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Social Equity in Public Administration: A Global Challenge¹

Susan T. Gooden

Achieving social equity presents a formidable challenge for public administrators around the globe. While nations are distinctive in terms of their culture, language, political systems, demographics, and history, this article focuses on the five overarching actions that offer promise in addressing global inequities. These actions include: 1) embracing the UN's Universal Declaration of Human Rights; 2) focusing on social inequities as problems rather than conditions; 3) strengthening commitment to core democratic principles; 4) promoting accountability for race, colonization, and slavery; and 5) advancing a humanitarian approach.

Social inequities both within and among nations is a critical concern. Public administrators around the world are tasked with implementing the provision of public services to all, with commitment to core public service values such as effectiveness, efficiency, and equity. My previous research has argued that “governments around the world face the challenge of espousing principles of fairness while practicing inequity in their administration among particular groups” (Gooden 2020, 1). These groups face patterns of inequity that are both historical and contemporary. The patterns are repetitive and predictable along various characteristics, such as race, ethnicity, gender, religion, sexual orientation, class, and ability status. Issues of equity and justice are fundamental concerns of public administrators who constantly struggle to evaluate the country's social climate and ensure equity in governance (Akram 2004). Public administrators directly impact social equity. This article provides a global challenge to public administrators to advance social equity in five specific ways. These actions include: 1) embracing the UN's Universal Declaration of Human Rights; 2) focusing on social inequities as problems rather than conditions; 3) strengthening commitment to core democratic principles; 4) promoting accountability for race, colonization, and slavery; and 5) advancing a humanitarian approach.

Embrace the United Nation's Universal Declaration of Human Rights as a Guiding Compass

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) is a milestone document in the history of human rights. Drafted by representatives with different legal and cultural backgrounds from all regions of the world, the Declaration was proclaimed by the United Nations General Assembly in Paris on December 10, 1948 as a common standard of achievements for all peoples and nations. It sets out, for the first time, fundamental human rights to be universally protected and has been translated into over 500 languages—the most of any document (United Nations n.d.).

As Eleanor Roosevelt, the first chairperson of the Commission on Human Rights, and a key leader in the document's development stated,

In giving our approval to the declaration today, it is of primary importance that we keep clearly in mind the basic character of the document. It is not a treaty; it is not an international agreement. It is not and does not purport to be a statement of law or of legal obligation. It is a declaration of basic principles of human rights and freedoms, to be stamped with the approval of the

¹ Delivered as keynote address at the Social Equity Summit, an event celebrating the launch of the *Journal of Social Equity and Public Administration*, held October 6-8, 2022, Charlottesville, Virginia.

Table 1. Universal Declaration of Human Rights

<p>Preamble</p> <p>Whereas recognition of the inherent dignity and of the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family is the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world,</p> <p>Whereas disregard and contempt for human rights have resulted in barbarous acts which have outraged the conscience of mankind, and the advent of a world in which human beings shall enjoy freedom of speech and belief and freedom from fear and want has been proclaimed as the highest aspiration of the common people,</p> <p>Whereas it is essential, if man is not to be compelled to have recourse, as a last resort, to rebellion against tyranny and oppression, that human rights should be protected by the rule of law,</p> <p>Whereas it is essential to promote the development of friendly relations between nations,</p> <p>Whereas the peoples of the United Nations have in the Charter reaffirmed their faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person and in the equal rights of men and women and have determined to promote social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom,</p> <p>Whereas Member States have pledged themselves to achieve, in cooperation with the United Nations, the promotion of universal respect for and observance of human rights and fundamental freedoms,</p> <p>Whereas a common understanding of these rights and freedoms is of the greatest importance for the full realization of this pledge,</p> <p>Now, therefore, The General Assembly, Proclaims this Universal Declaration of Human Rights as a common standard of achievement for all peoples and all nations, to the end that every individual and every organ of society, keeping this Declaration constantly in mind, shall strive by teaching and education to promote respect for these rights and freedoms and by progressive measures, national and international, to secure their universal and effective recognition and observance, both among the peoples of Member States themselves and among the peoples of territories under their jurisdiction.</p>	<p>Article 1. All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood.</p> <p>Article 2. Everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration, without distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status. Furthermore, no distinction shall be made on the basis of the political, jurisdictional or international status of the country or territory to which a person belongs, whether it be independent, trust, non-self-governing or under any other limitation of sovereignty.</p> <p>Article 3. Everyone has the right to life, liberty and the security of person.</p> <p>Article 4. No one shall be held in slavery or servitude; slavery and the slave trade shall be prohibited in all their forms.</p> <p>Article 5. No one shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.</p> <p>Article 6. Everyone has the right to recognition everywhere as a person before the law.</p> <p>Article 7. All are equal before the law and are entitled without any discrimination to equal protection of the law. All are entitled to equal protection against any discrimination in violation of this Declaration and against any incitement to such discrimination.</p> <p>Article 8. Everyone has the right to an effective remedy by the competent national tribunals for acts violating the fundamental rights granted him by the constitution or by law.</p>
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Article 9.

No one shall be subjected to arbitrary arrest, detention or exile.

Article 10.

Everyone is entitled in full equality to a fair and public hearing by an independent and impartial tribunal, in the determination of his rights and obligations and of any criminal charge against him.

Article 11.

1. Everyone charged with a penal offence has the right to be presumed innocent until proved guilty according to law in a public trial at which he has had all the guarantees necessary for his defence.
2. No one shall be held guilty of any penal offence on account of any act or omission which did not constitute a penal offence, under national or international law, at the time when it was committed. Nor shall a heavier penalty be imposed than the one that was applicable at the time the penal offence was committed.

Article 12.

No one shall be subjected to arbitrary interference with his privacy, family, home or correspondence, nor to attacks upon his honour and reputation. Everyone has the right to the protection of the law against such interference or attacks.

Article 13.

1. Everyone has the right to freedom of movement and residence within the borders of each State.
2. Everyone has the right to leave any country, including his own, and to return to his country.

Article 14.

1. Everyone has the right to seek and to enjoy in other countries asylum from persecution.
2. This right may not be invoked in the case of prosecutions genuinely arising from non-political crimes or from acts contrary to the purposes and principles of the United Nations.

Article 15.

1. Everyone has the right to a nationality.
2. No one shall be arbitrarily deprived of his nationality nor denied the right to change his nationality.

Article 16.

1. Men and women of full age, without any limitation due to race, nationality or religion, have the right to marry and to found a family. They are entitled to equal rights as to marriage, during marriage and at its dissolution.
2. Marriage shall be entered into only with the free and full consent of the intending spouses.
3. The family is the natural and fundamental group unit of society and is entitled to protection by society and the State.

Article 17.

1. Everyone has the right to own property alone as well as in association with others.
2. No one shall be arbitrarily deprived of his property.

Article 18.

Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion; this right includes freedom to change his religion or belief, and freedom, either alone or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief in teaching, practice, worship and observance.

Article 19.

Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers.

Article 20.

1. Everyone has the right to freedom of peaceful assembly and association.
2. No one may be compelled to belong to an association.

Article 21.

1. Everyone has the right to take part in the government of his country, directly or through freely chosen representatives.
2. Everyone has the right to equal access to public service in his country.
3. The will of the people shall be the basis of the authority of government; this will shall be expressed in periodic and genuine elections which shall be by universal and equal suffrage and shall be held by secret vote or by equivalent free voting procedures.

Article 22.

Everyone, as a member of society, has the right to social security and is entitled to realization, through national effort and international co-operation and in accordance with the organization and resources of each State, of the economic, social and cultural rights indispensable for his dignity and the free development of his personality.

Article 23.

1. Everyone has the right to work, to free choice of employment, to just and favourable conditions of work and to protection against unemployment.
2. Everyone, without any discrimination, has the right to equal pay for equal work.
3. Everyone who works has the right to just and favourable remuneration ensuring for himself and his family an existence worthy of human dignity, and supplemented, if necessary, by other means of social protection.
4. Everyone has the right to form and to join trade unions for the protection of his interests.

Article 24.

Everyone has the right to rest and leisure, including reasonable limitation of working hours and periodic holidays with pay.

Article 25.

1. Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and of his family, including food, clothing, housing and medical care and necessary social services, and the right to security in the event of unemployment, sickness, disability, widowhood, old age or other lack of livelihood in circumstances beyond his control.
2. Motherhood and childhood are entitled to special care and assistance. All children, whether born in or out of wedlock, shall enjoy the same social protection.

Article 26.

1. Everyone has the right to education. Education shall be free, at least in the elementary and fundamental stages. Elementary education shall be compulsory. Technical and professional education shall be made generally available and higher education shall be equally accessible to all on the basis of merit.

2. Education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and to the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. It shall promote understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations, racial or religious groups, and shall further the activities of the United Nations for the maintenance of peace.

3. Parents have a prior right to choose the kind of education that shall be given to their children.

Article 27.

1. Everyone has the right freely to participate in the cultural life of the community, to enjoy the arts and to share in scientific advancement and its benefits.
2. Everyone has the right to the protection of the moral and material interests resulting from any scientific, literary or artistic production of which he is the author.

Article 28.

Everyone is entitled to a social and international order in which the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration can be fully realized.

Article 29.

1. Everyone has duties to the community in which alone the free and full development of his personality is possible.
2. In the exercise of his rights and freedoms, everyone shall be subject only to such limitations as are determined by law solely for the purpose of securing due recognition and respect for the rights and freedoms of others and of meeting the just requirements of morality, public order and the general welfare in a democratic society.
3. These rights and freedoms may in no case be exercised contrary to the purposes and principles of the United Nations.

Article 30.

Nothing in this Declaration may be interpreted as implying for any State, group or person any right to engage in any activity or to perform any act aimed at the destruction of any of the rights and freedoms set forth herein.

General Assembly by formal vote of its members, and to serve as a common standard of achievement for all peoples of all nations. (Roosevelt 1948)

The UDHR is aspirational, not legally binding, but it provides an important directional compass for all nations to aspire. Without dispute, it has been a powerful influence for nations across the world in developing and interpreting laws, and influencing political and social actions. A central feature of the UDHR is that it provides universalist language without mention of any specific political system, culture or religion.

Importantly, the UDHR addresses three critical domains of equality and equity: 1) Equality of rights—the elimination of all forms of discrimination and respect for the fundamental freedoms and civil and political rights of all individuals; 2) Equality of opportunities—stable social, economic, cultural and political conditions allows all individuals to fulfil their potential; and 3) Equity in living conditions—a contextually determined acceptable range of inequities in income, wealth, and other aspects of life in society (United Nations 2006).

As a field, we should give much more attention to the UDHR and identify it as a core aspirational anchor of our social equity work. The UDHR applies to *all* individuals in the world, yes everyone, without regard to race, gender, sexual orientation, religion, class, ability status, income, wealth, or any other categorization. All 193 member states have signed on in agreement with the UDHR; yet, the extent to which it is assigned and discussed in our professional associations and public administration courses—even such courses with a direct focus on social equity—is understated.

