s “core zone of privacy.” In this case, the Supreme Court upheld the right of a woman to marry a person of her choice as well as the right to practice a religion of one’s choosing, viewing it as a case of love and not jihad.

The current wave of Hindutva has politicized religion, and the rights of women and minorities are under constant attack. Krishnan (2021) argues that the right of a woman to choose who she wants to marry is a fundamental human right and that the denial of this right is a violation against a woman’s autonomy and “the least acknowledged form of gender-based violence in India” (20). This kind of thinking and protectionist ideology goes back to the *Mānava-Dhârmashastra*, in which women were not provided any independence and were always under the watchful eye of a male figure. Religious freedom and secularism are backsliding in India, and Hindutva is becoming the unifying force against marginalized groups, especially Muslims, Christians, and Dalit women.

The Ban of the Hijab

The fundamental right to practice one’s religion is currently being challenged across states in India that are banning the hijab for women in educational institutions (Santhosh and Paleri 2021). Since 2014, violence and hate crimes against Muslim women have been on the rise, with the hijab at the center of the debate. In the southern state of Karnataka, Muslim girls are banned from wearing a hijab in educational institutions. A three-judge bench in Karnataka upheld a ban in March of 2022 stating that the hijab is not “essential” to the practice of Islam and violates the uniform dress code (Mateen 2022). The case was brought before the court by a group of Muslim girls from a government college in Udupi, Karnataka, who were barred from entering their classrooms in hijabs. The ruling is now being challenged in the Supreme Court. The fear is that the Karnataka state verdict will further the wave of Islamophobia around the country, with several states seeing similar bans.

India is home to 200 million Muslims constituting 13% of the population in a majority Hindu nation (81%). Religious minorities are increasingly feeling threatened under the Modi government due to movements and acts like Love jihad, the ban on the hijab, the Citizenship Amendment Act of 2020,⁵ rising commu-

⁵ The Citizenship Amendment Act of 2020 fast-tracks citizenship for non-Muslim persecuted minorities from Pakistan, Afghanistan, and Bangladesh, and is discriminatory in nature as it excludes Muslims and Jews and only includes persecuted migrants that are Hindus, Sikhs, Buddhists, Jains, Parsis, and Christians (Ratha 2021).

Figure 5. Visual representations of a ghoonghat worn by a Hindu woman on the left and a hijab worn by a Muslim woman on the right.



nal violence, and hate speech by Hindu religious leaders and politicians. Several journalists and activists are currently serving jail time on the charges of sedition and freedom of speech is heavily curtailed, which forms the basis of a thriving democracy. India has slipped eight points to its lowest ever ranking of 150 out of 180 countries on Reporter's Without Borders, World Press Freedom Index (Reporters Without Borders 2022). These all represent attempts to discriminate against Muslims and erase their voices through exclusionary politics and ideologies (Ochab 2022). In an in-depth ethnographic study of hijabi women, Rumaney and Sriram (2021) found that the veil is seen as a symbol of modesty, empowerment, self-efficacy, and resistance against the rising anti-Muslim rhetoric in India.

According to a survey undertaken by Pew Research Center, approximately 60% of Hindu women say they cover their heads in public compared to 89% of Muslim women (Salazar and Sahgal 2022). If courts decide to ban the hijab, they should also ban the ghoonghat, a form of *purdah* (veil) worn by many married Hindu women in the north and west regions of India. Figure 5 shows an image of a ghoonghat worn by a Hindu woman (on the left) next to that of a hijab worn by a Muslim woman (on the right). There are striking similarities between the two, with both women covering their heads and most of their faces (except their eyes). While a Hindu woman's ghoonghat is seen as an artifact of her honor, a Muslim woman's hijab is seen as

a symbol of terrorism. Thus, it should be asked why we do not feel threatened seeing a Hindu woman in a ghoonghat, while we feel fear seeing a Muslim woman wearing a hijab. The establishment of uniform clothing standards and practices in educational institutions can infringe on the religious freedoms of individuals and is a violation of India's secularism.

Causes of Gender Inequities in India (Blaming the Inequities)

While the preceding section discussed the problems regarding gender inequities in India, this section discusses some of the key reasons for these widespread inequities (Gooden's second step in her social equity framework). Gooden (2020) points out the nervousness among governments globally to address issues of inequities, asserting that "Nervous areas of government are commonly described as uncomfortable, difficult, challenging, or sensitive" (1). For a nation to thrive, it is vital for governments to face and address these uncomfortable issues head-on. In the context of India, caste, class, gender, and religion are these uncomfortable issues and are the root cause of most of the increasing inequities in a BJP-led government with a Hindutva agenda (Banerjee 2016; Gopinath 2020; Kaul 2021). Hindutva is not only a cultural phenomenon but also inextricably intertwined with the political, social, and economic aspects of India.

Brahmanical Patriarchy

Hindutva is rooted in Brahmanical philosophy, which aims to maintain a social dominance based on gender and caste hierarchy, with women seen as objects to be controlled and punished. In the Brahmanical texts, women are viewed as being at the heart of maintaining the caste hierarchy and are thus prevented from marrying men from lower castes (Chakravarti 1993). The path to salvation was codified in the religious texts that laid out the principles of *pativrata*, according to which a wife's moral duty is to serve her husband and maintain the social order by marrying within the caste. Women not only internalized but also accepted and perpetuated these ideologies rooted in religion, morality, and ethics regarding right and wrong. The justification of violence against women is thus entrenched in the Brahmanical patriarchy, a system in which the "purity of women ensured the purity of caste and thus of the social order itself" (Chakravarti 1993, 585). The need to maintain Hindu supremacy has led to acts of violence against Muslim women, women of lower caste, and women not conforming to the misogynistic and hegemonic norms of the society. Banerjee (2016) rightly notes:

Patriarchal moral high ground rooted in casteist Hinduism is advanced to punish women, sometimes through the very communities they belong to. Examples are supplied by caste (khap) panchayats' crucial role in organising communal sexual violence against "erring" women. The irony lies in the fact that this violence is practised by men who often preach, both nationally and internationally, the goddess-like stature of women in Indian (read "Hindu") culture. (7)

In India, women are elevated to the stature of goddesses as a way of promoting misogynistic values according to which women are expected never to err; to be homemakers; and to be the epitome of sacrifice, purity, and chastity. The danger of idolizing women in such a manner is the unrealistic expectations it places on them in society; when these expectations are unmet, the men in the society take it upon themselves to punish them. On the one hand, the birth of a son is celebrated, while

on the other, the birth of a daughter is seen as a liability since the parents have to provide money in the form of a dowry for her wedding (Clark 2000; Diamond-Smith, Luke, and McGarvey 2008). The preference for a son has led to a skewed gender ratio in India—110 males to 100 females (Ritchie and Roser 2019). Despite the 1994 Prohibition of Sex Selection Act, which banned prenatal sex screening in India, 500,000 female fetuses are selectively aborted each year (Jha et al. 2016; Robitaille 2020). The preference for a son is rooted in religious texts as well as economic and cultural factors prevalent in the society (Arora et al. 2013). Sons are seen as the inheritors of property and caretakers of parents in their old age (Clark 2000; Mitra 2014). Chapter 9, verse 185 of the *Manu Smriti* states that "The sons inherit the father's estate—not the brothers, not the fathers" (Olivelle and Olivelle 2005, 199). The insatiable appetite for a son results in intimate partner violence, currently forming a public health crisis that requires attention (Sabarwal et al. 2012).

These hegemonic ideas are preserved via the institution of marriage, and India is among the 36 countries in the world that do not recognize marital rape as a crime⁶ (India Today 2016). Section 375 of the Indian Penal Code (IPC) reads: "Sexual intercourse or sexual acts by a man with his own wife, the wife not being under fifteen years of age, is not rape" (Exception 2, Section 375, IPC) (India Code nd). While the number of rape cases reported annually in the United States is 10 times greater than that in India (Statista 2021), the numbers are skewed since less than 1% rapes in India are reported (Raj and McDougal 2014). Furthermore, reports have indicated that one in three women in India have experienced some form of sexual coercion or violence (see Deosthali, Rege, and Arora 2022). The court is split on the issue of criminalizing marital rape; in May 2022, a two-judge bench of the Delhi High Court issued a split decision on the problem. The case will be appealed in the Supreme Court and does not have support from religious and political institutions, who fear that making marital rape a crime will be used as a weapon by women to harass men and destabilize the institution of marriage (*BBC News* 2022). Such ideas are ingrained in the patriarchal norms and the *pativrata*

⁶ The Supreme Court in India legalized abortion for all women up to 24 weeks which may be a result of marital rape, but it has still not made marital rape a crime (Indian Express, September 29, 2022, <https://indianexpress.com/article/india/medical-termination-pregnancy-act-supereme-court-quotes-abortion-rights-8179908/>).

dharma prescribed in the Hindu religious texts. Over centuries, such beliefs have created a culture of silence “propagated to save and respect the ‘honour,’ the ‘pride’ and the ‘values’ of the Indian family overlooking the fact that incest, violence, suicides, murders (*sic*) are the price women pay” (Nigam 2015, 1).

Patriarchal Authoritarianism

The Brahmanical patriarchy described in the previous section is reinforced by the current Hindutva politics of the BJP authoritarian state, in which the rights of women are subordinate to those of men. Additionally, a marketized version of Hindutva is currently gaining momentum. It is a combination of populist strategies and economic policies according to which the people are viewed as “virtuous market citizens who are regulated and disciplined through the moral frameworks of Hindu nationalism” (Chacko 2020, 2). Within this framework, gender is the underbelly through which masculine patriarchy is advanced by “turning women into market actors and making households responsible for accumulation and social reproduction. Yet, virtuous market citizenship also reproduces patriarchal Hindu nationalist gender stereotypes of women as suffering and sacrificing wives, mothers, and daughters” (Chacko 2020, 16). In the 2014 general elections in India, the front-runner of the BJP party and the current prime minister Narendra Modi used hypermasculinity, machoism, and the notion of being the protector of the nation and savior of women as the manifesto for his election. This patriarchal image resonated with both male and female voters, and the gender gap was remarkably reduced in the 2014 election, with the voter turnout being 67% for men and 66% for women (Chacko 2020; Deshpande 2014). In fact, in the 2019 general elections, women slightly outpaced men at 67.18% compared to 67.01% (Jain 2021).

The protectionist agenda of the BJP government aims to control the bodies of women by organizing Love jihad, creating Anti-Romeo squads, and promoting violence against women (through Khap Panchayats). Such ideologies actually disempower both men and women and especially impact the most marginalized sections of the society—women, Dalit women, and religious minorities. Empowerment under the guise of a protectionist agenda or “Hindutva-based moral regulation” (Banarjee 2016, 5) stifles women, increases their dependence on men, curbs their autonomy, restricts their mo-

bility, and prevents them from making decisions that impact their lives, including taking on employment. Low levels of labor force participation despite the various welfare schemes can be attributed to the low levels of education among rural women, the crowding out of women in the agricultural sector, reduced access to training facilities, poverty, malnutrition, sexual harassment, expectations regarding the dual responsibility of work and home, and the prevailing social norms and negative stereotypes toward women (Chacko 2020; Chatterjee and Sircar 2021).

The Future of Women in India: The Way Forward (Claiming the Inequities)

With the election of a populist government led by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in 2014, a wave of Hindu nationalism has returned (Kaul 2017), in which a polity that does not fall within the Hindutva ideology is othered and subject to oppressive tactics “that rely on imaginations of the ‘pure’ people and their birthright to the nation-state’s infrastructure from those undeserving others” (Kinnvall 2019, 293). The use of victimization-based propaganda that invokes fear in the minds of the majority group being replaced by minorities is a theme that cuts across authoritarian populism around the globe. The dangerous rise of right-wing nationalism is deepening the divide between majority and minority groups in many democracies, which are now backsliding due to their push for a monolithic national identity. During his four-year presidency, U.S. President Donald Trump fostered deep hostility toward immigrants and nonwhite racial minority groups. Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Mihály Orbán is using similar tactics to further Islamophobia and ban homosexuality from school education. Similarly, Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro has made outrageous comments about women and the LGBTQ+ community, with the toxic hegemonic masculinity he exhibits having resulted in a rise in abuse and gender violence in the country. Authoritarian nationalism is a threat to democracy and its ideals, which rest upon freedom, justice, respect for human rights, and equality and equity for all (including women, minorities, Dalits, Indigenous people, people with disabilities, and individuals with nonconforming gender and sexual identities).