Focus on Social Inequities as Problems, Rather Than Conditions

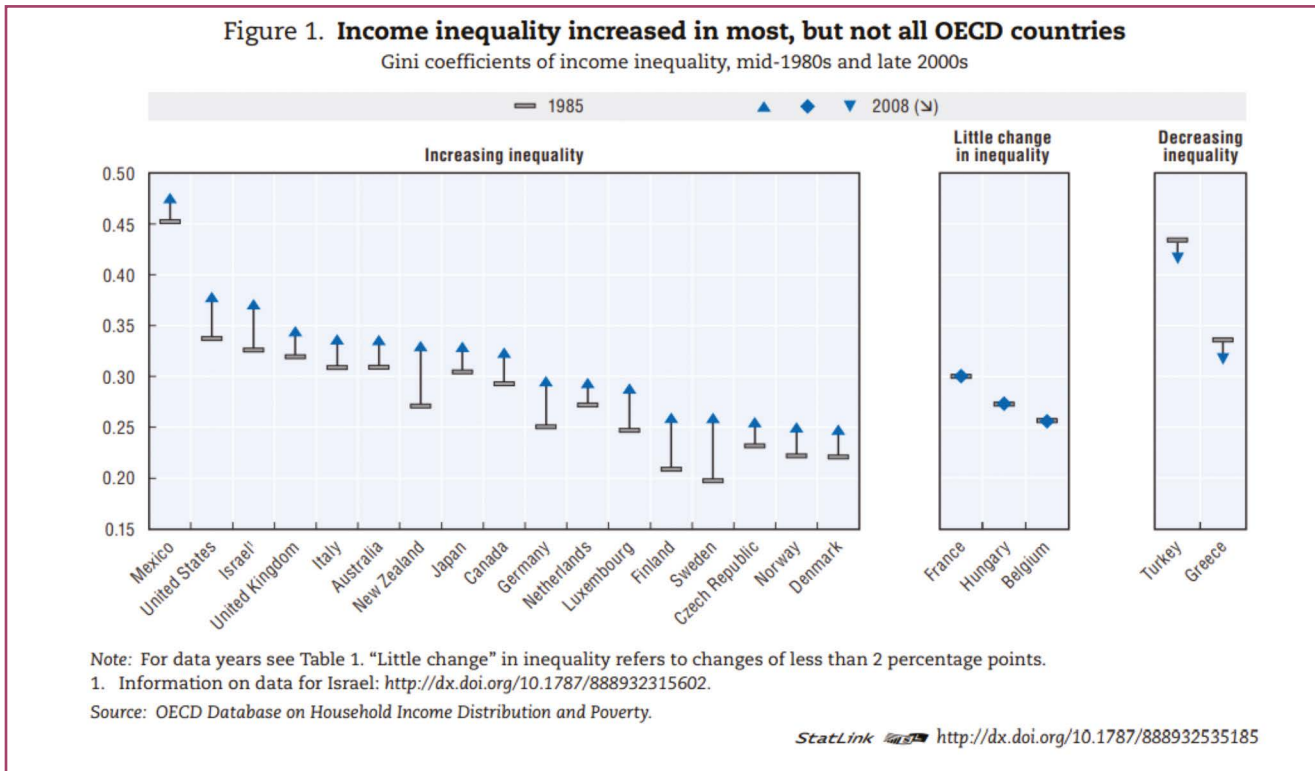
Inequities around the world represent serious problems to be solved, not conditions to be tolerated. Global inequities are high and have been increasing over the past several decades. The Gini coefficient is a common measure of income inequality that scores zero when everyone has identical incomes (perfect equality) and one when all income goes only to one person (perfect inequality). Developed by Corrado Gini, the Gini is based on the difference between the Lorenz curve (the observed cumulative income distribution) and the no-

tion of a perfectly equal income distribution. A Gini coefficient between .30 and .40 is generally viewed as desirable by economists in order for nations to prosper (see <https://databank.worldbank.org/metadataglossary/world-development-indicators/series/SI.POV.GINI>).

In the late 20th century, the income Gini coefficient ranged between a low of .24 in Slovenia and a high of .49 in Mexico. Particularly since the 1980s, Gini coefficients have steadily increased in many countries (See Figure 1). Based on 2010 data, “in OECD countries, the average income of the richest 10 percent of the population is about nine times that of the poorest 10 percent—a ratio of nine to one. However, the ratio varies widely from one country to another. While much lower than the OECD average in the Nordic and many continental European countries, the ratio reaches 10 to 1 in Italy, Japan, Korea, and the United Kingdom; around 14 to one in Israel, Turkey, and the United States; and 27 to 1 in Mexico and Chile” (OECD 2011, 22). Today, among all countries, South Africa has the highest Gini coefficient (.63), while Slovenia remains the lowest (.25). In South Africa, the richest 10 percent have 71 percent of the wealth, while the poorest 60 percent have 7 percent of the wealth (see <https://worldpopulationreview.com/country-rankings/gini-coefficient-by-country>).

The immediate and long-term consequences of these inequities have significant impacts at the individual and societal levels. These individuals and their families are systemically disadvantaged and this directly impacts access to education, employment, earnings, health, housing, food, transportation, and safety, to name a few. At its worst, extreme economic inequality results in a very real loss of life. An estimated 5.6 million people die every year for lack of access to health care in poor countries. More financial resources not only provide access to health care, it also lengthens life. For example, in São Paulo, Brazil, people in the richest areas can expect to live 14 years longer than those who live in the poorest areas. It is estimated that there would be 143 million more women worldwide if not for a combination of excess female mortality and sex-selective abortions (son preference). And, hunger kills over 2.1 million people each year (see Ahmed 2022).

From a societal stance, this leads to a massive loss of human capital that could have been invested into the betterment of society. A large segment of individuals,

Figure 1. Income Inequality Increased in Most, but Not All OECD Countries

with the ability to contribute to many societal needs across the country, such as teachers, lawyers, engineers, physicians, accountants, technical workers, IT professionals, entrepreneurs, artists, and athletes, are unable to acquire these skills and share their talents within the broader nation-state, and within the global economy. This is a real problem that needs to be intentionally addressed to reverse these long-term societal losses. Viewing these increasing equity gaps as unfortunate but unavoidable conditions is not only shortsighted but also self-destructive over the long run.

Strengthen Our Commitment to Core Democratic Principles

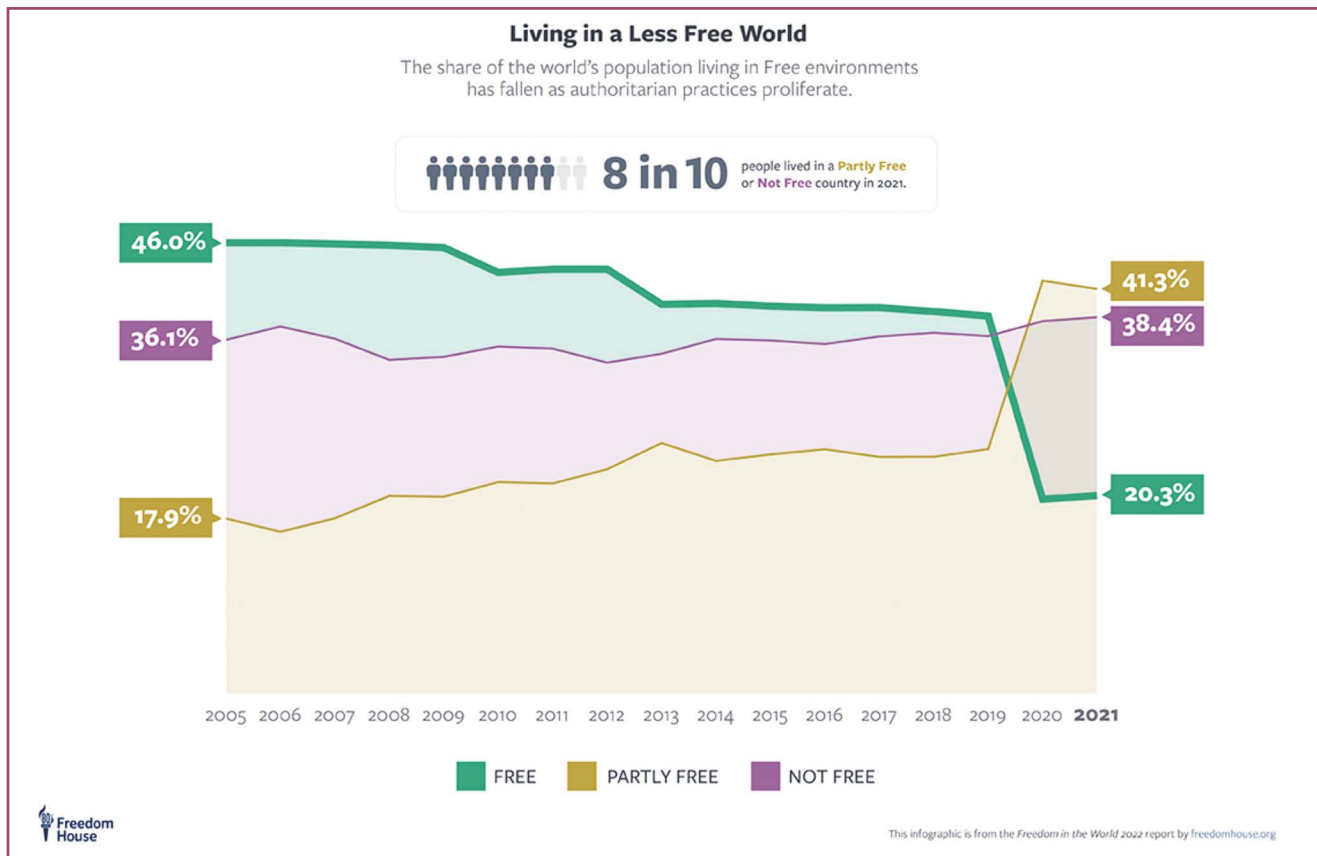
Advancing social equity is directly tied to core democratic principles. As succinctly articulated in a Freedom House 2022 report,

In its ideal form, it [democracy] is a governing system based on the will and consent of the governed, institutions that are accountable to all citizens, adherence to the rule of law, and respect for human rights. It is a network of mutually reinforcing structures in which those exercising power are subject

to checks both within and outside the state, for example, from independent courts, an independent press, and civil society. It requires an openness to alternations in power, with rival candidates or parties competing fairly to govern for the good of the public as a whole, not just themselves or those who voted for them. It creates a level playing field so that all people, no matter the circumstances of their birth or background, can enjoy the universal human rights to which they are entitled and participate in politics and governance. Democracy is also more than just an ideal. It is a practical engine of self-correction and improvement that empowers people to constantly, peacefully struggle toward that ideal. When one part of the system falters, the others can be used as tools to repair and strengthen it. (Repucci and Slipowitz 2022, 3)

Although the decline in democracies and the commitment to democratic principles is more commonly discussed, it is critical to note that authoritarian rule is also simultaneously increasing. This is an important and disturbing trend. As Figure 2 depicts, the share of the world's population living in a free world has signifi-

Figure 2. Living in a Less Free World



cantly decreased over time, based on an assessment of 10 political rights indicators and 15 social liberties indicators. Moreover, the scores of free democratic countries, like the United States, have dropped within the “free” category. There is a rise of populist leaders who are fueled by unchecked power to advance specific interests at the expense of minority groups.

To be sure, all democracies are imperfect, but their core principles offer important goal posts to realizing social equity. The decreases in democratic practices combined with an increase in authoritarian practices yields a troubling net loss for social equity around the globe. Public administration researchers and practitioners can and must advance the upholding of core democratic principles and practices within government. This is a key component of good governance which includes an emphasis on transparency, accountability, responsiveness, inclusion, equity, ethics, efficiency and effectiveness.

Promote Accountability for the Historical Impact of Racism, Colonization, and Slavery

The role of race and racism is woefully missing in global social equity analysis. Global inequities are most com-

monly presented in terms of financial terms, such as income, assets, poverty, and employment. When group analyses are conducted, these are most commonly reported relative to educational level, gender, and age. Global social equity research needs to significantly increase standard reporting of group analyses by race and/or ethnicity. As W. E. B. DuBois stated in 1897, “. . . the history of the world is the history, not of individuals, but of groups, not of nations, but of races, and he who ignores or seeks to override the race idea in human history ignores and overrides the central thought of all history.”

“Today’s historic inequality between rich countries and the majority of nations—and between racialized groups and White people within rich countries and within the global population—stems in large part from a brutal era of the slave trade, of racist policies, and of colonialism” of the 17th, 18th, and 19th centuries (Ahmed 2022, 26). The role of state-sanctioned racism and colonialization is very scant in global inequality analysis and reports published routinely by organizations such as the World Bank, OECD, and the United Nations.

“There is a long tradition of scholarship that highlights how Europe became wealthy at the expense of the places that it colonized . . . Not only did wealth distribution in former settler colonies (Australia, Canada, Latin America, and South Africa) primarily benefit European settlers at the expense of indigenous and colonised people, but economic ‘development’ (the generation of wealth) in many non-settler colonies was limited to the extraction of resources for the benefit of the colonising country, often using forced labour” (ODI Bites 2022).

Reparations are a public policy solution designed intentionally to provide financial redress for colonization and slavery. Viewed through a human rights lens, reparations include not only acknowledgment and apologies for past abuses and the harm they continue to cause, but fiscal redress as well. Reparations, paid by the state, help recognize failure of the state to protect human rights and the administration of justice (Lockhart 2021). A recent example includes the convening of a special committee in Belgium in 2021 which advanced a comprehensive program of reparations to address colonization offenses in Burundi, Congo, and Rwanda. Even more curious, is an examination of wealthy nations that have received reparations, such as payments made from Haiti to France. “France only recognized an independent Haiti in 1825, after its former colony agreed to pay reparations that would be worth \$22 billion today. Over the next 120 years, as much as 80 percent of Haiti’s revenue went to paying off this debt” (Labrador and Roy 2021).

Governments have not been innocent bystanders in the state of global inequity. Violations of fundamental human rights through colonialization and slavery, as well as their continuing aftermath, have been systematically minimized relative to actions of accountability. Serious efforts to address global inequities require sober consideration of all factors that contributed to their manifestation, including appropriate historical redress.

Advance a Humanitarian Approach

In affluent countries, the problem isn’t that there isn’t enough money—the problem is that money is in too few hands. Achieving social equity requires strong and deliberate pre-distributive and/or redistributive policies. Pre-distributive policies include more direct labor mar-

ket interventions, such as increasing the minimum wage or increasing the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC). Redistributive policies involve tax transfers from the wealthy to the poor, such as unemployment compensation and food stamps. “Even in relatively affluent countries with a strong liberal tradition, the ‘deals’ struck by Governments and societies to resolve the economic and social crisis of the 1930s were pursued with increasing vigour; most notably, public programmes were implemented to fight poverty, and universal social security schemes financed by extensive and progressive tax systems were adopted” (United Nations 2006, 4).

While such policies can be very effective in reducing inequities, there must be political will to support such actions. Since at least the days of England’s Elizabethan Poor Laws in the 17th century, societies have characterized people who are in poverty as “deserving” or “non-deserving.” The deserving poor are those who are considered poor through no shortcoming of their own—for example, individuals who were born with disabilities. The non-deserving poor are those who are considered poor because of their own choices or behaviors. These individuals are viewed as lazy and/or poor decision makers. This sets up a conundrum: There is a willingness to help those who are deserving, but an unwillingness (or more precisely blatant opposition) to helping or enabling those who are not deserving.

Over the past several decades, there has been a weakened redistributive role of the state. Support for redistributive policies must first be preceded by empathy. Empathy occurs when individuals can relate to, or see themselves in, the individuals who are struggling. Terms such as “deserving” vs. “undeserving,” “belonging” vs. “othering,” “inclusion vs. exclusion,” and “in-group” vs. “out-group” are all terms that differentiate the status of groups in terms of access to resources controlled by those who are in positions of power and influence (Barbelet and Wake 2020).

Advancements in social justice, except in extraordinary situations and circumstances such as the gaining of political independence, the aftermath of a long war or the depths of an economic depression, require pressure from organized political forces. Brief and sporadic protests against injustices, even if vehement, usually have a limited effect. Within society, the advancement of social equity involves efforts to realize greater equality in the life conditions of different social groups, including vul-

nerable populations. These efforts require intentional actions by policymakers and public administrators. “Distributive and redistributive policies were necessary for societies, and eventually for the entire international community, to progress towards social justice” (United Nations 2006, 6). According to Rawls (1999) a core principle of justice is that social and economic inequalities are arranged so that they are both (a) to the greatest benefit of the least advantaged, consistent with the just savings principle and (b) attached to offices and positions open to all under conditions of fair equality of opportunity.

The global COVID-19 pandemic shone a bright light on fundamental inequities. Across the world, those who are poor fared much worse. This holds true, not only in terms of developed health care systems, access to health care and the vaccine, but also in other critical areas such as employment (ability to work remote vs. not); earnings (sectors such as restaurants and hospitality); access to education; access to the internet; and overall well-being. However, there were also some important silver linings where there was political will to make health care more accessible (telehealth); provide income support for those who were unemployed; and develop and support many innovative and remote service delivery structures. These swift and broad public policy changes were unprecedented. While multiple groups benefitted from these changes, they were largely motivated by the randomness of COVID-19’s upper hand, particularly during the first year of the pandemic. In many ways, the pandemic closely approximated Rawl’s veil of ignorance. Because we did not fully understand how COVID-19 spread, the best way to advance our self-interest of avoiding illness, hospitalization or death, was to protect everyone.

Conclusion

To be clear, the achievement of social equity in public administration is a global challenge. The crux of the challenge is the lack of a truly humanitarian approach, where the well-being of all individuals is prioritized in order to advance the collective. James Kinney’s poem, “The Cold Within,” offers a clear and sobering characterization of what individuals, governments, and indeed nations must overcome.

Six humans trapped by happenstance
In bleak and bitter cold.
Each one possessed a stick of wood
Or so the story’s told.

Their dying fire in need of logs
The first man held his back
For of the faces round the fire
He noticed one was black.

The next man looking ’cross the way
Saw one not of his church
And couldn’t bring himself to give
The fire his stick of birch.

The third one sat in tattered clothes.
He gave his coat a hitch.
Why should his log be put to use
To warm the idle rich?

The rich man just sat back and thought
Of the wealth he had in store
And how to keep what he had earned
From the lazy shiftless poor.

The black man’s face bespoke revenge
As the fire passed from his sight.
For all he saw in his stick of wood
Was a chance to spite the white.

The last man of this forlorn group
Did nought except for gain.
Giving only to those who gave
Was how he played the game.

Their logs held tight in death’s still hands
Was proof of human sin.
They didn’t die from the cold without
They died from the cold within.

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Equity in Public Budgeting: Lessons for the United States*

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There is a growing realization among both academics and practitioners that infusing government budgets with an equity dimension has the potential to provide a pathway to a more equitable society. This potential has already been realized by more than 80 governments worldwide that have been using gender-responsive budgets (GRB) to advance gender equity. GRB represents a specific example of the growing trend in budgeting, which sees government budgets as something more than a neutral process of resource allocation. Rather, budgets are instruments to influence the allocation of resources to advance equity. In this article, we look at how international experiences with GRB can inform recent efforts in the United States by governments at all levels to use their budgets to advance social equity, especially for historically marginalized groups. We identify five factors that have contributed to GRB success and discuss how each of the factors can inform these efforts.

A government's budget is the single most important statement of its priorities. It provides information as to how public resources are mobilized and allocated, and is the key instrument for making and changing policies to address public problems. Historically, advancing equity has rarely been seen as one of these problems. In recent years, however, the confluence of Black Lives Matter and other social movements highlighting racism and inequality, and the COVID-19 pandemic that has exacerbated existing disparities among individuals and communities, has led to the recognition that infusing government budgets with an equity dimension has the potential to provide a pathway to a more equitable society. This potential has already been realized by more than 80 governments (Kolovich 2018) worldwide that have been using their budgets to advance gender equity.

Infusing a gender perspective into government budgets has been referred to using several terms including "women's budgets," "gender budgets," "gender-sensitive budgets," and "gender-responsive-budgets." We use the term gender-responsive budgeting (GRB) to describe intentional efforts by governments to incorporate a gender perspective into their budgets to advance equity between women and men.¹ GRB represents an explicit acknowledgment that budgets are not gender

neutral and that expenditure and revenue decisions made in the budget process can reinforce, maintain or reduce gender inequities. As Downes et al. (2017, 22) write, "Gender budgeting is a specific example of a broader trend in budgeting, whereby the budget is considered as something more than a neutral process of resource allocation, but as a value-laden process that embodies—and potentially influences—long-standing societal choices about how resources are deployed."

This broader trend in budgeting is reflected in recent efforts in the United States by governments at all levels to use their budgets to advance social equity, especially for historically marginalized groups. In this article, we look at how lessons learned from gender equity initiatives can inform these efforts. We begin with a brief history of equity in government budgeting, followed by a discussion of how equity can be (1) infused throughout the budget process that determines the procedures for government deliberations concerning the allocation of expenditures and revenue sources, and (2) included in different budget formats that establish budget decision rules and measures of success. We then look at how international experiences with GRB can inform the implementation of equity in budgeting in the United States. We conclude with a summary of the main findings in the article.

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1. Gender budget initiatives, to date, have not included genders other than women and men.

A Brief History of Equity in Government Budgeting

Equity entered the public administration lexicon in the 1960s when George Frederickson and other scholars initiated the “new public administration movement” which recognized that “public administration could be better served by emphasizing fairness not only in tandem with efficiency but possibly over efficiency” (Guy and McCandless 2020, 8). Since 2005, the National Academy of Public Administration (NAPA), the preeminent public administration organization in the United States² has included equity as one of the four pillars of public administration along with economy, effectiveness, and efficiency. The notion of equity, however, predates public administration by several millennia with the search for “the good” as the main focus of political philosophers through the centuries. Several philosophical viewpoints concerning equity have influenced political science, political theory, economics, and in turn, public budgeting. Economics in particular has long employed notions of equity, especially those consistent with utilitarianism,³ a philosophy that implicitly serves as the ethical basis for policy analysis and economic policy judgments, such as whether and how government should intervene in the economy.

Richard Musgrave, often referred to as the founder of public economics (Sturn 2007), developed a taxonomy with three separate branches to explain government’s intervention in a market economy: allocation, stability, and distribution. Most relevant, the distribution branch calls for government intervention to ensure that the distribution of income and wealth is fair (Musgrave 1959). To execute actions to bring about this more equal distribution, a government has to infuse equity into its most important policy document—the budget. Historically, equity has rarely been explicitly considered in a comprehensive way on either the expenditure or revenue side of government budgets.

Expenditures

Looking at budget formats—the way in which governments classify expenditures—provides a view of how eq-

uity has been considered on the expenditure side of the budget. The most commonly used format is the line-item budget in which expenditures are classified by inputs, and show what agencies spend on specific line items, for example, salaries, benefits, office supplies, travel, utilities and equipment. Introduced at the end of the 19th century to address “excesses of the political machines that controlled many state and local governments” (Municipal Technical Advisory Service 2021), the line-item classification by expenditure type speaks to the goal of cost control in which equity has had no explicit place.

Over time, governments have adopted several alternative budget formats to provide better information about expenditures than does the line-item approach. The most frequently used alternative is performance budgeting, a format in which expenditures are classified by measures of activities performed by an agency rather than by items it purchases. The origins of performance budgeting can be tracked back to research at the New York Bureau of Municipal Research (Williams 2006) in the early years of the 20th century. But, the actual term “performance budgeting” was coined almost 50 years later by the First Hoover Commission that recommended its adoption as an effective management approach to the budget process (Williams 2006). As performance budgeting has matured, several public finance scholars have pointed out that it is not realistic to expect that budgeted amounts can be determined by performance measures, rather that budgeting can be “performance-informed” where performance information helps policymakers in their budgeting decisions (Ho 2018; Joyce 2003).

Performance budgeting requires collecting and reporting data to measure government performance, using input, output, and outcome data to measure efficiency and effectiveness (see Table 1). Even with the growing emphasis on equity, there is little evidence that governments have amended their budgeting laws to include equity as a performance metric. For example, a recent analysis of U.S. state budget laws found this to be true for the states (Rubin, Bartle, and Willoughby 2022), and the word “equity” is totally absent in the most recent edition (2021) of *The Budgetary Processes in the States*, a comprehensive summary of budget practices in U.S. state gov-

2. NAPA is an independent, nonprofit, nonpartisan organization established in 1967 and chartered by Congress in 1984. Its close to 1,000 Fellows include former U.S. cabinet officers, members of Congress, governors, mayors, and state legislators, as well as prominent scholars, career public administrators, and nonprofit and business executives.

3. According to utilitarian philosophy, government should provide the greatest happiness for the greatest number of people.

Table 1. Types of Measures Used in Performance Budgets

<p><i>Input measures</i> classify government expenditures by the amount of resources being purchased to deliver products or services. Examples include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of flu vaccinations purchased • Salaries for full-time health care workers <p><i>Output measures</i> classify expenditures by how many products and services government provides. Examples include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of flu vaccinations given • Number of health care workers administering vaccinations <p><i>Efficiency measures</i> classify government expenditures by the relationship between the amount produced and the resources used. There are two types of efficiency measures: unit costs and productivity. Unit costs are resources used/number produced. Productivity costs are number produced/resources used. Examples include:</p> <p>Unit Costs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cost per vaccination <p>Productivity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shots given per health care worker <p><i>Outcome measures</i> classify government expenditures by the impact of products and services provided. Examples include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flu recidivism rate • Flu hospitalization rate <p><i>Effectiveness measures</i> relate outcome measures to inputs used. Examples include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cost per reduction in flu cases • Cost per hospitalization rate

Source: Rubin, Bartle, and Willoughby 2022.

ernments published by the National Association of State Budget Officers (NASBO).⁴ But, while equity has generally not been explicitly mentioned in budget laws, state governments have measured performance related to equity especially where it has been mandated by laws such as the Americans with Disabilities Act and affirmative action, and in state constitutional provisions for universal education (Bartle and Wang 2006).