This study used the social equity framework developed by Gooden (2014) to understand gender inequities in India under the current nationalist BJP government.

Women in India face several prejudices steeped in the culture, structure, and history of the nation. Structurally, the systemic discrimination faced by women is the result of several factors, including a 162-year-old legal system with deep colonial roots that needs a reexamination in changing times. Furthermore, a reform in the criminal justice system, which tends to favor the Hindu majoritarian government while being discriminatory to religious minorities, requires a deeper examination. While the IPC has been amended multiple times, marital rape needs to be criminalized, and sedition laws need to be reformed. Take, for instance, the case of the hijab, which is banned in educational institutions in Karnataka; this is a violation of the religious freedoms of a minority group that is seen as a threat to the Hindu nation. Systematically excluding Muslim women from the education system can lead to disparities with both short- and long-term impacts on the economic, social, cultural, and political well-being and inclusion of these citizens.

Gender inequities in India cannot be studied in isolation and, as highlighted in this study, must be analyzed using the intersectional lens of caste, religion, and class. Caste structures have deep and widespread roots in Indian society. Unfortunately, the most marginalized groups are subject to severe brutality—they are viewed as less than human and experience the grossest forms of atrocity. Dalit women are “demeaned and degraded and their body is a free terrain of colonization by men from other communities” (Singh and Vashistha 2018, 337). They are also excluded from the educational, political, economic, and social structures of the society; live in abject poverty; and are sexually harassed and exploited on a daily basis. Additionally, Dalit women face the same patriarchal oppression from Dalit men as they do from upper-caste men. Thus, a Dalit-feminist framework must be adopted to understand the unique characteristics of Dalit women and advance feminist theory (Arya 2020).

While many might argue that caste does not exist in modern day India, they are caste blind⁷ and speak from a place of privilege and based on a utopian notion according to which populist philosophy silences any discourse on the inequities that exist in the society (Silva 2020). Just as colorblindness perpetuates inequities in

race (Bonilla-Silva 2006), caste blindness maintains an upper-caste Hindu privilege that prevents majority groups from understanding and acknowledging their own privilege and their role in producing, reproducing, and preserving the dominant social order. Future studies can adopt a comparativist approach to record the experiences of the most marginalized groups around the globe. While it is not easy to compare inequities across nations given their historical, cultural, political, and social differences, certain patterns are beginning to emerge, as identified in this study.

In December 1979, the UN adopted the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). India ratified the convention in 1993 and hailed this act as the beginning of addressing gender inequities in the nation. While compliance with the CEDAW is voluntary, courts have used the treaty guidelines in high-profile gender equity and religious freedom cases (Holmes 2019). Gender inequity is a matter of human right, and “if women’s human rights are to become part of people’s lives, they must cross the bridge from being ‘rights’ in law books to ‘rights’ guaranteed by the everyday practices of local communities: they must shift from *adhikar* to *huq*”⁸ (Rajaram and Zararia 2009, 465). Thus, the use of a rights-based approach is crucial to addressing the gross inequities that women, Dalits, and religious minorities experience in India. Moving the most marginalized and disenfranchised populations in India from the fringes to the center of policymaking can help reframe the decision-making process.

Social equity, as a third pillar of public administration, is often subordinate to the values of efficiency and effectiveness (Berry-James et al. 2021; Blessett et al. 2019). However, I would argue that when focus is given to equitable policymaking, the natural outcome will be effective policies that are inclusive and efficient. McCandless and Blessett (2022) argue the following:

The field of public administration has long resisted admitting an uncomfortable truth. Public administration is culpable in creating and maintaining racist, white supremacist policies and institutions through

⁷ According to Silva (2020), “‘Caste blindness’ can be defined as a deliberate neglect of caste discrimination in public policy; such policies being driven by the privileged layer of society who do not recognise or deliberately disregard caste discrimination simply because they benefit from and identify with hereditary privileges generated by the system” (52).

⁸ *Adhikar* refers to entitlement, and *huq* refers to rights.

which Black, Indigenous, and other communities of color disproportionately experience prejudice and discrimination and, therefore, inequities and injustices throughout public services and society. (91)

I offer a similar argument regarding the case of India, where public leaders have for too long maintained misogynistic and casteist ideologies centered around Brahmanical and heteronormative values, systematically leaving women at the intersection of caste and religion out of the realm of policies and policymaking. These groups have for centuries experienced erasure in the form of extreme oppression; violence; and exclusion from economic, social, cultural, and political institutions.

I compare the Hindutva ideology to that of the right-wing white supremacists in the United States who fear that the influx of immigrants, minorities, and people of color will diminish the white race—thus justifying the killing of and violence against Black and marginalized members of the society. When a social order is threatened, whether it be of the majority Hindus in India, the majority whites in the United States, the Nazis in Germany, or the Kremlin in Russia, the majority adopts violence and hate targeted against women, ethnic, and religious minority groups. Thus, lynching, rape, and even killing (honor killing) may be viewed as justified so as to maintain dominance by certain groups of society who feel threatened by minority groups.

Conclusion

While much has been written on the authoritarian values of the West, there is a dearth of literature in public administration that exposes the state of women in India from a social equity and intersectional lens. This study is thus a step in that direction and a reminder to the broader public administration community that inequities are persistent around the world and that it is our responsibility as global citizens to further the discourse by centering the voices of the most marginalized and oppressed members of society. The inception of the *Journal of Social Equity in Public Administration* (JSEPA) is another step in that direction. It will fill a gaping hole that currently exists in the mainstream public administration literature discourse and provide a platform for scholars and practitioners to address social inequities that exist both locally and globally.

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Dismantling Institutional and Structural Racism: Implementation Strategies Across the United States*

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The field of public administration writes and theorizes a good deal about institutional and structural racism, but as an applied field, we don't address some of the potential intervention strategies for dismantling racist structures and institutions. This article examines some of the prospective strategies in areas such as reparations, criminal justice, health care, and housing which have been implemented seeking to upend institutional and structural racism in this nation. Policies or programs, unless implemented, create a revolving-door syndrome. However, even when policies are developed and implemented, their efficacy is not always guaranteed, as will be seen. This article discusses how public administration can move away from the "ready, aim, study more" conundrum, and offers suggestions for moving forward to the next frontier.

The academic and popular literatures are punctuated with articles addressing the pervasive, perennial problem of institutional and structural racism. Academic research clearly outlines the causes of institutional racism and offers a number of theories to study the problem, most prominently, Critical Race Theory. Few treatises, however, offer explicit intervention strategies for dismantling racist structures. Gooden (2008) argues that dismantling racist structures is a critical responsibility of government, but it is caught in an "unproductive cycle," whereby public sector organizations continue to identify and study issues such as racial disparities, but then fall short of developing and implementing public policies that can assist in dismantling institutional or structural racism. In effect, we operate in this never-ending, "continuous cycle of 'ready, aim, study more'" (Gooden 2008, 8).

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justice, health care, and housing which have been implemented seeking to upend institutional and structural racism in this nation. Policies or programs, unless implemented, create a revolving-door syndrome. However, even when policies are developed and implemented, their efficacy is not always guaranteed, as will be seen. This article discusses how public administration can move away from the "ready, aim, study more" conundrum, and offers suggestions for moving forward to the next frontier. After considering what we have learned from limited attempts at implementing strategies to dismantle structural racism, we present suggestions for how the field might move forward both in scholarship and practice.

Defining Institutional and Structural Racism

Institutional and structural racism are sometimes used synonymously. But institutional racism, also referred to as systemic racism, describes a form of racism where race and its intersections with other identity markers such as gender, sexuality, and class are an endemic part of society and are institutionalized in and by the law

¹ The author, Kwame Ture, was formerly known as Stokely Carmichael, the prominent civil rights activist.

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and public policy. Ture and Hamilton (1967) defined institutional racism as follows:

Racism is both overt and covert. It takes two, closely related forms: individual whites acting against individual blacks, and acts by the total white community against the black community. We call these individual racism and institutional racism. The first consists of overt acts by individuals, which cause death, injury or the violent destruction of property. . . . The second type is less overt, far more subtle, less identifiable in terms of specific individuals committing the acts. But it is no less destructive of human life. The second type originates in the operation of established and respected forces in society, and thus receives far less public condemnation than the first type. (p. 4, italics in original).¹

Examples of institutional racism include Jim Crow laws, which maintained and perpetuated the racist treatment and oppression of Blacks despite ratification of the Thirteenth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution in 1865, abolishing slavery, and the Fourteenth Amendment in 1868 which granted citizenship and equal legal and civil rights to Blacks. Another example can be seen in the government policies in the late 19th and early 20th centuries that denied Black veterans disability pensions by the Union Army. In medicine, the Tuskegee experiment conducted in the 1930s and continuing for 40 years, provides another example. The Tuskegee Institute conducted a syphilis study on 600 Black men (399 men with syphilis, 201 who did not have it), without the patients' informed consent and without providing adequate treatment for their disease. The victims were never informed of all the known dangers. Many patients were denied treatment so that scientists could observe the fatal development of the disease and some were denied the cure, despite its availability (Gray 2013).

Structural racism includes the interactions among institutions and more broadly societies, which produce insurmountable obstacles and barriers to Black and Brown people in their efforts to achieve social, political, and economic equality with Whites. Bailey and colleagues (2017, 1453) state that "structural racism refers to the totality of ways in which societies foster racial

discrimination through mutually reinforcing systems of housing, education, employment, earnings, benefits, credit, media, health care, and criminal justice. These patterns and practices in turn reinforce discriminatory beliefs, values, and distribution of resources." An example of structural racism can be seen in the persistent segregation of America's neighborhoods, despite passage of the Fair Housing Act in 1968 and Fair Housing Amendments Act of 1988 (FHAA). Although these laws banned overt discriminatory practices such as redlining² and predatory lending policies, they were replaced by subtler, putatively race-neutral policies which continue to exclude families of color from moving into White neighborhoods (Brown, et al. 2019).

For example, companies such as Facebook have engaged in a practice known as digital redlining, whereby it relies on algorithms in its ads to target certain favored groups and disadvantage or marginalize others based on race, color, national origin, and gender. In 2019, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) charged Facebook with restricting who was able to view housing-related ads on Facebook's platforms and across the internet. Advertisers were able to draw a red line around certain neighborhoods in maps which excluded specific groups from seeing the ads. More specifically, Facebook collected millions of data points about its users, drew inferences about each user based on these data, and then charged advertisers for the ability to micro-target ads to users based on Facebook's inferences about them. Administrative law judges ruled that Facebook was engaging in discriminatory housing practices in violation of the Fair Housing Act (*U.S. HUD v. Facebook* 2019).

It is also important to note, as Riccucci (2019, 633–634) argues, we should "not lose sight of the fact that systematic racism, whether institutional or structural, is the culmination of additive, individual racist voices, attitudes, and behaviors. Racism is the outcome of institutional practices that are committed by individuals that in the aggregate, produce White privilege and power: maintaining racially segregated schools; denying home loans and charging higher mortgage interest rates to Blacks; using seniority as a basis for employment; and criminalizing Black men in the application of laws." In the context of public administration, the lines between institutional and structural racism are much more blurred when you

² Redlining is a practice where banks and the real estate industry outlined Black and Brown neighborhoods with red ink. Loans to those in these neighborhoods were considered risky and banks were less willing to offer loans or other financial services such as insurance or credit cards.

factor in public servants at the front lines of service delivery who, as they interpret and then implement laws and public policies, perpetuate and institutionalize racism. Another example addressed later includes stop-and-frisk practices by law enforcement officers.

Institutional and structural racism are imposed and maintained by White supremacy and White normativity, which have created and maintained institutions and systems that subordinate people of color, particularly through White liberal ideals of law and equal protection (Portillo, Bearfield and Humphrey 2020; Humphrey 2021). As Gooden has argued (2008, 7) “racial gaps are associated with structural racism that includes a historical context fostering privileges of whiteness and the disadvantages of color. Institutions and public policies often reproduce these embedded racially inequitable outcomes. In order to reverse these racial disparities, there must be a mutually specific goal for long-term change.” Dismantling institutional and structural racism requires the suppression of the White normativity that suffuses decision and policy-making at every level of government in this nation.

Implementing Intervention Strategies

To address the unproductive cycle of perpetual researching and providing lip service to intervention strategies for dismantling racist structures and institutions, we provide not only illustrations of policies that have been implemented to help dismantle institutional and structural racism, but also examples of where greater oversight or watchdog activities could have *prevented* continued racist practices before implementation. In virtually every case, the efficacy of the policies or laws remains uncertain.³

Reparations

The American government has historically denied Blacks the opportunity to build wealth in this nation. Slavery, Jim Crow laws, and the false promises of guaranteed economic freedom and opportunity have systematically

deprived Blacks of their rights and possessions to ultimately prevent them from accruing intergenerational wealth. Reparations is a restorative justice method for redressing the legacy of institutional racism in this nation, which stems from the long legacy of slavery. And reparations are not new to the United States. As Ray and Perry (2020, online) point out, “Native Americans have received land and billions of dollars for various benefits and programs for being forcibly exiled from their native lands. For Japanese Americans, \$1.5 billion was paid to those who were interned during World War II. Additionally, the United States, via the Marshall Plan, helped to ensure that Jews received reparations for the Holocaust, including making various investments over time. In 1952, West Germany agreed to pay 3.45 billion Deutsche Marks to Holocaust survivors.” Blacks, however, have not received reparations from the U.S. government for institutional racism, despite the fact that the economic and class divide between Blacks and Whites has become exponentially greater in this country since the early 20th century.

The first—and thus far only—city in the United States to fund reparations for Blacks to redress the impact of residential segregation and disenfranchisement is Evanston, Illinois.⁴ In 2021, this suburb of Chicago began distributing up to \$25,000 per eligible resident for housing, in the form of down payments or home repairs (Treisman 2021). Evanston has committed \$10 million to be distributed over the next decade for reparations. In January 2022, the first 16 recipients of the reparation housing program were selected in a random drawing; each will receive a \$25,000 payment (Brown and Cahan 2022).

Other cities and states (e.g., New York City, Burlington, Vermont, Providence, Rhode Island, and California) have discussed and studied the issue of reparations, but have not yet implemented a policy to offer them (Dixon 2020). The City Council of Asheville, NC, passed a reparation measure in 2020, to fund homeownership and business opportunities, but it stopped

³ One example can be seen in Executive Order (EO) 13985, which President Biden signed on his first day in office, January 20, 2021. It is titled, “Advancing Racial Equity and Support for Underserved Communities Through the Federal Government.” In an effort to combat systemic racism, the EO directs federal agencies to determine if their policies produce racially inequitable results when implemented, and to make the necessary changes to ensure that underserved communities are properly supported (Federal Register 2021). It is still uncertain as to whether and how this initiative will be funded (see, e.g., Lewis-Burke 2021).

⁴ Bill de Blasio began his political career in 1989 as a volunteer coordinator for the mayoral candidate David Dinkins, who became the first Black mayor of the city in 1990. Once elected, de Blasio worked in City Hall as an aide to Dinkins and the city and later served in a number of posts, including as a member of the City Council. In these capacities de Blasio was very vocal about the city’s racial and class tensions, and he had long supported measures to promote racial equity throughout the city. He became mayor of the city in 2014, running on a platform of fixing the social inequities in the city (Grynbaum 2014).

short of implementing direct payments (Vigdor 2020). Also, in April 2021, a House committee voted to support H.R. 40, a bill establishing the “Commission to Study and Develop Reparation Proposals for African-Americans.” It has been introduced at every congressional session since 1989, but as of this writing, it has not yet passed the House (Felton 2022).

Importantly, reparations can be administered in any number of ways. As Ta-Neheshi Coates (2014, online) argues “More important than any single check cut to any African American, the payment of reparations would represent America’s maturation out of the childhood myth of its innocence into a wisdom worthy of its founders.” One example of reparations in the form of restitution or restoration of specific or identifiable victims’ rights can be seen in Mayor Bill de Blasio’s settlement of a long-standing discrimination case brought by Black and Latinx applicants for firefighting jobs in the city of New York.⁵ In 2007, the U.S. Justice Department and the Vulcan Society, an organization of Black firefighters, sued New York City charging its fire department with racially discriminatory hiring practices in violation of Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the United States Constitution, the New York State Constitution, and New York State and City human rights law. At the time of the lawsuit only 3% of the department’s 11,000 firefighters were Black and 4.5% were Latinx. The Justice Department charged that the exam, administered in 1999 and 2002, had a discriminatory or adverse impact on Black and Latinx applicants, but was not job-related; that is, it had never been validated to measure the skills required to perform well on the job as firefighter. In 2009, a U.S. District Court ruled that the city had discriminated against Black and Latinx applicants for entry-level firefighter positions (*U.S. and Vulcan Society v. City of New York* 2009). It ordered the city to develop a new exam and reform the fire department’s recruiting policies to promote diversity throughout the department to make it more representative of the city’s population.⁶

Shortly after the ruling, Mayor de Blasio announced that his administration would settle the lawsuit, agree-

ing to pay \$98 million in backpay and benefits to the 1,500 Black and Latinx firefighter applicants who failed the discriminatory civil service exams. The settlement included over \$6 million to cover lost medical payments and fringe benefits and interest for those who took the test in 1999 and 2002 (Pearson 2014). The settlement preempted another potentially protracted trial that was about to follow. There is a history of racist practices against Blacks and Latinx in fire departments across the country, but the victims are rarely offered restitution as they were in New York (see, e.g., Riccucci and Saldivar 2014). It was a historic approach to reparations or restorative justice for identifiable victims.

Reforming the Criminal Justice System

The most racist elements of the criminal justice system are evident in the killing of George Floyd in 2020 when Derek Chauvin pressed his knee into Floyd’s neck for nine minutes and 29 seconds. In a very rare outcome, Chauvin was found guilty of second-degree unintentional murder, third-degree murder and second-degree manslaughter by a jury in Minneapolis. He was sentenced 22.5 years in prison but intends to appeal his conviction. This is but one illustration of how the criminal justice system in United States is permeated with racism, from the moment of police contact through pleas, conviction, incarceration, and release (see, e.g., Brunson 2007; Pager 2007; Gilbert and Ray 2016; Wright and Headley 2020). There are several areas in which reforms can assist in dismantling institutional or structural racism here, as the following examples illustrate.

Banning the Box

Policies that can help to reintegrate the formerly incarcerated back into society include “banning the box.” This refers to outlawing any inquiry around conviction history at the application process. It allows prospective employees to make it beyond the initial application without having to disclose felonies or misdemeanors, which helps to reduce discrimination based on prior offense history. Each year, over 600,000 people in need of jobs are released from federal and state prisons (Meyer 2021). Research shows that

⁵ A ruling by the 2nd circuit upheld most of the remedies (*U.S. and the Vulcan Society v. City of New York* 2013).

⁶ States include Arizona, California, Colorado, Connecticut, Delaware, Georgia, Hawaii, Illinois, Indiana, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, Nevada, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, North Carolina, North Dakota, Ohio, Oklahoma, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Tennessee, Utah, Vermont, Virginia, Washington and Wisconsin.

having a job and a place to live reduces the likelihood of recidivism. Even a minor criminal record creates immense obstacles to gaining employment, especially for Blacks and Latinx (Carson and Anderson 2016).

Federal legislation to ban the box on all job applications in the public and private sectors was introduced in the U.S. Congress in 2012; but no vote was ever taken. However, the Fair Chance to Compete for Jobs Act of 2019 also called the Federal “Ban the Box” law) was passed in 2019 and became effective in December 2021. It prohibits most federal agencies. However, positions related to law enforcement and national security are exempted from the law and federal contractors are prohibited from requesting arrest and conviction information from job applicants. Many details of the new law are still unresolved, and the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) and General Services Administration (GSA) are in the process of issuing implementation regulations. In effect, it is simply too early to determine the effectiveness of this law (Avery and Lu 2021).

As of October 2021, 37 states and over 150 counties and cities have enacted laws or adopted policies that ban the box (Avery and Lu 2021).⁷ Although compliance with these mandates shows some inconsistency, in some ban the box jurisdictions, employment of Black or Latinx males (ex-offenders) increased, at least in government jobs (see, e.g., Jackson and Zhao 2017 and Craigie 2020). Other studies found evidence that ban the box laws resulted in employers discriminating against young, low-skilled Black or Latinx men, in that employers *assumed* in the absence of criminal record information, that they had a criminal past (see, e.g., Agan and Starr 2016; Barthel 2019; Doleac and Hansen 2020). Flake (2019) in his study found that employers in ban the box jurisdictions were in violation of the law when they continued to explicitly ask job applicants if they had a criminal history. Flake (2019, 1104)⁸ also found that employers violated the ban the box law by asking a question on the application such as, “As a condition of employment you may be required to undergo a criminal background screen-

ing. Would you feel comfortable with such a screening?” Some employers in jurisdictions that did not ban the box voluntarily removed the box for moral reasons, or because they operated in multiple states, some of which had ban the box laws or policies; these employers found it necessary in order to maintain a uniform job application.

Laws and policies have been implemented to ban the box, which could certainly assist formerly incarcerated persons reintegrate into society more easily. But their effectiveness obviously depends on whether they are legitimately enforced. Because the ban the box measures are mandated at the state and local level, overall compliance is difficult to determine, as each jurisdiction is responsible for measuring efficacy of their laws or policies. To the extent they are not, deeply rooted patterns and practices of racism prevail and hence, institutional racism triumphs.

Racial and Ethnic Disparities in Incarceration

Mass incarceration is an epidemic in this nation. In the last several decades, the prison and jail population has grown exponentially from around 200,000 in 1972 to almost 2 million in 2022 despite declines in crime rates across the country. The United States spends over \$80 billion on incarceration each year (Flake 2019; ACLU 2022). Disparities in incarceration by race and ethnicity arise in large part from misuse and overuse of incarceration. In particular, overreliance on incarceration disproportionately impacts vulnerable populations including communities of color, the poor, and people with substance abuse and mental health problems (Nellis 2020, 10). For example, Blacks are incarcerated for drug offenses at a rate 10 times greater than that of Whites, notwithstanding the fact that Blacks and Whites use drugs at around the same rates (ACLU 2022). In addition, as the ACLU reports, “One out of every three Black boys born today can expect to go to prison in his lifetime, as can one of every six Latino boys—compared to one of every 17 white boys” (ibid,

⁷ Flake’s study was an audit field experiment, which raises serious questions around ethics. He submitted fictitious job applications of ex-offenders in Chicago, which bans the box, and Dallas, which does not. Comparing the employer callback rates between the two cities, he found no racial disparities in either case.

⁸ In response to the violence against Blacks in our society by law enforcement officers, President Obama created a task force in 2014 to recommend reforms on the problem of police violence. Evaluations of the work of this task force suggest that little was done to change the culture of policing in our society (Sullivan 2020). Also, Trump suspended any efforts by President Obama to reform policing in this country.

online). Other examples of racial, ethnic and gender disparities across the United States include:

- Blacks are incarcerated in state prisons at nearly five times the rate of White Americans.
- Nationally, one in 81 Black adults in the United States is serving time in state prison. Wisconsin leads the nation in Black imprisonment rates; one of every 36 Black Wisconsinites is in prison.
- In 12 states, more than half the prison population is Black: Alabama, Delaware, Georgia, Illinois, Louisiana, Maryland, Michigan, Mississippi, New Jersey, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Virginia.
- Latinx individuals are incarcerated in state prisons at a rate that is 1.3 times the incarceration rate of Whites. Ethnic disparities are highest in Massachusetts, which reports an ethnic differential of 4.1:1 (Nellis 2020, 5).
- In New York State, Blacks and Latinx account for around 30% of the state's population, but they represent 60% of the state's inmates (New York City Bar 2021).
- Women are the fastest growing incarcerated population. Incarcerated women are 53% White; 29% Black; 14% Latina; 2.5% American Indian and Alaskan Native; 0.9% Asian; and 0.4% Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander (Kajstura 2019).