Another budget format that has been adopted by governments is the program budget in which expenditures are classified by their contribution to broad government objectives, such as education or health care, without regard to the specific agency responsible for providing the activity or service. Equity has not typically been one of these objectives. Still another format is zero-based budgeting (ZBB) that differs from other formats in that the budget for each new cycle is created starting from a “zero base,” rather than incrementally. The focus is on the justification of all expenditures for each budget cycle by each agency. This approach has not had an explicit

focus on equity. The absence of an equity element also holds true in budget reforms such as the Planning Programming Budget System (PPBS) whose major objective was to unify the planning, programming and budgeting systems of government, and Management by Objectives (MBO) that focused on the cost of meeting management targets, with periodic performance reviews (Axelrod 1995).

Revenues

Whenever equity has been discussed with respect to the revenue side of the budget, it has generally been with respect to personal income, particularly with regard to taxes. As far back as 1776, Adam Smith enunciated four standards to guide taxation in a market-based economy. Often referred to as the four canons of taxation, these standards are fairness, certainty, convenience, and economy. According to John Mikesell, a recognized authority on taxation, “although the language of those standards has changed . . . and emphasis has shifted with the de-

4. NASBO has been the professional membership organization for state budget and finance officers for more than 75 years.

velopment of a more complex economy, modern reform still concerns essentially the same issues” (2014, 352), including fairness. Regarding fairness, Smith wrote, “The subjects of every state ought to contribute towards the support of the government, as nearly as possible, in proportion to their respective abilities” (Mikesell 2014, 352).

More specifically, the ability to pay concept of fairness in taxation⁵ looks at two dimensions—horizontal equity and vertical equity. Horizontal equity is concerned with equal treatment of taxpayers with equal ability to pay. Vertical equity is concerned with the treatment of taxpayers with different abilities to pay. While these two concepts have been questioned by some scholars as to their conceptual coherence and normative significance (McDaniel and Repetti 1993), they continue to provide the focal point for discussions regarding tax equity in relation to income. In recent years, however, there have been dimensions of tax equity in addition to income that have been brought into the budget dialogue. For instance, tax equity by gender has received attention with issues such as the “marriage tax” feature of the federal income tax, and other tax policies that treat women differently than men⁶ (Abramovitz and Morgan 2006; McCaffery 1997).

Another dimension of tax equity being recognized is related to race. Leachman et al. (2018) point out that several tax actions in the 19th and early 20th centuries in U.S. southern states likely had racist intent. For instance, after the white population in Alabama regained control of the state legislature in 1875, it rewrote the state constitution to impose strict constitutional limits on property tax rates. Since almost all property was owned by whites, this policy kept their tax burden low and protected them from future increases if Blacks gained power. During this period, Arkansas, Missouri, Georgia, and Texas adopted similar constitutional property tax limits.

Leachman et al. (2018) also found that in 1932 when Mississippi adopted the nation’s first retail sales tax, the main impetus was probably to replace the shortfall in revenues caused by the Great Depression. But, the governor “urged adopting the new tax in part by emphasizing that the revenue would be used to reduce property taxes,

and that as a result, the tax would shift the state tax base away from (mostly white) property owners onto consumers with little or no property but who purchased taxable items (many of whom were Black)” (p. 9).

In the late 1970s, tax limitations swept the country with significant, if unintended, equity implications. For example, Proposition 13 passed by referendum in California in 1978, significantly limited increases in the state’s property taxes, and had the effect of shifting the tax burden to more regressive sales and excise taxes that had a greater impact on those in lower income brackets, many of whom were members of historically marginalized groups. Proposition 13 was followed by similar property tax limitations in several other states that, in effect, shifted the tax burden away from primarily white property owners to other taxpayers, many of whom were people of color.

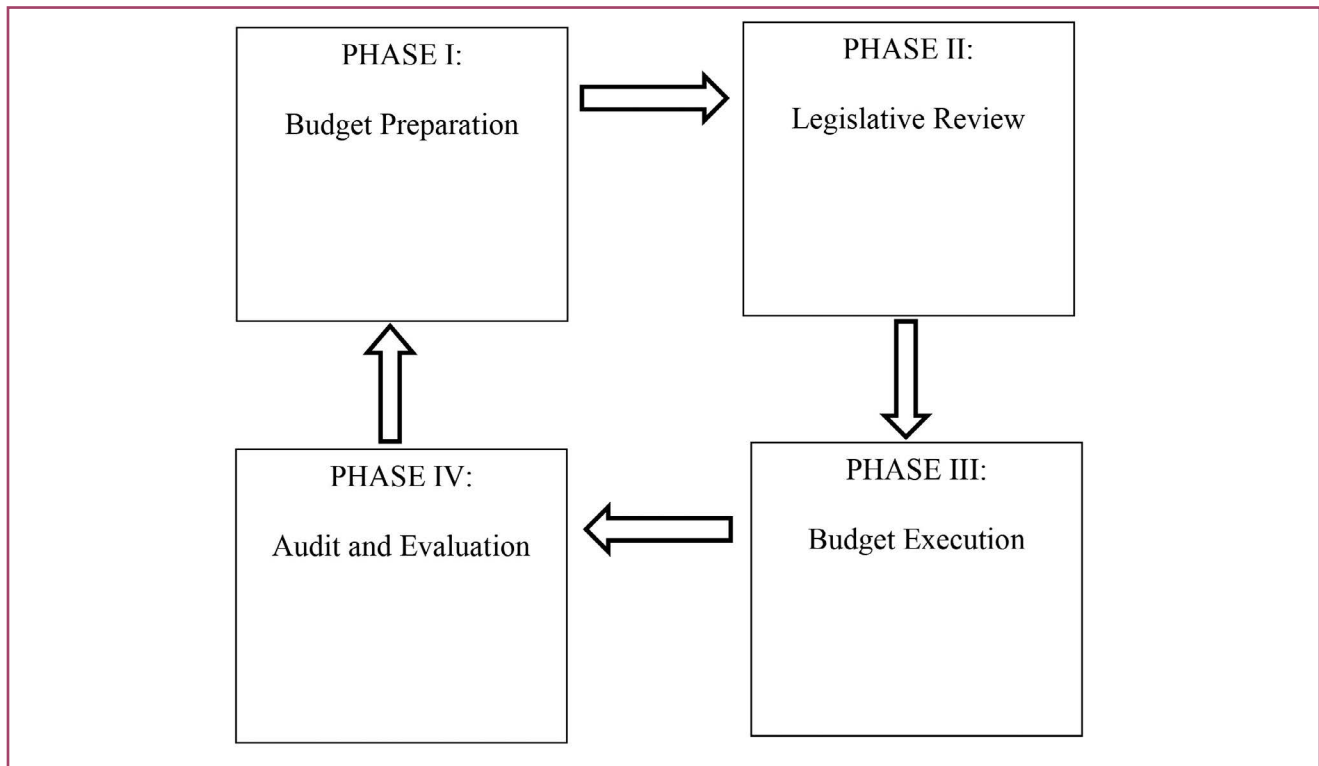
These examples illustrate the need to move beyond a singular focus on income when considering budget equity to include other demographic characteristics such as gender and race. However, governments typically calculate tax burdens based on income, or sometimes geographic area (such as city, county, school district, or legislative district). It is rare to see tax burdens disaggregated by other demographic characteristics that are relevant to equity. Nor do governments systematically analyze the equity of spending beyond isolated analyses of specific programs. Generally, we do not know much about the equity impact of either the expenditure or the revenue sides of the budget, despite the growing recognition of its importance.

Infusing Equity Through Phases of the Budget Process

The budget process by which governments create and approve their budget determines the procedures for government deliberations concerning the allocation of expenditures and revenue sources. In the United States, in the federal government and most state and large local governments, as well as in other countries that separate powers

5. A second concept of fairness is the “benefits received principle” that relates equity to the use of government services. But, as Mikesell writes: “Problems prevent wholesale application of the benefits received principle” (2014, 360). In addition, the principle is linked to the use of government services, and as such, does not focus on the distribution of the tax burden, the main concern of equity in taxation.

6. Married taxpayers have the option of filing federal tax returns jointly or filing separate tax returns. The marriage penalty or marriage tax takes effect when the taxes paid jointly exceed what would have been paid if each partner had remained single and filed as a single filer.

Figure 1. The Budget Process

between the executive and legislative branches of government, the four phases of the budget process are: budget preparation, legislative review, budget execution, and audit/evaluation (see Figure 1). Each phase provides a potential for integrating equity into the decision-making process.

Phase I: Budget Preparation

In Phase I, the executive branch of government typically has the responsibility for budget preparation.⁷ Led by the chief executive, this branch is comprised of numerous agencies or ministries along with a central budget office that is responsible for establishing budget preparation guidelines, approving agency budget submissions, and consolidating funding requests into the executive's budget submission to the legislature. The priorities of the chief executive are operationalized through actions of the central budget office and budget requests of agencies/ministries. For example, if equity is one of the chief executive's priorities, the central budget office can mandate that agencies submit a "needs assessment" in their budget requests detailing existing needs and answering

these questions: how does their budget request address these needs and how is equity addressed? The central budget office can also use its call circulars to require agencies to include descriptions of the potential equity impact of their budget requests. These circulars contain instructions to agencies regarding the budget calendar, processes, forms for preparation, and the level of detail for budget submission.

In efforts to promote gender equity, governments across the world have incorporated GRB initiatives into the budget preparation phase. For example, in Finland, once the decision was made to adopt a GRB initiative, the Ministry of Finance "issued specific instructions in the budget circular, requiring all ministries to include a summary of the important gender impacts of measures for each budget chapter" (Quinn 2018, 69). Central budget offices in Uganda, South Korea, and Indonesia have included templates for developing a gender budget statement (Kolovich and Loungani 2018) in their engendered budget calls. This statement "is usually described as a gender-specific accountability document produced by a government agency to show what its programmes

7. In a few states in the United States, the budget is prepared by the legislative branch; in a few others the executive and legislative branches work together on budget preparation.

and budgets are doing in respect of gender” (Budlender 2016, 5). Among countries with a GRB initiative, India has released a gender budget statement along with its national budget documents since 2005, and Rwanda has used them since 2012 when gender budget statements were made mandatory.

Several countries have incorporated gender impact assessment into their budget preparation phase that typically addresses the question: how does a law, policy, or program reduce, maintain, or increase gender inequalities? In Iceland, for instance, gender equity targets must be included when drafting the country’s budget (Quinn 2018). Other countries using gender impact assessments in budget preparation include Belgium, Canada, France, Israel, Mexico, Morocco, Netherlands, Norway, Spain, Sweden, Uganda, and the UK (Downes et al. 2017; Fernández-Shaw 2019).

In Austria, gender impact assessment is constitutionally mandated and is integrated into the nation’s organic budget law. The Austrian constitution calls for “the Budget Management of the Federation [to apply] the principles of impact orientations, especially under the consideration of the objectives of the effective equality of men and women, transparency, efficiency and the most faithfully possible representation of the financial situation of the Federation” (Rubin and Bartle 2022, 8). It further calls for the implementation of “measures for an impact-oriented administration, especially also under consideration of the objective of the effective equality of men and women” (Downes et al. 2017, 11). Each ministry is required to define output measures to support outcomes, including gender outcome goals. Administrative units within the ministries’ outputs have to be defined, including gender outputs. “The Court of Audit assesses whether outcomes and outputs are met” (Schwarzendorfer 2014).

Phase II: Legislative Review

In Phase II, the executive’s budget is submitted to the legislature for review and approval. A gender perspective can be included in Phase II in several ways, such as including it in guidelines for expenditure and revenue legislation and in language establishing new programs and agencies. In Sweden for instance, “the Lower House of the Parliament ensures that gender is a key criterion in the formulation and oversight of the na-

tional budget” (OECD 2015, 51). In Mexico, “the parliament, under the leadership of female parliamentarians and INMUJERES⁸. . . have worked to ensure that greater resources were devoted to policies and programs that address women’s needs” (Fragoso and Rodriguez 2016, 9). In Canada, the Parliament has a Standing Committee on the Status of Women that oversees the implementation of the Gender Budgeting Act (Bova and Herold da Costa Reis 2022). And, “in South Africa, a sub-committee of the powerful Finance Committee led the process of integrating gender into the committee’s work. In Uganda, members of the Special Interest Groups (SIG) Caucus, through their respective parliamentary oversight committees, began this process” (Wehner and Byanyima 2004, 81).