In short, because of one's race, ethnicity, or skin color, there are disparities in terms of whether you are even accused of a crime (e.g., theft), arrested or detained before a trial for that crime, and whether or not you are convicted—and then for how long. Mass incarceration is mainly attributed to sustained institutionalized racism. The dual criminal justice system has maintained the social and economic hierarchy in this nation.

The trickle-down effect of mass incarceration has often limited, or completely blocked, the educational opportunities of those impacted by the system (Custer 2021). Until 2020, Individuals in prison were not allowed to receive federal Pell Grants, an essential source of financial support provided to low-income individuals and families seeking higher education (Kelliher 2022). While that barrier has been removed, individuals still face the administrative burdens associated with filling out the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FASFA). While in prison, individuals often lack computer access or cell phone access which can complicate applying for aid (Kelliher 2022). Also, even when an individual has been released from prison, the complica-

tions associated with receiving financial aid do not stop. For example, the FASFA form requires all applicants to disclose if they have a prior conviction for the sale or possession of drugs. Known as Question 23, full or partial aid has been denied to thousands of students for failing to answer the question (Kriegbaum, 2018).

Despite this dismal picture, as of 2021, nine states have begun to reform their high mass incarceration rates: Alaska, New Jersey, New York, Connecticut, Alabama, Rhode Island, Vermont, Hawaii, and California (Ghandnoosh 2021). For example, in 2019, bail reform in New York was expected to lead to decarceration in the state. Primarily Black, Indigenous, and other People of Color (BIPOC) were being held in jail pretrial, often for years, because the cost of bail was unaffordable. The reform prohibited judges from setting bail for nonviolent and misdemeanor felonies (e.g., shoplifting, disorderly conduct), including all drug charges. Consequently, there was a 31% drop in the number of inmates in New York jails; they were free to return home and await their day in court (Vera Institute of Justice 2021). However, because conservative political opponents waged a backlash against the law, erroneously blaming it for new crimes, the New York State legislature amended the bill in 2020, allowing judges to now set bail on a number of crimes, including misdemeanors and nonviolent felonies. COVID-19 was in full force by this point and the number of persons incarcerated in New York on any given day surpassed 13,000.

Today in New York, significant judicial discretion remains in the system, despite bail reform. In addition, some of the other states that implemented reform policies to address mass incarceration reversed any progress that had been made. For example in such states as Alaska and Alabama, some progress toward decarceration has been reversed. In 2019, Alaska's state legislature repealed a number of provisions of its criminal justice reform bill. In Alabama, changes to the state's parole policies are counteracting efforts to decarceration (Ghandnoosh 2021). Because a key driver of mass incarceration has been the pronounced growth in prison terms, legitimate efforts toward sustained decarceration will require policies that will reduce excessive prison terms for violent convictions. Current reform efforts have been minimal and have not scaled back extreme sentences. Examples here include California, which enacted an early release policy that benefited inmates with 180 days or less to serve on their prison term. Colorado Governor Jared Polis is-

sued an executive order relaxing the state's release policy by suspending time restrictions to earn early release credits. Finally, in Illinois, the Department of Correction director is allowed to use 26 medical furloughs to release medically vulnerable persons, but only on a temporary basis (Porter 2021). While these reform efforts begin to move in the right direction, they fail to address extreme sentencing. As Nellis (2020, 4) has argued, "Truly meaningful reforms to the criminal justice system cannot be accomplished without acknowledgement of its racist underpinnings. Immediate and focused attention on the causes and consequences of racial disparities is required in order to eliminate them."

Policing: Stop-and-Frisk

Over the past several years, police violence against Black and Brown persons in the United States has once again escalated, resulting in the maiming or killing of young Black and Brown men including Michael Brown, Eric Garner, Tamir Rice, Walter Scott, Alton Sterling, Philando Castile, Freddie Gray, Jr., Terence Crutcher, Jacob Blake, Andres Guardado, Sean Monterrosa and Andrew Brown, Jr. Racial profiling, including stop-and-frisk practices by police tend to escalate into aggressive, violent actions (Epp, Maynard-Moody, and Haider-Markel 2017; 2014; Dooley 2021). This violence sparked civil unrest and strong nationwide demonstrations against the brutality of law enforcement officers, leading to the Black Lives Matter movement.⁹ Black and Brown persons have historically been racially profiled by police in this country. But in 1968, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled in *Terry v. Ohio* that limited searches for weapons were permitted when a law enforcement officer reasonably suspected that the person stopped could be armed. This seems to have established the constitutional practice of what we now know as stop-and-frisk or "Terry stops." The ruling authorized police intervention in an individual incident, but in reality, it has been practiced en masse by police departments nationwide. Stop-and-frisk continues to be practiced all over the country, particularly in large urban areas such as New York City, Philadelphia, Los Angeles, and Chicago.

New York City serves as one of the primary examples because of the pervasive and continued use of stop-and-frisk, despite a ruling by a U.S. district court that it was being carried out in a manner that violated the U.S. Constitution. New Yorkers believed that a district court ruling put an absolute end to stop-and-frisk practices. However, because the court in *Floyd v. City of New York* (2013) found its particular use in the city of New York to be unconstitutional, interpretation has been that the actual technique of stop-and-frisk is not unconstitutional. In fact, the court made this clear. The district court judge stated in *Floyd* that she was charged with determining the appropriate remedies for "NYPD reform practices and policies related to stop and frisk to conform with the requirements of the United States Constitution. I stress, at the outset, that the remedies imposed in this Opinion are as narrow and targeted as possible. To be very clear: I am *not* ordering an end to the practice of stop and frisk. The purpose of the remedies addressed in this Opinion is to ensure that the practice is carried out in a manner that protects the rights and liberties of all New Yorkers, while still providing much needed police protection" (*Floyd* 2013 at 671; emphasis in original).¹⁰ In effect, the New York City police department continues to racially profile and stop-and-frisk Black and Brown persons throughout the city, despite empirical evidence, countering the city's claims, that such practices lead to a decline in citywide crime (see, e.g., Greenberg 2014; Rengifo and Pater 2017). As Speri (2021, online) found, stop and frisk never ended and "New Yorkers of color have continued to bear the brunt of it—even last year, when the coronavirus pandemic shut down much of the city and many of its residents stayed home. A review of the NYPD's stops-related data shows that in 2020, the number of reported stops was at its lowest ever—9,544, down from 13,459 in 2019 and 11,008 in 2018. Despite the drop, the racial disparity remained as stark as ever, with New Yorkers of color making up 91% of those stopped, roughly the same as in the two years prior. Black New Yorkers, who account for 24% of the city's population, accounted for 56% of those stopped last year."

⁹ Other cities have faced lawsuits, but in some instances avoided them by settling with the plaintiff. For example, the ACLU was preparing to file suit against the City of Chicago over its overuse of stop and frisk. City officials simply agreed to track its use (Gorner 2015).

¹⁰ Other cities across the country are maintaining their status quo. For example, the head of police in Newark, New Jersey, stated "We don't use stop-and-frisk. . . . It sounds too invasive." He went on to say that "It's not racially driven profiling . . . It's crime-driven profiling" (Bergner 2014).

A few cities across the country have not banned stop-and-frisk practices, but have passed laws that seek to end practices that disproportionately affect Black and Brown people. For example, Philadelphia passed in October 2021 the Driving Equality Bill which bans law enforcement officers from stopping drivers for minor traffic violations (e.g., single brake light or headlight not illuminated; license plate not luminated; improperly displayed registration stickers). These stops have tended to target Black drivers at disproportionately higher rates. Other jurisdictions across the country that have enacted similar laws include Minneapolis, the state of Virginia, and Ramsey County, Minnesota (Brown and Tucker 2021). The city of Pittsburgh passed a law in January 2022 that requires police officers to document the reason why they are stopping and searching a person without a warrant (Hudak 2022).¹¹ These laws became effective in early 2022, so it is too early to examine their efficacy in ending racial and ethnic disparities in police stops.

Additional necessary reforms in the U.S. criminal justice system include decriminalization of drug use, including hard drugs (see City of Portland, Oregon, Selsky 2021); rather than “defunding police,” restructuring local budgets to promote public safety in law enforcement (including diversifying the rank-and-file; see, e.g., Nicholson-Crotty, Nicholson-Crotty and Fernandez 2017; Yu 2022), and reforming “justifiable homicide” laws, which allow for police officers to claim “self-defense” thereby justifying the excessive use of violence by police against Black men and women. An illustration here can be seen in the recent killing of Breonna Taylor by Louisville police officers who fired their weapons indiscriminately during an aborted narcotics “no knock” search that ended in Ms. Taylor’s death; Kentucky law allows them to claim self-defense (Lartey 2020). At least

25 states across the country have self-defense or “stand your ground” laws (Ricucci 2022).

Health and Health Care

Institutional and structural racism as well as generations of disinvestment in communities of color create and result in disproportionately negative health outcomes for Blacks, Latinx and Indigenous Americans. Ramaswamy and Kelly (2015, 285) point out that the “link between racism and health is a matter of life and death. In the United States, Blacks are more likely than Whites to die during infancy as a result of preterm delivery, and during adult life are more likely to have HIV, hypertension, and diabetes, and to die from breast or prostate cancer . . . The pathways to these health inequities are layered and complex—the organization of the health care system, patient behaviors, health care providers’ biases—all have been used to explain the relationship between race and poor health outcomes.”

Disproportionate barriers to care and lower quality of care exist in a number of areas including the lack of high-quality hospitals in close proximity to Blacks, Latinx, and Indigenous Americans (Dimick, et al. 2013); underrepresentation of these groups in clinical trials for cancer and other life-threatening diseases (Kwiatkowski, et al. 2013), and cost barriers to substance abuse facilities, where public insurance is not accepted (Cummings, et al. 2014). In addition, there has been a multitude of hospital trauma center closures, which increases the travel time for emergency care in areas with large Black, Latinx, and Indigenous populations (Hsia and Shen 2011; Tung, et al. 2019).

At the federal level, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has over the past several years developed a number of strategies for reducing health disparities.¹² As its 2013 report states, the CDC seeks

¹¹ The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) has a National Institute of Health, which houses its National Institute on Minority Health and Health Disparities. The HHS also has an Office of Minority Health (OMH). These overlapping agencies also have developed duplicative strategic plans to reduce racial and ethnic health disparities. See, e.g., the National Institute on Minority Health and Health Disparities Strategic Plan for 2021–2025, <https://www.nimhd.nih.gov/docs/nimhd-strategic-plan-2021-2025.pdf> and HHS’s 2011 Action Plan to Reduce Racial and Ethnic Health Disparities, https://www.minorityhealth.hhs.gov/assets/pdf/hhs/HHS_Plan_complete.pdf; but measures of their efficacy in performance or in reaching their goals are lacking.

¹² In March 2021, for instance, the CDC launched a \$2.25 billion funding effort to address COVID-19 related health disparities among racial and ethnic groups and persons living in rural areas. And in April 2021, the CDC awarded \$3 billion to support local efforts to increase the COVID-19 vaccine uptake, whereby 75% of the total funding was distributed to programs and initiatives to increase vaccine access, acceptance, and uptake among racial and ethnic communities (CDC, no date). Blacks have the lowest vaccination rates among ethnic groups. To be sure, sociohistorical experiences legitimately explain why they are hesitant to trust the government with any vaccination program (see, e.g., Tuskegee experiment discussed earlier in the text).

“to identify and address the factors that lead to health disparities among racial, ethnic, geographic, socioeconomic, and other groups so that barriers to health equity can be removed. The first step in this process is to shine a bright light on the problems to be solved. Providing accurate, useful data on the causes of illness and death in the United States and across the world is a foundation of CDC’s mission and work” (CDC 2013, 1). The CDC has indeed collected and analyzed an inordinate amount of data demonstrating the existence of health disparities across racial and ethnic groups, and in 2021, its director Dr. Rochelle Walensky declared “racism a serious public health threat” (Wamsley 2021). She first pointed to the disproportionate impact of COVID-19 on communities of color in terms of cases and deaths, but went on to say that “Yet, the disparities seen over the past year were not a result of COVID-19. . . . Instead, the pandemic illuminated inequities that have existed for generations and revealed for all of America a known, but often unaddressed, epidemic impacting public health: racism” (Wamsley 2021, online).

Despite the fact that the CDC has not focused its attention on the root causes of the disparities (read institutional racism), it has had some success with such interventions as vaccine coverage, including for COVID-19.¹³ For example, between 1995–2011, the CDC was successful in reducing racial and ethnic disparities in the distribution of the measles vaccine when it had resurged in the United States in the early 1990s. Affected children were disproportionately from inner cities, including Blacks, Latinx, and Indigenous Americans. They were at a three to 16 times greater risk for measles than were non-Hispanic White children. The CDC was successful in reducing the disparities by eliminating the cost of the vaccine; it distributed them at no charge to inner-city private physicians’ offices and to public health clinics around the country (Walker, Smith, and Kolasa 2014).

State and local governments have also sought to reduce racial and ethnic health disparities. For early

initiatives, see, for example, Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies (2008). Many are effective in identifying the disparities, but policies or programs to reduce them are lacking. A recent study conducted by the Commonwealth Fund on disparities throughout the states found profound racial and ethnic inequities in health and health care across and within all 50 states (Radley et al. 2021).¹⁴ The study also found that some of the widest disparities occur within states which are known for having high-performing health care systems. For example, Minnesota, which was ranked third overall on health care performance by the Commonwealth, had some of the largest disparities between White and Black, Latinx, Indigenous Americans, Alaskan Native, and Asian populations. The study also found that only six states had health systems scoring above the national average for all racial and ethnic groups studied. These include: Connecticut, Hawaii, Massachusetts, New York, Oregon, and Rhode Island. Nevertheless, large disparities were also found in those states, where health system performance for White residents was scored the best of any group (Radley et al. 2021).¹⁵ The study concluded that there are a number of policy options at the state and federal levels that can address disparate access to care and unequal treatment within health care facilities. A number of these will sound familiar:

- Ensuring universal, affordable, and equitable health coverage (e.g., reduce deductibles and out-of-pocket costs for marketplace insurance plans; allow more workers in expensive employer health plans to become eligible for subsidized marketplace plans; mount aggressive, targeted outreach and enrollment efforts to reach the remaining uninsured, most of whom are eligible for Medicaid or subsidized private insurance);
- Strengthening primary care and improving the delivery of services to communities of color;
- Reducing inequitable administrative burdens affecting patients and providers;

¹³ The study collected data for 24 indicators of health system performance which were grouped into three performance domains: 1) health outcomes, 2) health care access, and 3) quality and use of health care services.

¹⁴ Except in Massachusetts where it was slightly higher among Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander residents.

¹⁵ Our persistent efforts to contact the settlement administrator of the Justice Department to learn more about the Department’s efforts to recompense the victims of discriminatory lending practices were unsuccessful. The last communication from that department instructed us to file a FOIA request.

- Investing in social services (the United States spends less on economic and social supports for children and working-age adults than most other high-income countries).

But, acknowledging that institutional and structural racism play a significant and overwhelming role in shaping health care policies, the study concludes if genuine progress is to be made, “leaders at the federal, state, and local levels should reexamine existing laws and regulations for their impact on people of color’s access to quality care. And new reforms to ensure good insurance coverage and timely access to primary and specialty care need to target communities across the United States that have long been ignored” (Radley et al. 2021, 13).

Segregated Housing

Racial residential segregation in the United States has become more pronounced in recent decades. And where you live determines the schools your children can attend, the parks near your home, the quality of your drinking water, the amenities in your neighborhood, your municipal tax base, and the degree to which your neighborhood will be surveilled by law enforcement. The Othering & Belonging Institute at the University of California-Berkeley reports that more than 80% of large metropolitan areas in this nation were more segregated in 2019 than they were in 1990. The Institute goes on to say that “Racial residential segregation so effectively sorts people across space and bundles vitalizing resources that no redistribution plan can ever match the swift efficacy of the underlying mechanism” (Othering & Belonging Institute 2021, online). That underlying mechanism is structural racism.

Despite efforts to dismantle structural racism as it manifests in segregated housing, racist housing policies established by government at every level, and racist housing practices by American businesses not only endure, but they compound over time (see Blessett 2020; Loh, Coes, and Buthe 2020). For example, the racist practice of redlining contributes to inequalities today in terms of air pollution. Lane and colleagues (2022) found that communities of color redlined by federal officials in the 1930s have higher levels of harmful air pollution more than eight decades later. This points to the legacy of a racist policy that “continues to shape systemic environmental exposure disparities in the United States (Lane, et al. 2022, online).

Persistent segregation exacerbates racial as well as economic injustice in the United States. Segregated Black neighborhoods, for example, continue to be cut off from established banks, credit unions, and other lending institutions. Contributing to the financial crisis of 2008, American banks, promising the hope of breaking through the barriers of racial residential segregation and building generational wealth, targeted and lured in Black home-buyers with subprime mortgages; these mortgages offer lower-interest home loans at higher fees to individuals with lower credit ratings, but they carry a very high risk. When borrowers could not make loan payments, banks foreclosed on the loans. As Coates (2014, online) observed “Plunder in the past made plunder in the present efficient.”

The question remains, why were these illegal practices allowed to continue? The Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation (FDIC) is the watchdog agency created in 1933 to circumvent predatory lending practices by banks and other financial institutions that target persons by race, color, religion, sex, national origin, disability, or age. Laws around housing, discussed earlier (e.g., the Fair Housing Act in 1968), prohibit lending practices that are unfair and deceptive to borrowers; such practices carry high fees and encourage borrowers to take out mortgages they cannot afford. These housing practices and policies certainly illustrate how racism is institutionalized and perseveres despite laws proscribing such behavior and the existence of regulating organizations responsible for averting it altogether. It is the very laws intended to reduce racial disparities that allow the disparities to prevail.

And, even when financial institutions are sued for deceptive and fraudulent lending practices aimed at Black and Brown families, the restitution rarely provides relief to the victims. For example, the Obama administration launched an investigation into the predatory lending practices around the 2008 financial; two major lenders were targeted: Wells Fargo and Bank of America. Throughout the United States, Bank of America’s Countrywide Financial Unit had charged over 200,000 Blacks and Latinx higher fees and interest rates compared to White borrowers between 2004 and 2008. Obama’s Justice Department found that Countrywide “discriminated by steering thousands of African-American and Hispanic borrowers into subprime mortgages when non-Hispanic white borrow-

ers with similar credit profiles received prime loans” (U.S. Department of Justice 2011). Borrowers in 41 states and the District of Columbia were affected by Countrywide’s discriminatory lending practices. Bank of America was required to pay \$335 million to settle the discrimination charges (U.S. Department of Justice 2011).

The challenge was for the Justice Department to track down the victims of the discriminatory practices. As Department officials acknowledged, tracking down and compensating the 200,000 victims was nearly impossible, “because they are the victims most likely to have lost their homes to foreclosure and subsequently moved several times” (Kendall 2011, online). Victims were also required to have access to computers, so that they could fill out the forms online that were needed to start a claim. And, even if they could be located, it would take at least two years for the victims to receive compensation. In the end, it is not certain how many victims actually received payment.¹⁶ Wells Fargo also faced challenges in identifying the more than 34,000 Black and Latinx borrowers spanning 36 states from 2004 through 2009. Wells Fargo was found to have “engaged in predatory and discriminatory lending practices” against Blacks (*City of Baltimore v. Wells Fargo* 2008 online; also see U.S. Department of Justice 2012). Although the case was settled by the Justice Department for \$175 million, the Department unfortunately determined that only 4,000 were improperly steered into subprime loans when White borrowers with similar credit risk profiles had received regular loans. As with the Bank of America settlement, most of the victims were not identified (Mui 2012; Savage 2012).

A number of jurisdictions across the country have developed strategic plans of varying types aimed at dismantling institutional racism and structural racism in other areas such as employment, environment, and education.¹⁷ Developing strategic plans to combat institutional and structural racism is an important first step, but as stressed throughout this article, successful imple-

mentation—followed by measuring and determining effective performance are—critical.

Discussion

The findings from this analysis have several implications for the practice of public administration, especially in the context of “ready, aim, study more.” The focus here was on the implementation of public policies aimed at chipping away at structural and institutional racism. One important point is, as Gooden has argued, this endless, continual cycle prevents governments at every level from implementing important public policies. Whether the issue is the need for more research or political and economic obstacles, policies are often proposed but they are never implemented. Even when policies are implemented we rarely see rigorous evaluations that can inform the diffusion of policy innovations. As a field, we should take a more comprehensive approach to how we study and implement policies meant to dismantle institutional and structural racism.

First, promoting social justice needs to go beyond symbolic gestures and outcomes. Genuine efforts to dismantle racist structures must include substantive, material gains for Black and Brown people. And these efforts can take many forms. For example, as this analysis showed, the mayor of New York City provided restitution to identifiable victims’ of discrimination—Black and Brown persons seeking jobs as firefighters. This is a milestone and puts NYC on the frontier of proactive ways to provide reparations by redressing the racial wealth gap in our society. Policies and practices cannot just provide lip service around addressing structural inequities, but must provide material corrections to past wrongs.

By extension, a second element is that this work must be explicit about correcting institutional and structural racism. Explicit and implicit adherence to White supremacy throughout our nation’s history has resulted in institutional and structural racism. That means that we cannot rely on neutral policies that do not acknowledge

¹⁶ See, for example, Seattle, Washington (Race Equity & Social Justice Initiative, 2019–2021); King County, Washington (Equity and Social Justice Strategic Plan, 2016–2022); Minneapolis (Strategic and Racial Equity Action Plan, 2021). Also see, Repository of City Racial Equity Policies and Decisions (National League of Cities, n.d.).

¹⁷ Recall in his bid for the presidency in 2017, Trump introduced his brand of hatred for Black and Brown people when he commented that “When Mexico sends its people, they’re not sending their best. . . They’re bringing drugs. They’re bringing crime. They’re rapists” (*Washington Post* Staff 2015, online).

this past to correct those harms. Race neutral fixes will only get us so far in correcting racialized histories. While public administration as a field often preaches neutrality as a value, we have been complicit in perpetuating institutionalized racism. That means that we have to acknowledge that racism has shaped the work of our field and explicitly work to address it in our scholarship and practice.

Third, and relatedly, we must acknowledge how federalism and partisan politics affects this work. As this analysis shows, genuine strategies for implementing public policies to dismantle institutional and structural racism are much more prominent at the state and local levels as compared to the federal level of government, which is increasingly hampered by partisan gridlocks; this is the case at least for progressive state and local governments that are genuinely committed to breaking down barriers created by racism. To be sure, this is an issue of federalism and just as progressive state and local governments are attempting to promote social justice, conservative states counter with regressive, reactionary policies, as witnessed by recent measures in states such as Florida, where a new voting law augments the disenfranchisement of Black and Brown people, and where LGBTQIA persons are beleaguered by a law that bans any discussion around sexual orientation or gender identity in the classroom. As public administration scholars we must engage more directly with the local, state, and federal political context that we work in if we are going to see real change in administrative policies that promote racial justice.

Fourth, as any introductory book on policy implementation will affirm, a critical aspect of implementation is evaluation. Implementation is denigrated to the extent that policies are not evaluated. Evaluation will rout out any interference with successful implementation, including political impediments that can ultimately eviscerate the intention and actual goal of the policy. For example, as seen in this article, implemented policies can sometimes be revised, which may ultimately diminish the intended outcome of policy. Evaluation of

public policies is also important because it promotes public accountability, government effectiveness, and ultimately contributes to sound, trustworthy governance.