Phase III: Budget Execution

After the budget has been approved by the legislature, it enters the third phase of the process in which budget plans are put into operation by departments, ministries, and agencies in the executive branch. There are several ways in which a gender perspective can be incorporated in this phase such as including it in objectives for procurement and outsourcing. Here again, as with Phases I and II, GRB initiatives illustrate how an equity perspective can be infused into budget execution. For example, in Austria, “each line ministry is obliged to consider how its activities relate to gender equality, and to design objectives and indicators to promote gender equality in the context of the budget” (OECD 2017, 78). And, in Spain, gender equity objectives are established by the central budget agency with the input of each line ministry (OECD 2017, 35). Regarding procurement, in Israel, for instance, the “Mandatory Tenders Law states that when two bids receive the same number of points after evaluation, the bid from a ‘business controlled by a woman’ shall be chosen” (Rimmer 2017, 14).

Another way in which gender has been infused into Phase III is through gender disaggregated incidence analysis that decomposes spending and revenue policies by gender to examine their initial impact and their potential longer-term effects. For instance, Italy and Belgium have both classified expenditures by their impact on gender equality: neutral (no impact), sensitive (some gender-specific impact), or “designed to reduce gender inequalities”

8. INMUJERES is a nonprofit institution in Mexico that works to advance equal treatment of women “in the political, cultural, economic and social life of the country” (UNESCO 2016).

(Bova and Herald da Costa Reis 2022, 6). Not only can this type of analysis help those within government assess fiscal impact by gender, “incidence analysis also provides a useful systematic oversight that helps civil society and citizens to scrutinize if tax and allocations are aligned with the gender related objectives” (Bova and Herald da Costa Reis 2022, 6).

Phase IV: Audit and Evaluation

Audit/evaluation is the fourth and final stage of the budget process. There are two basic types of audits: financial audits and performance audits. A financial audit determines if public funds are spent legally and managed in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles. A performance audit examines the efficiency and effectiveness of government programs and functions and determines whether programs achieve their intended objectives. Gender audits fall into the second category. They identify the specific ways in which the objective of gender equity is or is not addressed in the budget. As Katherine Rake, a GRB expert writes, “a gender audit of policy and expenditures offers a unique opportunity to evaluate the impact and effectiveness of the government’s social and economic programme” (2000, 117).

Austria has incorporated gender equity evaluations into impact assessments, performance audits, and into

the purview of the country’s Court of Audit, its supreme audit institution. By connecting spending to measurable and relevant outcomes, the OECD has called the Austrian approach a “leading international practice in gender budgeting” (Woolner 2019). Gender audits have also been used to assess specific areas of government expenditures. For instance, they have been used in Nepal, Kenya, and Senegal to assess the success of engendering energy policy (Clancy and Mohlakoana 2020).

Gender audits, however, cannot stand on their own but must be consistent with rules and laws promulgated throughout all phases of the budget process. This holds true for a broader consideration of equity in budgeting. If agencies are asked to apply an equity focus in the budget preparation phase, but it is not reinforced in the legislative approval phase, they are likely to put in a half-hearted effort during budget execution. Similarly, if equity is not included in the evaluation/budget audit phase, there is no feedback loop to agencies and legislators regarding whether the initiatives are working.

Table 2 provides a summary of the potential for incorporating equity throughout the four phases of the budget process. We discussed this potential almost two decades ago (Rubin and Bartle 2005) and found that in Phase I, the budget preparation phase, several governments had included gender guidelines and other GRB initiatives, and that in Phase IV, the audit and evalua-

Table 2. Potential Initiatives for Infusing Equity into the Four Phases of the Budget Process

Phases of Budget Cycle	Potential Initiatives
Budget preparation	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Impact statement 2. Budget calls
Budget approval	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Creation of equity guidelines for budget legislation 2. Integration of equity-specific language in legislation 3. Incorporation of equity outcomes into fiscal notes
Budget execution	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Creation of guidelines for spending when discretion is given to agencies 2. Development of equity guidelines for outsourcing, procurement, and grant disbursement 3. Implementation of equity goals in staffing
Audit and evaluation	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Incorporation of an equity dimension into financial audits of spending 2. Evaluation of equity goals in performance audits focusing on outputs 3. Audit for compliance with equity goals and guidelines

Source: Rubin, Bartle, and Willoughby 2022.

Table 3. Potential for Infusing Equity into Different Budget Formats

Budget Format	Organizing Mechanism	Potential Equity Integration
Line-item	Expenditures organized by inputs (resources purchased)	Percentage of wages and salaries paid to people of color, women, and other marginalized groups Percentage of contracts awarded to people of color, women, and other marginalized groups
Performance	Expenditures organized by activities	Performance measures directed at equity objectives
Program	Expenditures organized by contribution to government objectives	Program impact by race, gender Equity as a stand-alone objective
Zero-based	Expenditures organized by decision packages associated with various funding levels	Race and gender impact at different decision-making levels

Source: Rubin, Bartle, and Willoughby 2022.

tion phase, there was significant progress in adopting a gender focus. There were, however, fewer instances of GRB initiatives integrated into Phase II, the legislative approval phase, or into Phase III, budget execution. That this finding still holds today should not be surprising. When reviewing the budget, members of legislative bodies have diverse views and may not have a unified opinion on implementing a GRB initiative as compared with the hierarchical executive branch in which a chief executive's focus on equity will filter through to agencies preparing budget requests. In addition, "there are limits to parliamentary interventions. The role of legislatures in the budget process is often confined to budgetary approval and oversight, while budget formulation and execution are more commonly functions of the executive" (Wehner and Byanyima 2004, 71). In Phase III, agencies do not always have the significant discretionary powers needed to initiate policies such as those that incorporate equity.

Infusing Equity into Budget Formats

The *budget process* determines the procedures for government deliberations to establish spending priorities and to determine how these activities will be paid for. The *budget format* refers to the way in which expenditures are classified. By presenting expenditures in a particular format, budget documents focus attention on specific

questions, relationships, and developments. As discussed earlier, the most commonly used budget formats are line-item budgets, performance-budgets, program budgets, and zero-based budgets. Equity has not been explicitly considered in any of these formats, but as Table 3 shows, has the potential to be incorporated into each.

In line-item budgets, an equity perspective can be incorporated into individual line-item entries such as procurement, where the proposed expenditure could include information on the proportion of contracts that will go to different groups of people such as women and people of color. In performance budgets, an equity dimension can be added by specific inclusion of the impacts of spending through equity-related performance measures. In the program budgeting format, equity can be a stand-alone government objective or can be specifically incorporated into a broader objective such as equity in education or can be specified in different subprograms. In zero-based budgets, an equity perspective can be incorporated into the assessment of alternative funding packages.

With regard to infusing GRB into different budget formats, Rhonda Sharp, a GRB expert, opines that, "Line item budgeting . . . does not readily lend itself to assigning expenditure (and revenue) inputs in a systematic way according to their gender impacts" (2003, 25). She further suggests that performance-oriented budgets may provide the best framing for a budget initiative

to achieve gender-equity goals (2003). This suggestion could be extended to budgeting for equity for all marginalized groups. We also believe that the program budget format that is organized into service areas and focuses on government objectives can provide a good framing for budgets to achieve equity objectives, particularly if equity is identified as a stand-alone objective of the government producing the budget. In the United States, several local governments have adopted a program-type budget format generally referred to as a priority-based budget (PBB). A PBB combines elements of zero-based budgets and program budgets. That is, “It emphasizes working with the resources available as a starting point rather than with the previous year’s expenditures, as well as allocating funding to programs rather than departments” (Zencity n.d.).

Lessons from GRB

If GRB, or any budget reform, is to have a lasting effect, it must reform the government budget process and become integral to the administrative routines of government. In a recent article, we discuss how some GRB initiatives have been successful at budget reform, while others have not (Rubin and Bartle 2021). We identified five factors that have contributed to GRB success: (1) the political commitment of government decision makers, (2) incorporation into the legal foundation of government, (3) support of the lead budget agency, (4) availability of gender-disaggregated data, and (5) support of organizations outside government. Each of these factors can inform efforts in the United States to infuse equity into the government budget process, especially for historically marginalized groups.

Political Commitment of Government Leaders

The political commitment of government decision makers to gender equity has been critical to the success of GRB initiatives. The assessment by Fernández-Shaw (2019) of the European experience with GRB provides evidence that without political support and leadership, a successful initiative is not possible. The reverse is also true as shown in efforts to introduce a gender perspective into budgets in Barbados and the two islands of St. Kitts and Nevis where pilot GRB initiatives were not sustained due to the lack of political support (Christie and Thakur 2018). Perhaps nowhere is the importance of

political commitment to gender equity illustrated more clearly than in Australia, the birthplace of GRB, where from the early 1980s through the mid-1990s government leaders were responsive to women’s needs and supportive of GRB initiatives. However, elections in 1996 brought into office leaders who were not committed to gender equity nor to GRB. In fact, a 2011 survey by the OECD of its member countries identified Australia “as one of the worst performers in imposing requirements to undertake gender impact analysis of legislation, regulations and budgetary programs and GRB” (Sharp 2016). In 2014, Australia’s GRB initiative was eliminated.

Historically, efforts in the United States to affect budget reform have also required political commitment (Axelrod 1995; Grizzle 1986). The City of San Francisco provides an example of the nonsustainability of a GRB budget reform in the absence of this commitment. The City is one of just two places in the United States that has tried to implement a GRB initiative (the second was Fulton County, Georgia). Key to the adoption of San Francisco’s 1998 ordinance that signaled recognition of the budget’s importance in promoting gender equity was the strong backing of the president of the County Board of Supervisors⁹ and Willie Brown, San Francisco’s first African American mayor, well-known for his support of human rights. However, since the adoption of the 1998 ordinance, San Francisco’s political leaders have not been proactive in promoting the consideration of gender in budget decisions, with the exception of one Board of Supervisors’ resolution in 2003 that “urged” (but did not require) departments to assess the gender implications of pending budget cuts (Rubin 2018).

Conversely, recent efforts in the United States demonstrate the political commitment of government leaders to use the budget to advance equity. On the federal level, on President Biden’s first day in office, he issued Executive Order 13985: *Advancing Racial Equity and Support for Underserved Communities Through the Federal Government* (Biden 2021). With this Order, Biden became the first U.S. president to identify equity as a responsibility of the federal government that would be operationalized through the budget.

The importance of the commitment of political leaders to use their budgets to advance equity can also be seen at the local level of government. For instance, in Philadelphia, one of the most advanced cities in terms

9. Because San Francisco is a county and a city, its Board of Supervisors functions as the City Council does in other cities.

of implementing an equity approach to budgeting, both the mayor and city council are committed to the effort. As stated in a local newspaper headline, “Mayor Jim Kenney and City Council have honed in on racial inequities in public policy during budget negotiations” (McCrystal 2021). In 2015, Austin, Texas was found to be the most economically segregated large metropolitan area in the country. This led the City Council to create a City Equity Office and to develop an equity assessment tool which focuses in part on budget analysis (Guzman, Jordan, and Joyce 2021).

Incorporation into the Legal Foundations of Government

A second factor contributing to the success of a GRB initiative has been its incorporation into the legal foundations of government. As of 2018, three countries had embedded a gender budgeting provision into their constitutions—Austria, Bolivia, and Rwanda. Four others—Belgium, Mexico, Norway, and Spain—have gender equity imperatives in their constitutions that provide a framework for gender budgeting (Kolovich 2018). Twelve countries (Rwanda, Uganda, India, South Korea, Philippines, Austria, Iceland, Bolivia, Ecuador, El Salvador, Mexico, and Morocco) have provisions in their organic budget law, some of which require ministries to take actions that are consistent with gender budgeting (Kolovich 2018).

In the United States, budget equity provisions are not yet embedded in organic budget laws at any level of government. However, while extant state budgeting laws have not been changed to include an equity component, many governments are applying an equity lens to revenues and/or expenditures in some way (Rubin, Bartle, and Willoughby 2022). Concerning revenues, states are increasingly considering equity when developing tax policy. For instance, in 2020, New Jersey increased the State’s income tax rate from 8.97% to 10.75% on income over \$1 million. According to Wesley Tharpe (2020) Deputy Director of State Policy Research at the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, “by raising revenues on the wealthiest families and profitable corporations, expanding tax credits for working families, and improving cash assistance, New Jersey is advancing a strong, antiracist response to COVID-19 and the recession.” In Washington, the state legislature operationalized its “paramount duty” to provide more equitable education services in early learning, childcare, and K–12 through a more progressive

tax structure. A new excise tax of 7% on the voluntary sale or exchange of stocks, bonds, and other capital assets realizing profits more than \$250,000 annually was passed in 2021 to fund these education services (Washington Department of Revenue 2021).