Conclusions

This article addressed only some of the potential strategies for reducing institutional or structural racism. In every area illustrated here, it appears that the unproductive policy cycle sometimes includes implementation, but seems to always consist of circumventing—even unlawfully—behaviors by government officials that stall or explicitly gut intended policies to dismantle institutional and structural racism. As public administration scholars we must acknowledge the political reality of the context of our work as well as the way historic calls for neutrality have contributed to institutional and structural racism. In order to break the unproductive “ready, aim, study more” cycle we must be explicit about our goals, realistic about the politics, and intentional about implementing and evaluating policies meant to materially correct racial inequities.

Lack of investment, economic or social, is also responsible. Even sincere efforts are upended or thwarted by partisan politics or identity politics. For example, grassroots protesters, politicians, and policymakers at every level of government may genuinely support the development, implementation, and evaluation of efforts to dismantle institutional and structural racism, but partisan or identity politics can obstruct these efforts at any stage. As Brownstein (2020, online) contends, the “belief that widespread racism is no longer a problem in American society has become one of the core convictions uniting the modern Republican coalition, especially in the Donald Trump era.”

Today’s Republican party fomented by the class- and race-based ideology of Trump and his supporters, is certain to gut any meaningful efforts. Indeed, this philosophy makes possible and *acceptable* violent racial uprisings of far-right extremist groups and members of the alt-right.¹⁸ In particular, in August 2017, the Unite

¹⁸ Would the shameful behaviors of Republicans in the Senate confirmation hearings of Judge Ketanji Brown Jackson for the U.S. Supreme Court have been acceptable and tolerated if Trump had never been elected, especially that of Senator Cruz who questioned Judge Jackson about critical race theory, asking her if she felt babies are racist, based on the book, *Antiracist Babies*, by Ibram X. Kendi?

¹⁹ Emmett Till, at 14 years old, was abducted, tortured, and killed in 1955 after a White woman accused him of whistling at and grabbing her while he was visiting relatives in Mississippi.

the Right rally brought White supremacists to Charlottesville, Virginia to putatively protest the removal of Confederate statues or monuments. Racist and anti-Semitic propaganda and slogans promoted racial violence and hatred. The rhetoric plays into the fears of Whites anxious about the changing racial and ethnic demographics in this nation. One of the protestors deliberately ran his car into a crowd, killing one person and injuring dozens of others. As (Clark 2020, online) has argued, “Trump is perhaps the most notable example of a politician” who appeals to white nationalists and has allowed for White supremacy to return to national politics.¹⁹ The January 6th (2021) insurrection on the Capitol is another example of the audacious, Republican brand of White nationalist ideologues spreading violent behavior. And a “less” extreme example can be seen in the political right’s success in banning the use of Critical Race Theory (CRT) in classrooms throughout the country during the early 2020s. To some White people it is too discomfoting, irritating, or infuriating to hear how White supremacy has created racist structures and institutions in America.

Let’s take a closer look at the quintessential tool to enforce racial hierarchy and oppression: lynching which intimidates and terrorizes Blacks. Despite over 200 attempts by the U.S. Congress to outlaw lynching, a law finally made it through both houses of Congress and was signed into law by President Biden on March 29, 2022: the Emmett Till²⁰ Antilynching Act, which recognizes lynching as a federal hate crime, carrying up to 30 years

in prison. However, some argue that it won’t stop the violence against Black and Brown people in our society. U.S. Representative Bobby Rush, Democrat of Illinois, who introduced the bill to the House, commented that the killing of the 25-year-old Black man, Ahmaud Arbery by three White men when he was out jogging in his own neighborhood in Georgia, represented a modern-day lynching (Cochrane 2022). Whether Black and Brown people are murdered in public view or in the privacy of their homes—as Breonna Taylor was by police while sleeping in her bed—racially motivated lethal force by the police or private citizens may continue, despite passage of the Emmett Till Act. And the immediate instinct of police, prosecutors, and many elected officials is to protect the White people involved.²¹ White normativity is endemic in our nation. It permeates every aspect of policymaking, from development to evaluation. As addressed here, policies or programs, unless effectively implemented and evaluated, create a revolving-door syndrome. Indeed, as in every decade throughout the history of this nation, this country has been faced with a moral reckoning: “Americans have to decide whether this country will truly be a multiracial democracy or whether to merely tinker around the edges of our problems once again and remain decidedly racist and unequal” (Glaude 2020, online). The country needs to come to terms with its moral axis and acknowledge that institutional and structural racism play a significant and overwhelming role in excluding, marginalizing, and disenfranchising Black and Brown people in our society.

²⁰ Recall Kyle Rittenhouse, the White, 17-year-old police devotee from Illinois who showed up at a BLM protest in Kenosha, Wisconsin over the police shooting of a Black man, Jacob Blake, shot several times in the back and left paralyzed from the waist down. No charges were brought against the White police officer; Rittenhouse, who was arrested for fatally shooting two men and wounding another with a semi-automatic rifle claimed self-defense and was acquitted of all charges. Also, since 2000, there have been at least eight suspected lynchings of Black men and teenagers in Mississippi (see Brown 2021).

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Environmental Justice and Resiliency in an Age of Uncertainty

Edited by Celeste Murphy-Greene

New York, NY: Routledge, 2022. 168 pages, paperback.

Reviewed by Betsy Smith, University of Colorado Denver

Seemingly endless tragedies including extreme drought, record freezing, the spread of COVID-19, and skyrocketing living costs populate news headlines daily. The timeline of disasters, especially as the Earth's climate warms, leaves individuals, communities, and countries with less and less time to recover from one event to the next. Though attempts are made to improve and relieve some of the wicked problems we face today, no sudden intermission offers a break from these ongoing challenges. In her book *Environmental Justice and Resiliency in an Age of Uncertainty*, Celeste Murphy-Greene tackles environmental equity, energy justice, democratic practices, and the importance of creating resilient communities better prepared to face disasters.

With her academic career and previous roles with the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the U.S. Department of Energy, Celeste Murphy-Greene's experience has granted us a volume of insights and understanding about the intersection of equity and the environment. Acknowledging the timeliness of the book, authors in this collection write not only to inform readers of the dynamics of justice, but to also describe realistic actions public administrators can take. The book is not aimed at throwing theory at readers with no topical application. Rather, it is written and edited with a refreshingly straightforward approach that easily breaks down the layers of social and physical forces impacting historically exploited communities of color. *Environmental Justice and Resiliency in an Age of Uncertainty* serves as a necessary new resource. It models the direction resources and theory must go if collective efforts are to realize a more sustainable future. Change that improves the environment and creates more equitable distribution and infrastructure cannot be left to elected officials and academics. This book targets public administration as the impetus for solutions.

The book accentuates the notion that equitable solutions to persistent injustices affecting Black, Indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC) communities require multiple targets. Throughout history, these populations were subjected to conditions involving polluted resources, segregated housing, and reduced access to essential public service. Fueling the injustices, public managers, elected officials, and contracted private companies have remained largely unresponsive, allowing for decades of mistreatment to compound. As issues accumulate without any type of policy learning, injustices become more difficult to repair. At its apex, these circumstances result in disasters that are impossible to escape. Consider how already struggling communities respond to disasters. How does a community in poverty rebuild their water infrastructure after disaster? How do migrant workers with limited resources adapt to unbearably warm temperatures, and what happens to agricultural products when people cannot work in the heat? No issues of equity and the environment exist in a vacuum, a point this book reiterates throughout. The main idea of this collection, as told through interwoven themes, is that inequitable practices do, in fact, exist and they are heightened during times of climate change and related disasters. The book clearly describes these issues by defining terms and deleting jargon, offering case studies and historical events, and providing realistic suggestions for actions public administrators can take.

Book Contents

Each chapter of the book contributes to the same thesis without becoming redundant. The contents cover issues that will remain topical for years to come alongside brand-new topics such as the COVID-19 pandemic. What shines, in addition to the ideas, is how the materials are covered in a way that feels new. The book is not a mashup

of chapters that read as stand-alone articles, but rather a thoughtful mapping of environmental equity and modern problems. This style offers a welcoming tone to practitioners and students looking for digestible literature that is informative and thought-provoking. The book contains chapter-ending discussion questions, offering guideposts to readers as they think through the book's overarching themes, which accentuates the applicability of the content. Readers of *Environmental Equity and Resiliency in an Age of Uncertainty* will be left feeling more empowered by what they have learned about the complicated arena of social equity and the environment.

The introduction and opening chapters provide a survey of the history and development of the environmental justice movement. In an early chapter, authors Celeste Murphy-Greene and Michael A. Brown discuss focusing events and policy development in the United States, the scientific markers of a warming climate, and areas in the world most vulnerable to climate change. Though advances to protect our environment have been made since mid-century, BIPOC communities were not offered access to the same advancements, laying the foundation for the persistent inequities that stem from practices like redlining and segregation. These introductory chapters pave the way for the remaining chapters. They leave the reader with a sufficient understanding of key elements to environmental injustice without feeling overwhelmed by climate science and political narratives.

Chapter 3 stands out as an acknowledgment that the book is being published at a time when we are still working to understand the COVID-19 pandemic. Though the virus is not an issue of energy or the environment, this chapter plays an important role by illustrating the entwined nature of health, racism, and the environment. It describes how tragedies in the past impact willingness to trust government authority. For example, the generational trauma of the Tuskegee Study is cited as an example of learned distrust among communities. How can we expect citizens to trust a system that has continuously wronged them before? As poor environmental quality and climate change have deleterious effects on health, understanding community buy-in and risk perception can increase community resilience. Trust in information and in leaders is an essential lever. Combatting climate change requires understanding and action at the community level. For this to happen, citizens must understand and believe that improving the environment will, in turn, improve quality of life.

Another emergent theme is the importance of emergency and disaster management in mitigating damage and preventing compounding trauma. *Environmental Justice and Resiliency in an Age of Uncertainty* tackles emergency response, describing the resulting consequence of poor preparedness and silenced voices. In their chapters, Chris R. Surfus and Cara Sanner discuss the Flint Water Crisis and together with Jim Redick, they describe the power of disaster in determining community resilience through discussion of emergency appointments, accountability, and community demographics. Informative for managers and those interested in the chain of command leading to and responding to disaster, these chapters reiterate that administrators bear a true responsibility to citizens. During Flint's crisis, citizens were ignored and complaints went unheard, leaving the city to continue its strategy of slashing the budget while chemicals and bacteria leached into the water. In the end, the failure to invest upfront left the city investing more dollars afterward to solve the crisis inflicted by the city's hired emergency manager. Disasters are not only unexpected events. They can also be the direct result of conscious decision-making. The strategies employed to overcome a given disaster or to create new decision-making tiers are how learning and resilience are built. Addressing this main takeaway from the book, Redick's chapter outlines existing tools and effective strategies for emergency managers to reflect on equity and choices when responding to disaster. For a community to become more resilient, administrators must acknowledge that preparedness and stability after disaster are not personal choices. They are, instead, subject to already existing inequities.

Public works, though not the most attractive headline grabber in equity and the environment, are explained as a direct way to mitigate unequal treatment. Historically, only wealthier and whiter communities have benefitted from public-offered benefits such as maintained parks, greenspace replacing concrete, and safe sidewalks. This has translated to a higher general quality of life for the beneficiaries and measurable detriments like urban heat islands and higher rates of illness for deprived communities. Angela Orebaugh's chapter exploring smart cities describes how the ability to monitor area quality and infrastructure performance can help officials and urban planners respond more readily to problem areas. If cities can easily react to timely information on air quality, energy outages, and high-

speed internet access, then citizen needs can be met swiftly. This prevents compounding stressors in problem areas of a community. Intentional infrastructure is also described in Seth Mullendore's chapter discussing renewable energy at the local level. Just as BIPOC communities are often grounds for waste sites and emitters of noise pollution, these communities also do not see the benefits of renewable or efficient energy infrastructure. In advancing renewables, local level decision-making must offer a seat at the table for all who will be affected by energy transmissions. Commitments must be made to ensure BIPOC communities do not once again shoulder the burden of waste or expensive energy costs when communities shift to greener solutions.

Thinking about this alongside James W. Patteson's chapter discussing public works highlights the importance of sustainable and equitable service delivery as a right to all citizens, regardless of demographics. This echoes the ideas presented in chapters discussing pollution and disaster. Conditions which give rise to community devastation are preventable and manageable by informed, equitable planning. With infrastructure and attention to clean water, the Flint Water Crisis could have been prevented. With widespread planning around renewable energy, frontline communities may not be subjected to dirty fossil fuels or runoff. Reevaluating existing services in the face of BIPOC neighborhoods can offer insight into how planning for these communities can increase equity across regions. The authors argue that administrators benefit from grasping how equity is a component of every level of decision-making in public service. Even the tasks that some regard as menial or straightforward require assessment to identify gaps in equitable practices, a skill that should be taught to all administrators and planners. Advancing toward renewable energy, mitigating the effects of a warming climate, and serving the communities most affected will be the primary global challenge for the foreseeable future. Only when considering equity and a fair weight of burden in these circumstances can we ensure resilient communities.

Conclusion

For practitioners, diving into academic literature is often a luxury with the time to do so being an even greater luxury. This book fills a need in the field by offering insight on issues that are not often tied together in a straightforward fashion by news media or practitioner-aimed reports. Here, through-lines are explicit and the reader does not move between the chapters unsure of common themes or topic relevance. No other volumes offer this approach to explaining the dynamics of environmental inequality while offering this much breadth in a book of this size. Free from overly technical explanations, these chapters speak directly to students and administrators. The material is accessible, informative, and prescriptive. It fills a gap by providing administration-related energy and environmental guidance. *Environmental Justice and Resiliency in an Age of Uncertainty* would be a great addition to any classroom and an excellent resource for those already working in public service fields.

Communities across the globe must prepare for the effects of a changing climate and identify new sustainable solutions for society. The path to doing so, though, must not repeat historical patterns of shedding the burden onto communities of color and lower incomes. The role of public administrators in managing infrastructure, urban planning, disaster response, and public services places them at the helm of critical interventions to improve equity across the United States and the globe. Training professionals to understand how access and just practices are important for every aspect of public administration is a crucial step in ensuring that equity becomes a second nature thought process for future generations. Murphy-Greene's edited volume and its contributors have offered a new type of literature that is both informative and useful for anyone in administration, planning, and policy. Its readership ranges from students to practitioners to academics and it informs across a wide survey of concepts.

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From Equity Talk to Equity Walk: Expanding Practitioner Knowledge for Racial Justice in Higher Education

By Tia Brown McNair, Estela Mara Bensimon, and Lindsey Malcom-Piqueux
Hoboken, NJ, Jossey-Bass, 2020. 160 pages, hardcover.

Reviewed by Anthony M. Starke, Jr., Virginia Commonwealth University

Introduction

Eight minutes and forty-six seconds. On Monday, May 25, 2020, George Floyd was asphyxiated to death by Derek Chauvin, a Minneapolis police officer, as the world watched in dismay. The brutal ordeal lasted eight minutes and forty-six seconds and subsequently, jolted humanity into a social justice frenzy. In the days, weeks, months, and years to follow the tragic event, public institutions and private corporations have been called upon to enact systemic change to combat racial inequality. For institutions of higher education, like many other organizations, achieving equity requires faculty and staff to reckon with the institution's deep-seated history of whiteness and systemic racism embedded in its policies and practices. Sadly, interest groups and stakeholders advocating for substantive institutional equity were met with platitudes, diversity statements, and other symbolic gestures. Though not its focus, the book *From Equity Talk to Equity Walk: Expanding Practitioner Knowledge for Racial Justice in Higher Education*, which was published in the same year, provides insight into why so many organizations were unable to answer the clarion call for social equity in response to the murder of George Floyd (Williams and Duckett 2020). Public administration's extant literature offers countless examples of how organizations miss the mark of achieving social equity. In this book, Tia Brown McNair, Estela Mara Bensimon, and Lindsey Malcolm-Piqueux explicate how whiteness, privilege, and systemic racism operate at various levels within the academy, and clear a path toward equity-mindedness and engaged inclusivity.

Summary of Argument

The book's central argument is that equity necessitates critical inquiry as to why inequities exist. It implores readers to first ask *why inequities exist* before considering *how to close equity gaps*. McNair, Bensimon, and Malcolm-Piqueux (2020) postulate, "the ways in which problems are framed influence the solutions that practitioners can envision" (104) and throughout the book they illustrate the ways in which "racism and a pervasive belief in hierarchy of human values have shaped [higher education] systems, policies, and practices" (6). These authors find, "the whiteness question is not asked because racial equity is not considered a standard of quality, performance or accountability" for many institutions (106).

Summary of Contents

The book opens with guided self-reflection to ascertain the reader's current understanding of equity, followed by broad coverage of the conceptual and linguistic parameters of equity. Upon establishing a shared understanding of equity, the body of the text shifts its focus to "how institutions can examine their data and practices through equity lenses, how they define equity and equity-mindedness, and what that means for campus change" (McNair, Bensimon, and Malcolm-Piqueux 2020, 18). Each chapter offers strategies and best practices for equity-mindedness based on scenarios and cases studies of AAC&U institutional members in consultation with CUE. The book deconstructs commonly used performance indicators and other higher education metrics, provides guidance on how best to disaggregate and communicate performance measures

to promote engaged inclusivity, discusses common obstacles to creating an equity-minded campus culture, and offers strategies for building capacity for equity-mindedness.

Strengths and Weaknesses

The book's greatest strength is its accessible framework for thinking about why inequities exist and how to close equity gaps. The equity-mindedness framework is an evidenced-based approach for identifying and overcoming obstacles in implementing equity as a "*pervasive institutional value*" within higher education organizations. The book caters to varying levels of expertise. In addition to the guided self-reflection at the beginning of the book, the last chapter sets forth strategies specifically designed for first-generation equity practitioners.

An asset of this text is its firm grounding in higher education practice; this may also be its weakness. The authors take much care to speak to the context and needs of the target audience, which may be unappealing to non-higher education professionals. Yes, the higher education environment has unique characteristics; however, the equity-mindedness framework has value in non-higher education spaces. For instance, data scientists and technicians working in any organization can benefit from using community data as a tool to advance equity, which is the focus of chapter 3, just as leaders and managers working in large organizations can learn valuable strategies from chapter 4's emphasis on aligning strategic priorities and building institutional capacity.

Conclusion

Dwight Waldo argued that "the elimination of extreme inequality" is akin to the essence of public administration (Miller 2012, 63) and, some 133 years after Woodrow Wilson (1887) declared "the studious and systematic adjustment of administrative tasks resulting in carefully tested standards of policy" (200) as the province of public administration scholarship, Black and Brown bodies are being crushed and destroyed under the weight of systemic racism. The death of George Floyd was a moment in modern history that reinvigo-

rated movements for social change and human rights while, concurrently, exposing organizational and societal shortfalls to achieving racial justice. This book offers its readers a deep dive into organizational culture and equity in higher education institutions; it also provides an evidenced-based model for moving from symbolic to material equity. It guides readers toward aligning organizational beliefs and values with actions to achieve excellence in equity through accountability, assessment, and reflection.

About the Authors

Considering the status of racial equity in higher education is a task well-suited for these authors. Having published several books and numerous other publications both collectively and individually, Drs. McNair, Bensimon, and Malcolm-Piquex have extensive knowledge of racial and gender equity, student success, high-impact educational practices, strategy implementation, and change in higher education. Dr. Tia McNair holds several professional positions and appointments building on her expertise in student success and high-impact educational practices. Dr. McNair provides strategic direction and leadership for AAC&U's Truth, Racial Healing, and Transformation Campus Centers as well as the Summer Institute for High Impact Educational Practices. Dr. Estela Bensimon is an elected fellow of the National Academy of Education and Dean's Professor of Educational Equity at the University of Southern California. There she founded and leads the Center for Urban Education (CUE) where she cultivates her practice in equity, organizational learning, and change. Dr. Lindsey Malcolm-Piquex is Assistant Vice President of Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Assessment at the California Institute of Technology where she works to investigate and improve institutional conditions that advance equity. Through their work and partnership with USC's Center for Urban Education and the Association of American Colleges and Universities, Drs. McNair, Bensimon, and Malcolm-Piquex use their decades of combined experiences and expertise to advise campuses across the nation on "designing and implementing effective campus change strategies that establish more expansive and equity-minded campus cultures" (2020).

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Reproductive Justice: An Introduction

By Loretta J. Ross and Rickie Solinger. Oakland, CA: University of California Press, 2017.
351 pages, paperback.

Reviewed by Samantha June Larson, University of Wisconsin Oshkosh

Bringing Reproductive Justice and Activist Scholarship to Public Administration

Since the U.S. Supreme Court overturned the constitutional right to an abortion in June 2022, questions abound as to what comes next. Although it was published in 2017, *Reproductive Justice: An Introduction* helps us understand how America got here, and how to move forward. Like other iconic duos—lightning and thunder, coffee and cream, a candle and a flame—authors Loretta J. Ross and Rickie Solinger are the perfect duo to provide this primer. With depth and breadth, they carry us through the movement's aim to identify how reproductive oppression results from the intersection of multiple oppressions and is connected to the struggle for social justice and human rights. At the outset, they offer reflexivity statements that trace their backgrounds, the lens they bring, their professional expertise, and each describes how they pair well together. As coauthors, they invite us into this intimate, radical, sacred space.

For instance, Ross is a human rights and reproductive justice activist who was one of the founders of the movement. She spent two decades as a leader of Sister-Song Women of Color Reproductive Justice Collective. As a Black feminist, she has provided a voice to the interwoven nature of white supremacy and reproductive destinies. Ross also stresses that she has needed historical and sociological analysis to support her activism.

That is where Solinger enters the equation. As an academic and historian, Rickie has studied the intersection of race, gender, sovereignty, and class for more than 25 years. As a white, Jewish teenager, she was keenly interested in understanding the events that led to the Holocaust and other atrocities. Conversely, history also taught her the power of voice, storytelling, and to look

for “champions of resistance as models,” a moniker she bestows on her coauthor (Ross and Solinger 2017, 4).

I highlight that this book was written by an activist and a scholar for a specific reason. In addition to providing an astounding intersectional analysis, *Reproductive Justice: An Introduction* also exemplifies good activist scholarship, “broadly defined as politically engaged scholarship which aims at furthering justice and equality of various forms” (Lennox and Yıldız 2020). Public administration continues to push up against the dominant paradigm of positivism. Thus, this book also serves as a guide for activist scholars because they are needed in the “range of heterogeneity in research traditions in public administration” (Riccucci 2010, 4).

In this book review, I first summarize some key takeaways from each chapter. Readers should note that the book is structured around the three primary principles of reproductive justice: 1) the right *not* to have a child; 2) the right to *have* a child; and 3) the right to *parent* children in safe and healthy environments (Ross and Solinger 2017, 9). To my surprise, this book is much more than an account of abortion rights, legal decisions, and the pro-choice/pro-life debate. And it should be noted that this review is but a glimpse. After recounting some high points, I note how public administration scholars, activists, instructors, and students would benefit from this text. Finally, I conclude by highlighting how Ross and Solinger can contribute to the dialogue and practice of advancing equity in the post-*Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization* world.

Chapter Highlights

Chapter 1, “A Reproductive Justice History” acquaints readers with the core tenets of this framework. First, it highlights how the white supremacist, capitalistic

foundations of the United States have impacted fertility, sexuality, and parenting through the present day. Several laws and policies are noted to demonstrate how quickly the colonies and new nation began racializing the population to uphold primacy for whites. For instance, the Virginia Colony passed a law that “defined the status of a child—slave or free—as following the status of the mother” in 1662 (Ross and Solinger 2017, 18). Although this position was opposite to the English common law tradition of defining children based on the position of their father, the law soon spread to other colonies. This ensured that enslaved women of color who became pregnant at the hands of white owners would perpetuate a lineage of children who would be born into slavery as well.