On the expenditure side, states are applying equity initiatives to specific state functions. Some, especially those related to education, have been incorporated in state law for decades, while others are new. For instance, Alaska’s Fiscal Year 2020 budget of the Department of Education and Early Development provided funding specifically to close learning gaps “by ensuring equitable educational rigor and resources” with results to be delivered in FY 2022 (Alaska Department of Education and Early Development 2021). In Illinois, the state legislature passed a law to develop equitable funding strategies and present legislators with ways to raise graduation and retention rates of disadvantaged students (Rasper 2021). And New Jersey has established a seed fund to address systemic racial inequities in access to capital for Black and Latinx entrepreneurs (Rubin, Bartle, and Willoughby 2022).

At the local level of government, “as a result of this push for increased equity, many localities want their equity goals to be reflected in their budgets and are tying their investments to equitable outputs and outcomes” (Newsome 2022), and several U.S. cities are moving to integrate equity into their budget processes. To illustrate, the Austin, Texas City Council passed a resolution mandating that the central budget office “evaluate the impact that existing city policies and practices have on equity, evaluate best practices in other cities, and develop recommendations for addressing current race and socioeconomic-based inequities” (Austin Equity Office 2020). The City’s equity assessment tool was designed to “identify and remedy inequitable policies, practices and procedures” (Austin Equity Office 2020). The tool was piloted in 2017 in eight departments.

Support of the Lead Budget Agency

A third factor contributing to the success of GRB has been the support of lead budget agencies. As Bova and Herold de Costa Reis write, “The active engagement of the people responsible for the budget is necessary for the success of a gender budget approach” (2022). In seven of the 12 OECD countries with a GRB initiative at some level of government, training and capacity development was provided by finance ministries to agencies implementing gender analysis (Downes et al. 2017). And in

Berlin, Germany, officials attribute the success of their GRB initiative in part to the leading role of the Department of Finance and the Department of Women and Equality (Bova and Herold da Costa Reis 2022; Quinn 2018). It should be noted that the support of agencies specifically established to promote gender equity has also contributed to the success of GRB initiatives. For instance, in Sweden, the Gender Equality Agency participates in deciding how resources are allocated and assists in the implementation of gender equality efforts (Bova and Herold da Costa Reis 2022).

In the United States, lead budget offices have been proactive in efforts to use budgets to advance social equity. At the federal level for the first time in its history, the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) called for consideration of an equity discussion in its A-11 budget instructions to all agencies for preparation of their Fiscal Year 2023 budget requests. The instructions stated:

As agencies develop and execute the President’s Budget, they should, whenever possible, consult and involve underserved communities . . . consider how their organizational and decision-making processes may not account for certain perspectives, and incorporate leading practices for ongoing equity assessment and affirming efforts within public sector organizations. (OMB 2022, Section 220, 8)

At the local level of government, lead budget offices in several cities have also initiated the equity effort. For instance, in Madison, Wisconsin, the finance department is using a Racial Equity and Social Justice Tool to “facilitate conscious consideration of equity and examine how communities of color and low-income populations will be affected by a proposed action/decision of the City” (Madison Racial Equity & Social Justice Initiative 2018). And San Antonio, Texas is using a Budget Equity Tool to assess the equity impacts of budget decisions focused on communities of color and low-income communities (San Antonio n.d.).

Data Availability

A fourth factor explaining the success of GRB initiatives has been the availability of gender-disaggregated data (Fernández-Shaw 2019) to assess the differential impacts of policies and programs on women and men. In their study of GRB in OECD countries, Downes et al. (2017) found this to be a necessary condition for success and

stressed the importance of investing in data collection to discern and address gender differentials. Another assessment of GRB in OECD countries found that the lack of gender disaggregated data was one of the reasons for slow implementation of GRB (Yeung 2021). The lack of gender disaggregated data also helps to explain the non-sustainability of the GRB initiative in San Francisco. A 1998 City ordinance required all government departments to collect gender disaggregated data. However, there were no sanctions if they failed to do so, and many departments did not comply with the requirement. As a result, gender gaps were not revealed in most policy areas (Rubin 2018). Emily Murase, past Executive Director of the San Francisco Department on the Status of Women, identified the lack of gender disaggregated data as the most pressing challenge in trying to implement GRB (Rubin 2018).

Recent efforts in the United States to more broadly use government budgets to enhance social equity have also been challenged by the unavailability of data disaggregated by demographic characteristics. On the federal level, with the exception of the U.S. Census, federal data sets, including those necessary for equity-based budgeting, are generally not demographically disaggregated. In recognition of the importance of disaggregated data, an Equitable Data Working Group was established under President Biden’s Executive Order 13985 mentioned earlier. Its members include government leaders in program policy, statistics, social science, data science, and information technology. In a recently released report, the Equitable Data Working Group identified several priorities to improve data collection efforts (White House 2022, 2). The priorities are:

generating disaggregated statistical estimates to characterize experiences of historically underserved groups using survey data; increasing non-federal research and community access to disaggregated data for the evidence-building that supports equity efforts; and conducting robust equity assessments of federal programs to identify areas for improvement.

Local governments also see “data as the next frontier in equity” (Newsome 2022). As one local government official observed: “data is critical to embedding equity into a government’s operations and budgeting for this reality is paramount” (Newsome 2022).

Support of Organizations Outside Government

In many countries, the support of organizations outside of government has also been an important factor in the success of GRB initiatives. In the seminal GRB initiatives in Australia and South Africa, civil society organizations were critical to their adoption. More recently, Downes et al. (2017) reported that making civic audits and open data resources available to nongovernmental organizations has been helpful in supporting the growth and implementation of gender equity policies in OECD countries. Kolovich and Shibuya (2018) found the same to be true in India. In many countries, “The role of UN Women (formerly UNIFEM) has been critical in initiating gender budgeting efforts . . . and helping sustain them” (Stotsky 2016, 19).

In the United States, there are several organizations that are supporting local governments in their efforts to incorporate equity into the budget process. For instance, the Government Alliance on Race and Equity (GARE), a joint project of Race Forward¹⁰ and the Othering & Belonging Institute at the University of California Berkeley, has been working with several hundred local governments to promote racial justice through more inclusive policymaking. GARE has developed tools that are being used by several governments. The most relevant here are the Racial Equity Tools that “are designed to integrate explicit consideration of racial equity in decisions, including policies, practices, programs, and *budgets* . . . Use of a racial equity tool can help to develop strategies and actions that reduce racial inequities and improve success for all groups” [emphasis added] (GARE 2016, 4).

A second national effort to provide assistance to cities working to advance equity was undertaken by Bloomberg Philanthropies through its What Works Cities (WWC) initiative, and launched as City Budgeting for Equity & Recovery program (CBER) in 2020 in a cohort of 28 cities. WWC developed cases and action-oriented research to advise cities on how to develop and implement equity-focused reforms in their budgets. Several other organizations, such as the Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA) and the National Civic League are also working with cities in their efforts to apply an equity lens to budgets.

Conclusion

Since Adam Smith, writing almost 250 years ago, included fairness as one of his four canons of taxation, equity has been an issue in fiscal policy. In the mid-20th century, Richard Musgrave brought the public finance discussion of equity to the forefront when he called for government intervention to ensure that the distribution of income and wealth would be fair. Equity, however, has rarely been explicitly considered in a comprehensive way in government budgets. When it has been brought into budgetary considerations, it has generally been with regard to income equity. In recent years, however, additional dimensions of tax equity have been brought into the budget dialogue, such as gender and race.

The emergence of GRB in the early 1980s in countries around the world signaled recognition that government budgets could be used to advance equity for a particular demographic subgroup, in this case women. In the United States in recent years, there has been an effort by governments at all levels to use their budgets to advance social equity, especially for people of color and other historically marginalized groups. Lessons learned from GRB can inform the implementation of these efforts. These include: (1) the importance of political support of government decision-makers and their commitment to change policies that contribute to inequities, (2) the need to incorporate equity into the legal foundations of government, (3) the support of lead budgetary agencies, (4) the availability of data disaggregated by several demographic characteristics including race, ethnicity, gender, disability/ability status, and sexual orientation, and (5) the support of organizations outside of government for the integration of equity into government budgets. These lessons, as well as the recognition that equity can be incorporated into all phases of the budget process, and into most budget formats, particularly the performance-informed and program formats, can help guide the implementation of equity in public budgets, and are critical tools for meaningful and lasting development of more equitable public policy.

10. Founded in 1981 as the Applied Research Center, Race Forward advances racial justice through research, media, and practice.

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A Systematic Literature Review of U.S. Welfare Sanctions and Racial Equity

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In the United States, welfare sanctions are designed to enforce compliance with program rules and are the most tangible and, in some cases, detrimental enforcement mechanism for recipients of public cash assistance. Whether or not they are equitably administered is critical to our understanding of the program and of safety net enforcement mechanisms across the sector. Using electronic databases of peer-reviewed articles across disciplines, this systematic literature review resulted in a deeper understanding of the research conducted related to racial inequities and welfare sanctions. The 29 studies included in this analysis highlight different rates and effects of sanctions for recipients depending on race and ethnicity. Findings are synthesized and recommendations for future research are presented.

The COVID-19 pandemic and the financial challenges faced by families prompted governments across the globe to enact policies addressing poverty. Many of these programs and policies, however, were time-limited. Their end is marked by a shift back to policy debates about the deservingness of those experiencing poverty. In the United States and other countries with means-tested and limited welfare programs, debates about work requirements are also resurfacing. Public opinion on deservingness, poverty, and work is often intertwined with racial bias, making equity a critical consideration in safety net policies and their administration. These are not new debates, and lessons can be gained from a review of the literature on U.S. welfare sanctions, arguably the most tangible enforcement mechanism of the requirements associated with public cash assistance receipt.

The enactment of the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program in the United States in 1996, through the passage of the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunities Reconciliation Act (PRWORA), made national a growing trend of work requirement pilot programs. The final regulations require all eligible adults receiving assistance to participate in a work activity to maintain their benefits. At the same time, PRWORA changed public assistance from an entitlement program to a block grant to states with a large amount of leeway regarding implementation. Given the devolution inherent in TANF, states can choose the types of work require-

ments, how many hours recipients need to participate, and how to enforce requirements. Beyond state-level devolution, there is discretion at the caseworker level in determining how to implement TANF policies, with some showing more leniency or stringency with regard to program work requirements and enforcement.

The intended purpose of sanctions is to encourage recipients to comply with program requirements so they meet program goals. TANF goals include supporting families so children can remain in their homes; reducing government dependency through work, job preparation, and marriage; reducing out-of-wedlock pregnancies; and promoting the formation and maintenance of two-parent families (PRWORA 1996). In practice, however, studies point to more harmful outcomes of sanctions that are not aligned with the legislation's intent. Studies of welfare sanctions have reviewed implementation issues such as who is sanctioned and for what, as well as the effects of sanctions on case longevity, recipient earnings, and other measures of well-being. However, few studies have evaluated TANF sanctions against their stated purpose of getting recipients to comply with program requirements.

Fewer studies have used an equity framework in their analysis to assess the structural inequalities that exist within the policy and practice of sanctions. This incomplete knowledge about the racial impact of sanctions is problematic. The global Black Lives Matter movement coupled with country-specific events from volatile presi-

dential elections to public calls for deep reform and reparations have had an impact on public policymaking and administration. All of these, along with a long history of systemic inequality, highlight the need to better study race equity in our systems to support more just social policy and practice. To document this gap in the literature, the current study conducts a systematic literature review of research on sanctions of TANF recipients that include race or ethnicity as a component of their analysis. The primary goal of the review is to understand what is known about whether sanction policy and practice is equitable. For sanctions to be considered equitable, race or ethnicity would not be a determining factor in the use and outcomes of sanctions. Furthermore, the review applies an equity framework to the discussion and implications of current research findings to practice, particularly in terms of the limitations and gaps in what is known.

Background

Welfare Sanctions

Individual and case sanctions are a financial penalty imposed on TANF recipients who do not comply with requirements. Sanctions are designed to be an enforcement mechanism and how they are administered can expand or limit access to public cash assistance. Sanctions were used long before the 1996 welfare reform, with states issuing partial financial penalties to those who were not complying with program requirements. Following criticism that penalties were too small to be effective, the federal government allowed states to experiment through waivers to impose full family and case sanctions (Bloom and Winstead 2002). In 1996, welfare reform formalized sanctions and required states to terminate or reduce benefits when recipients did not comply with work requirements.