Ross and Solinger incorporate various examples in their account of the development of discriminatory reproductive policies throughout the course of each century, such as the outlawing of interracial marriage, the criminalization of “mixed” children, the Indian Removal Act of 1830, 19th century laws against contraception and abortion, forcing Native children into boarding schools, the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882, eugenics of the 20th century, forced sterilization, and Depression Era programs that aimed to reduce the number of children born to people in poverty. The false racist ideas that were touted to justify such policies were founded on “an old charge: African American women and other women of color were hypersexual. They did not have the intellectual or the moral resources to be good mothers raising future citizens. Lacking these qualities, they did not qualify as rights-bearing persons” (Ross and Solinger 2017, 39).

Beginning in the 1950s, this chapter also outlines how reproductive justice issues have sparked some of the most charged domestic policy debates in American life. The authors chart a clear course from the legalization of birth control to *Roe v. Wade* to the Hyde Amendment, which outlawed the use of federal funding to provide abortion services for poor women in need. Notably, this chapter introduces the reasoning that white feminists selected the term “choice” in their campaign for abortion rights. More importantly, it provides an important critique made by women of color activists, explaining that the “pro-choice” position is problematic because it only accommodates “women who can afford to enter the marketplaces of choices” (47). The lack of inclusive policymaking further exacerbated efforts to forcibly

control the bodies of poor women of color rather than ensuring that they and their children had access to the services they needed to thrive.

The first chapter culminates by describing how the reproductive justice movement was founded in the 1990s in response to gaps noted throughout the chapter. Several organizations led by women of color came together to assert that “reproductive dignity did not depend simply on making good *personal choices*” (Ross and Solinger 2017, 54). From that moment onward, activists, scholars, and policymakers have considered reproductive justice as the right to reproduce, the right not to reproduce, and the right to parent children in a safe and healthy world. Instead of “choice,” the two key words that they have emphasized are *human rights*.

In chapter 2, “Reproductive Justice in the Twenty-First Century,” the authors provide a thorough explanation of what this movement is and why it matters. A major component revolves around the centrality of storytelling. Stories are critical because they help people understand what it looks like when human rights are either protected or violated. Ross and Solinger explain that the movement requires *polyvocality*, or “many voices telling their stories that together may be woven into a unified movement for human rights” (Ross and Solinger 2017, 59). They also stress the importance of *centering*, as demonstrated by 12 Black women who placed themselves at the center of the lens to find new ways to describe reality from their standpoint at a pro-choice conference. They noted, “while abortion was a crucial resource for us, we also needed health care, education, jobs, day care, and the right to motherhood” (Ross and Solinger 2017, 64). In other words, the most historically disadvantaged and vulnerable people with the fewest resources must be front and center of the movement to address systemic oppression.

Key definitions are provided in the context of a comprehensive matrix of reproductive activism proposed for the 21st century. Three specific frameworks—reproductive health, reproductive rights, and reproductive justice—are defined and introduced as distinctive yet interrelated. Specifically, Ross and Solinger (2017) note:

Reproductive Justice is a movement-building and organizing framework that identifies how reproductive oppression is the result of the intersection of multiple oppressions and is inherently connected to the struggle for social justice and human rights.

Reproductive justice argues that social institutions, the environment, economics, and culture affect each woman's reproductive life. Reproductive justice activists invoke the global human rights system as the relevant legal framework using treaties, [and] standards, [while] moving beyond the U.S. Constitution. (69)

The remainder of chapter 2 expands on this definition. It describes the limitations of the U.S. legal system, which constructs law based on intentions rather than effects of discriminatory practices. As an alternative, the authors propose following the legal precedent set forth in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) that was crafted after World War II. The chapter further stresses the need for this approach given the reproductive oppression that has led to "the control and exploitation of women, girls, and individuals through our bodies, sexuality, [labor], and reproduction . . . It involves systems of oppression that are based on race, ability, class, gender, sexuality, age, and immigration status" (90).

Furthermore, the impact of neoliberalism on reproductive justice is outlined, demonstrating how American elites worked to construct an administrative state that promotes corporate welfare rather than social welfare. Relatedly, it notes how the question of who should be a mother emerged from white supremacy and class bias in the Reagan Era. As the authors close the chapter, they note: "With scant job opportunities, few living wage jobs, and severely slashed public services, childbearing feels much more like a class privilege than a choice" (Ross and Solinger 2017, 109).

Chapter 3, "Managing Fertility," expands on how motherhood as a privilege has evolved. It notes that the promises of second wave feminism were only achievable based on a woman's access to money and other resources, all of which were mainly reserved for white women in the middle class or above. Ross and Solinger further penetrate the limits of "choice" from the perspective of low-income women of color. They link the lack of affordable health care writ large to the lack of affordable *reproductive* health care.

Constitutional law and white feminists' prioritization of the U.S. Supreme Court to advance this movement is also examined through a critical lens. Returning to the call for a human rights approach, they note that: "Human rights are first most powerfully expressed as

moral commitments, then political structures and opportunities, and then as legal demands" (Ross and Solinger 2017, 127). As previously noted, the Hyde Amendment limited the protections of *Roe v. Wade* for low-income women, which also opened the floodgates for criminalizing social problems like poverty and illness. Considering this through a post-*Dobbs* lens, the UDHR is particularly relevant to consult as a guide for future legal action.

Furthermore, the chapter discusses how reproductive justice analysis has provided understanding of how certain bodies are marked as healthy and fit for reproduction. Just as true, other bodies are not, such as those of immigrants. The lack of resources provided to the most socially vulnerable leads to the predictable consequences of unintended pregnancy. Yet, neoliberalism promotes the narrative of this being a lifestyle mistake rather than product of inadequate public services. The authors stress that the goal of fertility management should be to enhance health and well-being instead of reducing assistance, increasing religious and financial barriers, and blaming individuals for their situation. Furthermore, they argue that effective antipoverty programs must include reproductive justice (Ross and Solinger 2017, 158).

Finally, chapter 4, "Reproductive Justice and the Right to Parent" examines the other two tenets of the framework. It begins by restating the aims of building a world in which all children are wanted and cared for, in which all families receive support, and where, around the globe, priorities are on creating conditions for healthy, thriving lives. Again, the authors move the conversation beyond the choice debate. They highlight incorporating a lens toward other social needs, such as education and affordable housing. They promote the application of the social determinants of health to replace the "fitness standard" currently cast on many low-income women of color when it comes to motherhood. Furthermore, they highlight the use of dog whistles to maintain *heteropatriarchy*, or the ways in which European settlers used genocide and enslavement to colonize the United States and entrench ideas about sexuality, reproduction, and "value" that elevated white people and degraded everyone else (Ross and Solinger 2017, 173). Instead, they reframe the debate and make it into sexual citizenship based on the UDHR.

In other words, motherhood is a human right and should be treated as such. This primer urges readers to

understand the basis of birth injustice, such as obstetric violence in the form of cesarean sections performed against the will of mothers. They highlight the racial politics of motherhood, noting how white supremacy leads to the dehumanization of women, which enables vulnerability to sexual violence to persist. Furthermore, the massive expansion of the prison system is noted as a highly problematic injustice to women of color, who have experienced far greater incarceration rates, which takes away their rights as citizens. A reproductive justice lens is also applied to transgender issues, adoption and foster care, children with disabilities, and potential inequities that result from assisted reproductive technologies (ARTs).

Furthermore, the final chapter closes by noting several ways in which reproductive justice is impacted beyond biology itself. Ross and Solinger provide an intersectional analysis that includes several policy areas. For instance, they examine the connection between reproductive justice and immigration policy, noting that 80% of women are raped in transit. Considering criminal justice, they advocate for treating all pregnant women through the lens of public health. They reiterate the impact that discriminatory federal housing policies and gentrification have had on racial segregation and intergenerational poverty of women and children. In relation to education, they emphasize how parents of color must worry if their children will make it home from school alive. They call for an end to senseless violence against young people of color. And they close with a focus on environmental and reproductive justice. Notably, the authors make the critical counterpoint that the growing number of people on the planet should not be regarded as a reason to reduce fertility. Instead, they assert that advocating for environmental justice means objecting to persistent claims that those with the least power are causing the most harm. They point a finger at the real causes and effects of climate change and environmental degradation, such as conspicuous consumption, corporate greed, and the military-industrial complex.

The *Epilogue* is a great addition and should not be overlooked. It includes vignettes written by six leaders of organizations that are applying the theories and concepts covered in the book. Examples are provided from around the country, including the states of Pennsylvania, Ohio, Colorado, Georgia, Florida, Oregon, and “beyond and around the U.S.-Canada imperial

border” (Ross and Solinger 2017, 255). This section is incredibly powerful and worth reading because it lends a practitioner’s perspective. It also demonstrates and celebrates how BIPOC women have made meaningful change.

Something for Everyone

Because it is a work of activist scholarship, the audience for *Reproductive Justice: An Introduction* is far reaching. First, anyone involved in activism in the United States—whether it is on behalf of the pro-choice movement, Black Lives Matter, anti-poverty, or racial justice—needs to understand the history and intersectional lens presented in this book. This is especially true for white activists and feminists who have historically failed to include the lived experience and leadership of women of color.

Furthermore, voices of the women featured throughout the chapters, and especially in the epilogue, are valuable for two key reasons: first, they provide examples of how to organize for reproductive justice, and second, they are potential contacts for others interested in expanding their organizing and engagement into this holistic area of work.

In addition, public administration scholars specializing in social equity will benefit from Ross and Solinger’s approach. The book provides an astounding application of intersectionality in both theory and practice. This leads to a new perspective and telling of American history through a racial equity lens. For instance, their account of the racialization of reproduction in the early United States offers a keen critical perspective on the role of social construction in policymaking. Moreover, they reveal limits of the U.S. legal system and critique constitutional law. They continually point to the UDHR as a policy document that fulfills the human rights imperative. Although this book is written in the context of the American movement, the emphasis on UDHR opens an opportunity to explore the fight for reproductive justice on a more international, comparative plane.

Finally, this text would be a great fit for several Master of Public Administration elective courses. Classes that primarily focus on topics such as social entrepreneurship in nonprofits, health policy, criminal justice reform, and social problems have clear connections to the core topics. Furthermore, the style of writing is stu-

dent friendly. It is academic in nature, rooting theory with history, yet flows well and is easy to comprehend. This is the type of book that students will gain much in terms of knowledge and understanding without having to reread passages two or three times.

Final Thoughts: How *Reproductive Justice: An Introduction* Can Advance Social Equity

In summary, Ross and Solinger present a radical critique and forward path to applying a human rights approach in the realm of women's rights and gender equity. They are skilled at intersectionality theory and practice and they know how to articulate it. Relatedly, the text serves as an instructive guide for how to incorporate storytelling into public administration research. This requires building relationships and lifting up the voices of those who are engaged in the work of advancing equity in their own communities. In other words, the book persuasively demonstrates that the greatest impact happens when social equity scholars join with activists and work side by side, as Ross and Solinger have done.

On a final note, one specific call resonated with me from the view of practice. It may be the key to restoring democratic institutions. As stated by Ross and Solinger (2017):

When activists assume that only those with whom they share particular identities are acceptable, safe, or credible, they are promoting a mechanical “angel/devil” practice of radical struggle, creating a false binary. This kind of “purity politics” foments criticism, shaming, and silencing—and turns naturally occurring political disagreements into ex-

cuses for dismissing the voices of others. . . . No one wins in the Oppression Olympics. In order to achieve reproductive justice, we need a united human rights movement that includes all persons and their voices. (75–76)

In other words, it is refreshing to see these radical leaders push for an end to the pro-choice/pro-life debate, and make a call for finding common ground. Relatedly, they also warn that there are some safe spaces where activists and scholars can go to be nurtured. However, “the road to human rights is not necessarily a protected space” (Ross and Solinger 2017, 76).

In reality, working for human rights and reproductive justice is difficult, scary, and uncomfortable. At times, we may say the wrong thing. However, as social equity scholars, we must have the courage to stumble and to keep on learning, to stick with it, and to move forward as one. I cannot stress enough how vitally important a collective approach is today considering the overturning of *Roe v. Wade*. This book stands as a beacon for us to do just that.

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