As with most TANF policies, states set the guidance for sanctions, determining when they are used and their severity. Sanctions can include removal of the adult from the case—affecting benefit amounts; a partial or complete reduction in the case benefit amount; or a complete case closure. Sanctions range from one month to a permanent change in financial benefits, which states set from a 6% decrease to the case being closed. In the most severe cases, some states will permanently ban the adult on the case from receiving benefits, or place a long-term ban, such as 10 years, before they can reapply (Shantz et al. 2020). A full benefit sanction or case closure results in the family losing benefits for a predetermined period,

with a complete case closure requiring the family to reapply following the sanction period.

According to the Urban Institute's Welfare Rules Databook, 12 states reduce the benefit by a fixed percentage as the first sanction and eight states remove the adult. Thirty states close the case as the most severe sanction policy (Shantz et al. 2020). Monnat (2010) found that, between 2001 and 2006, 29% of TANF cases that were closed were due to a sanction. Of those whose cases were closed due to a sanction, most (65.4%) were due to failing to comply with a requirement. Recipients can appeal the decision through fair hearings. Lens and Vorsanger (2005) noted that although fair hearings became a right to clients in 1970, they are rarely used despite typically being beneficial for the recipient.

Although the goal of sanctioning is to motivate recipients to comply with program requirements, evaluations of sanctions typically show less successful outcomes. Sanctions can cause a full case closure, completely restricting families from receiving cash benefits. In addition, sanctions can lead to poor employment and financial stability outcomes (Wang 2020; Chang, Lanfranconi, and Clark 2020; Wu, Cancian, and Wallace 2014). These effects tend to be counter to TANF's goal of self-sufficiency.

Street-Level Organizations and Discretion

Street-level organizations are the pathway to public services, including TANF. Street-level bureaucrats are those who administer public benefits and their practices have significant effects on policy implementation. Discretion is inherent in public policies, as vagueness within legislation increases the likelihood of passage and thus leaves some of the implementation decisions to those on the ground (Lipsky 1980). In addition, public service workers may use discretion to help process large workloads with limited resources, choosing for example, how much time to spend with specific clients. How discretion is used by frontline workers has implications across agencies and service delivery.

In the case of welfare services, discretion is exercised through several mechanisms which widen the divide between policy as written and as performed, including information sharing and requirement stringency. Several studies (Meyers et al. 1998; Meyers 1998; Selkman 2014) found that information sharing between caseworkers and clients was limited. This is a critical implementation failure, as caseworkers are a primary source of information for clients, and choices not to share infor-

mation may mean there are program features or services that clients never learn about. In addition, caseworkers can use their discretion to determine the stringency of program requirements, determining who to punish and who to offer waivers of work requirements (Fording et al. 2007; Keiser et al. 2004). Watkins-Hayes (2011) finds that the strict structure of street-level organizations often restricts workers from using discretion to benefit minority clients, concluding that it is important to address organizational inclusiveness, and that diversity alone is not enough to improve equity.

Administrative Burden

Differences in awareness of public benefits and the complexity of the bureaucratic systems that manage them make access more difficult for families. Herd and Moynihan (2019) describe these challenges as the administrative burden associated with complex government processes. They conceptualize and categorize the administrative burdens families face as three types of costs: 1) learning costs as related to finding information about programs, 2) psychological costs such as stigma and stress, and 3) compliance costs related to understanding and following regulations (Herd and Moynihan 2019, 15).

In addition to administrative costs associated with trying to access public benefits, Brodtkin and Majmudar (2010) find that these can result in administrative exclusion, with nonparticipation in public benefits attributable to organizational costs rather than eligibility or compliance. They found that those with more attributes related to disadvantage, such as dropping out of high school or experiencing deep poverty, were more likely to exit benefit receipt programs for procedural reasons. Their findings suggest that administrative exclusion contributed to welfare caseload decline, and that discretion and policy complexity contribute to a public system that is inequitable. Similarly, Cancian, Noyes, and Ybarra (2012) found that around one-half of TANF applicants did not enter the TANF program within 60 days of applying, and that there were important factors that decreased the likelihood of access including family composition and prior employment history. Hetling and colleagues (2022) validated these findings, with their study showing that 62% of TANF applicants were denied and that the most common reasons can be connected to administrative burden. Together, these studies point to a system in which access is inequitable.

Equity in Public Policy and Administration Research

Noting the public service gap that develops between policy as written and as performed (Hupe and Buffat 2014), street-level organizations seek to limit or monitor discretion. Riccucci (2002) points to two key pillars of public administration—efficiency and effectiveness, and adds that social equity has gained prominence in the field but may not yet be a pillar to which workers are held accountable. As John Dewey noted of government accountability, it is “only through constant watchfulness and criticism of public officials by citizens can a state be maintained in integrity and usefulness” (Dewey 1927, 110).

Recent work in the fields of public administration, public policy analysis, and program evaluation call attention to the need to systematically examine program outcomes by race and ethnicity. For policies and programs in which race can predict outcomes or for which no research on racial disparities has been conducted, analyses are critically needed. The need for equity analyses of social welfare policies, including TANF, is particularly great (McDaniel et al. 2017). Susan Gooden (2006), a leader in this field, explains “this lack of systematic examination is problematic because it significantly reduces our ability to access how well or how poorly our social welfare agencies assist clients across various racial and ethnic groups,” (2). Since Gooden’s early scholarship, a growing body of literature and reports encourages scholars to incorporate an equity framework into their analyses and provides concrete guidance on doing so (e.g., Andrews et al. 2019; Brown et al. 2019; Center for Evaluation Innovation 2017; Woodson 2021).

Thorough research on racial equity analysis is a complex and far-reaching endeavor. Recommendations go beyond just including race as a control variable, but rather to look historically and holistically at the causes and effects of inequity in the systems studied and to undertake more nuanced approaches to data and analysis. Most guidelines and best practice references discuss embedding equity in all aspects of the research or evaluation process, from project preparation to dissemination. Guidance on preparing for the project includes examining researcher biases (e.g., Andrews et al. 2019), engaging affected stakeholders (e.g., Brown et al. 2019), and forming research questions focused on equity (Woodson 2021). Although critically important in conducting equity-focused evaluation and policy research, many of these elements are difficult to assess in published work as they

often are not included in the background or methods sections of peer-reviewed articles or agency reports.

Other elements, however, are easier to assess when reading documents and research findings. First, related to the background section of an article, equity analyses should review and present information on the historical and institutional aspects of the program or policy being examined as it relates to racial impacts in its design and outcomes, both intended and unintended (e.g., Andrews et al. 2019). Second, equity frameworks call for deep and nuanced definitions of race and ethnicity, particularly in measurement and analysis (e.g., Brown et al. 2019). For example, using a dichotomous or dummy variable to measure race reduces unique and different racial groups to an overly simplistic “other” category (Brown et al. 2019), and consistently using white as the reference category may imply that this group is the standard or norm (Andrews et al. 2019). Lastly, applying an equity framework to public policy and administration research and analysis requires that empirical findings be discussed and critically assessed using an equity lens, relating findings to racial and ethnic group outcomes in relevant contexts (e.g., Andrews et al. 2019; Woodson 2021).

Methods

Search Strategy

Our search for peer-reviewed literature on welfare sanctions and race was conducted between February and June 2021. We utilized four electronic citation databases and limited our search to articles published after 1996, when TANF sanctions were implemented. After completing the search of academic databases through the university library, an additional search was conducted in Google Scholar.

With the support of our library staff, the research team identified four databases: EBSCO, Proquest, Hein Online, and Scopus. Within EBSCO, the search included Academic Search Premier, Business Source Elite, ERIC, EconLit, Family & Society Studies Worldwide, and Women’s Studies International. Within ProQuest, the search included Social Science Premier Collection with Social Service Abstracts and Sociological Abstracts. Within each of these databases, the team used the follow-

ing search terms: “(TANF OR “Temporary Assistance for Needy Families”) AND (sanctions) AND (race OR racial OR ethnic¹).” Finally, to ensure a thorough review and to capture peer-reviewed work from journals falling outside of our databases, we conducted an additional search in Google Scholar using the same search terms. To ensure a more targeted result, the authors added an additional search parameter of “welfare sanction” as an exact phrase. The first 50 results were then included in the group of articles to review.

These five searches, the four academic databases plus Google Scholar, yielded 2,060 total results. Following initial review that included deduplication and removal of results that were not valid (such as book reviews and interview transcripts), the final sample was 1,271 results. These are detailed further by the database in Figure 1.

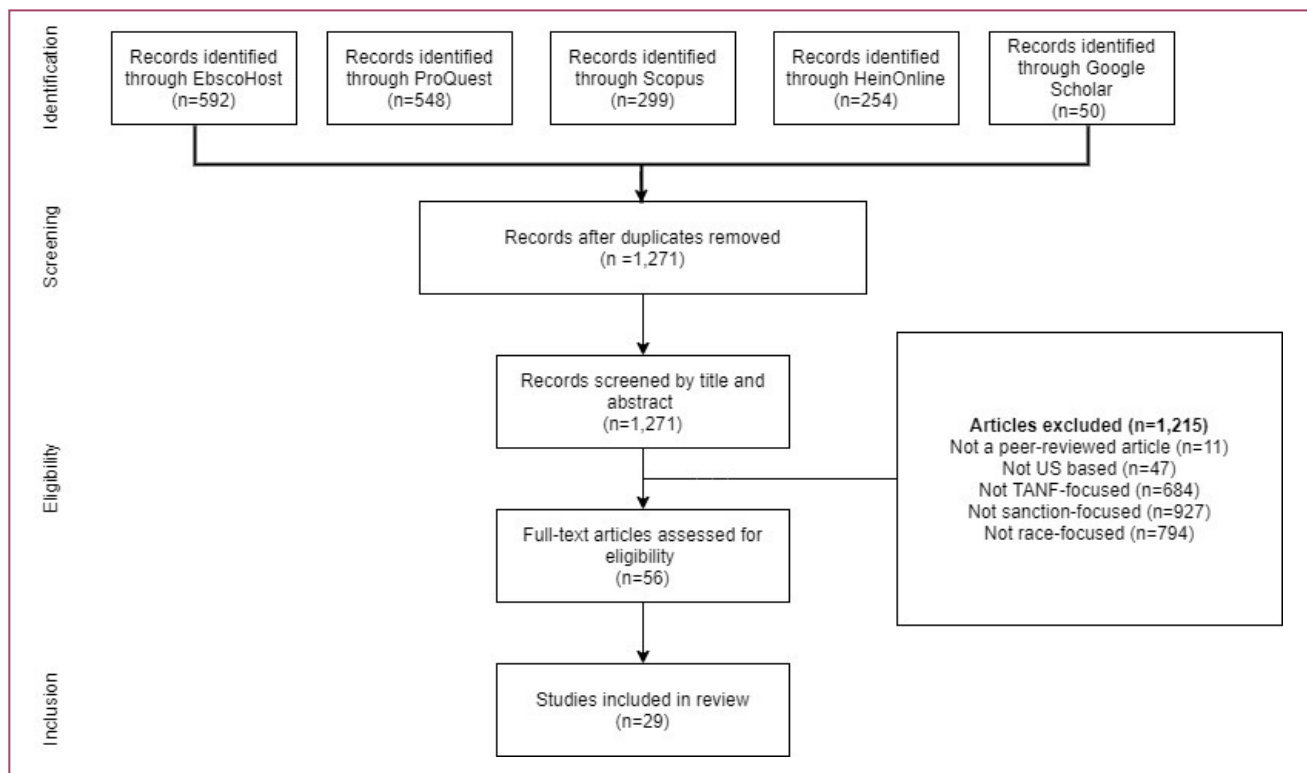
Inclusion Criteria

Authors reviewed the extent to which each of the 1,271 results met the six criteria categories, which included being 1) published after 1996, 2) U.S.-based, 3) TANF-focused, 4) peer-reviewed, and explicitly focused on 5) sanctions, and 6) race. The first four criteria were straightforward and were completely assessed with a review of the article title, abstract, and publication outlet. The determination of whether the article had an explicit focus on sanctions and race was a two-step process. First, using the article titles and abstracts, authors made conservative assessments of articles that did not meet the criteria as defined collaboratively by the team. The criteria that a study had a race-focus was defined as the inclusion of race in the analysis, whether qualitative or quantitative, and a subsequent mention of race in the findings or discussion of the article. The criteria for being focused on sanctions was defined as the inclusion of sanctions in the analysis and a subsequent mention of sanctions in the findings or discussion of the article. As illustrated in Figure 1, this screening process resulted in the removal of an additional 1,215 articles, many of which were excluded because they lacked more than one of the six criteria for inclusion.

The remaining 56 articles were read thoroughly by the authors with a focus on the methods, findings, and implications to complete the second step in determining the final two criteria. During this final step, the authors

¹ For the purposes of consistency and unless otherwise noted, we chose to use the following terms throughout the manuscript, despite the terms used in specific studies reviewed: white, Black, Hispanic, and Asian. We recognize the diversity in use and opinions of correct terminology and that this approach is only one of many possible ways to address this.

Figure 1. Article Selection Process



considered the two criteria together, specifically whether the analysis included the intersection of race and sanctions, rather than the presence of independent mentions or inclusions of the two topics as separate issues. For this final step, studies in the sample must have discussed their findings on sanctions as they related to race, whether in severity, rates, or some other connection between the two. Our primary research question related to the equitable implementation of sanctions, and thus studies which briefly discussed race separate from sanctioning, or included race as a variable in their model but did not discuss the relevant findings anywhere in the article, were excluded. Following individual and team assessment of the search results and inclusion criteria, the final sample included 29 peer-reviewed journal articles.

Data Extraction and Analysis

Upon finalizing the sample of analysis studies, the research team developed a spreadsheet to extract key details from each of the sample studies. This information included: publication information such as abstract and journal; topic and sample information such as topic of analysis, sample size, and geography; analytical approach such as methods, outcome variables, definition of race, and data source; and outcomes related to several key ar-

reas such as equity and program performance. All team members met to review the common themes, methods, and findings. Table 1 is an abbreviated version of our data extraction file, and lists each of the 29 articles' authors, publication year, title, sample population and size, geographic scope, methodological approach, and definition of race and ethnicity.

Results: Research Design and Sanction Literature Overview

This literature review search resulted in 1,271 unique articles. Of those, 79 studies met the first five criteria before applying the criterion to be race-focused. Within those 79 studies, 50 did not meet that last criterion, indicating that they were articles about TANF sanctions, but that did not include race in a meaningful way in their analysis. By this we mean they either did not include race in their analysis, or, for a few excluded, had race as a control variable in their model but did not discuss the associated findings. The 29 studies in the final analysis were evenly spread chronologically, with 14 studies published between 2000 and 2010, and 15 published on or after 2011.

Most studies in this analysis (22) relied on quanti-

tative methods alone, while two studies relied on qualitative methods alone and three used a mixed-methods approach. Two additional studies were descriptive in nature, contextualizing the current literature while adding in some public data on sanction rates and experiences as background. Methodological approaches of the studies were diverse, ranging from descriptive statistics to difference-in-difference analyses, and on the qualitative side from interviews to critical discourse analysis. Data sources varied among original data collection such as surveys and interviews, state administrative data, and federal data collections such as the Survey of Income and Program Participation or the Fragile Families collection. Considering the outcome variables of interest in these studies, 10 measured the probability of being sanctioned. Others shared similar outcome measures of the severity of state and local sanction practices, while some studied other outcomes with the experience of being sanctioned as a comparative predictor in their analysis.

Contextualizing Race

Studies included in this analysis, by nature of the inclusion criteria, were focused on how recipients of welfare managed based on race, particularly as it related to the use of sanctions. One recommendation of an equity framework for research is connecting research findings to a broader context of race, embedding research in the historic and systemic inequities families have faced for generations. Of the 29 studies, 25 include a discussion of race in their background sections. This ranged from a brief mention about the historical racial inequities in welfare, to a thorough description of the systemic disparities particularly among Black and Hispanic families. Of the 25 including a discussion of race, 21 presented a more nuanced background while four included one sentence related to race in existing literature. There were only four articles that did not mention race in their background sections at all, though they later included race in their analyses.

Defining Race

Throughout the studies in this analysis, race and ethnicity are measured fairly consistently. Most studies (20) include variables for at least white, Black or African American, and Hispanic or Latinx. Very few studies include categories for Asian (3); others used a category of “other” to capture multiple racial groups (9). A few studies (3) only used Black and white, or white and nonwhite as their measures of race. Three studies included only one

race category, using percent of population or recipients who are Black to analyze program features. In most studies, race was included as a control or independent variable measured as a dummy variable with white as the reference category. Qualitative studies either restricted their sample by race/ethnicity (i.e., Hispanic women) or used race to describe their sample population.

Results: Relationship between Sanctions and Race

While it was an inclusion criterion for studies to have findings related to sanctions and race, the extent to which authors discussed this connection varied. For some, it was a simple mention of the significance or insignificance of a control variable. For others, there was an extensive discussion on how their findings differed based on race and ethnicity. Further, some studies were focused on other outcomes or contextual factors, such as local political ideologies or effects of sanctions on employment overall, rather than how sanctions and their effects differed by race.

A few studies in this analysis offered either a theoretical framework for analyzing welfare outcomes by race, or strongly encouraged future research based on their findings. Marchevsky and Theoharis (2008) conducted an ethnographic study with 14 Mexican immigrant welfare recipients, and conveyed experiences of discrimination within welfare offices, noting that the women they interviewed discussed their experience through the context of race and rights. Lanfranconi and colleagues (2020) conducted a critical discourse analysis and concluded that in the absence of a clear equity framework, the decentralized nature of TANF in some states complicates their ability to address equity. Soss and colleagues (2008) outlined a racial classification model (RCM) of social policy choice that was later employed by Fording and colleagues (2011) and others in their review of welfare sanctions. As the authors state, policy does not require overt discriminatory intent to produce racially inequitable outcomes. The next sections detail how studies in this analysis have observed such disparities.

Sanctioning by Race

A key finding across many of the studies (11) was that differences in the rate of sanctions exist based on race. At the aggregate level, studies pointed to the difference in rate of sanctioning and punitive measures for states and counties with a higher share of nonwhite populations (Chang et al. 2020; Ojeda, Whitesell, and Berk-

Table 1. Articles Included in Systematic Literature Review

Reference	Title	Sample Population and Size	Geography	Type(s) of Data	Race Definition
Caiola and Kneipp (2020)	Modeling Upstream Socioeconomic Inequities and Syndemic Conditions among Mothers over Time	Women with children (4,898)	20 large U.S. cities	Quantitative	Dichotomous: non-Hispanic Black as reference; Hispanic and White as comparisons
Chang, Lanfranconi, and Clark (2020)	Second-Order Devolution Revolution and the Hidden Structural Discrimination? Examining County Welfare-to-Work Service Systems in California	Review of service delivery indicators	California	Quantitative and Qualitative	Percent of population White, African American, Asian, and Hispanic
Cheng, Lo, and Weber (2017)	Racial Disparities in Welfare Dependence and Financial Independence: Links to Human Capital, Local Economy, and State Temporary Assistance for Needy Families Policies	Adults with children between 1996 and 2008 (6,737)	U.S.	Quantitative	Dichotomous: White, African American, Hispanic
Cheng (2009)	Racial Inequality in Receiving Transitional Support Services and Being Sanctioned among TANF Recipients: A Group Threat Hypothesis	Former TANF recipients (676)	13 states	Quantitative	Dichotomous: White, African America, Hispanic, Other
Cheng and Lo (2018)	Explaining Restrictive TANF Policies: Group Threat Hypothesis and State Economy Conditions	Longitudinal analysis of states; 765 state-years	U.S.	Quantitative	Percent of population African American, Hispanic, Other
Crewe (2003)	From Paper to People: An Analysis of Critical Welfare Reform Issues Affecting the Black Community	N/A; Conceptual	U.S.	N/A; Conceptual	N/A

Crewe (2002)	Motivated but Fearful: Welfare Reform, Disability, and Race	Households on TANF for two years after PR-WORA (268)	Urban county	Quantitative	African American, White
Fording, Schram, and Soss (2013)	Do Welfare Sanctions Help or Hurt the Poor? Estimating the Causal Effect of Sanctioning on Client Earnings	Unmarried female TANF clients with children (36,319)	Florida	Quantitative	Black, Hispanic, White
Fording, Soss, and Schram (2011)	Race and the Local Politics of Punishment in the New World of Welfare	TANF recipients (70,000 cases)	Florida; U.S.	Quantitative	Black, Hispanic, White
Fording, Soss, and Schram (2007)	Devolution, Discretion, and the Effect of Local Political Values on TANF Sanctioning	TANF recipients (60,045 clients)	Florida	Quantitative	Black, Hispanic, White
Kalil, Seefeldt, and Wang (2002)	Sanctions and Material Hardship under TANF	Current and former TANF recipients (562)	Urban Michigan county	Quantitative	Dichotomous: Black, White
Keiser, Mueser, and Choi (2004)	Race, Bureaucratic Discretion, and the Implementation of Welfare Reform	Women receiving TANF (66,330)	Missouri	Quantitative	Dichotomous: White, Nonwhite
Lanfranconi, Chang, Das, and Simpson (2020)	Equity versus Equality: Discourses and Practices within Decentralized Welfare-to-Work Programs in California	State and county-level policies and descriptive program statistics	California	Quantitative and Qualitative	Percent of population White, African American, Asian, Hispanic, Other
Lee and Yoon (2012)	A comparison of Sanctions in African American and White TANF Leavers	Former TANF recipients (2,243)	U.S.	Quantitative	African American, White, Other
Lens (2008)	Welfare and Work Sanctions: Examining Discretion on the Front Lines	Sanctioned recipients (28)	Suffolk County, NY	Qualitative	Black, Hispanic, White
Lindhorst, Mancoske, and Kemp (2000)	Is Welfare Reform Working? A Study of the Effects of Sanctions on Families Receiving Temporary Assistance to Needy Families	Former TANF recipients (347)	U.S.	Quantitative	African American, White, Other

Reference	Title	Sample Population and Size	Geography	Type(s) of Data	Race Definition
Marchevsky and Theoharis (2008)	Dropped from the Rolls: Mexican Immigrants, Race, and Rights in the Era of Welfare Reform	Mexican immigrant welfare recipients (14)	Los Angeles, CA	Qualitative	Sample: Latina Women
Monnat (2010)	The Color of Welfare Sanctioning: Exploring the Individual and Contextual Roles of Race on TANF Case Closures and Benefit Reductions	Female TANF recipients (959,388)	U.S.	Quantitative	Black, Hispanic, White
Ojeda, Berkman, and Plutzer (2019)	Federalism and the Racialization of Welfare Policy	US States	U.S.	Quantitative	Percent of caseload non-Hispanic Black
Pipinis (2017)	Punitive White Welfare Bureaucracies: Examining the Link between White Presence within Welfare Bureaucracies and Sanction Exits in the United States	Former TANF recipients (11,850)	U.S.	Quantitative	Black, Hispanic
Rodgers, Payne, and Chervachidze (2006)	State Poverty Rates: Do the New Welfare Policies Make a Difference?	US States	U.S.	Quantitative	Percent of caseload Black
Schram, Soss, Fording, and Houser (2009)	Deciding to Discipline: Race, Choice, and Punishment at the Frontlines of Welfare Reform	Case Managers (144 in survey experiment); Florida TANF recipients (6,214)	Florida	Quantitative	Black, Hispanic, White, Other
Schram (2005)	Contextualizing Racial Disparities in American Welfare Reform: Toward a New Poverty Research	N/A; Conceptual	U.S.	N.A.; Conceptual	Black, Hispanic, White, Asian, Other
Schram, Fording, and Soss (2008)	Neo-Liberal Poverty Governance: Race, Place and the Punitive Turn in U.S. Welfare Policy	TANF recipients (60,045)	Florida	Quantitative	Dichotomous: Black, Hispanic, White as reference

Soss, Fording, and Schram (2011)	The Organization of Discipline: From Performance Management to Perversity and Punishment	Florida Welfare Transitions Program participants (53,373)	Florida	Quantitative and Qualitative	Dichotomous: Black, Hispanic, White as reference
Spencer, Livingston, Woods-Jaeger, Rentmeester, Sroczyński, and Komro (2020)	The Impact of Temporary Assistance for Needy Families, Minimum Wage, and Earned Income Tax Credit on Women's Well-Being and Intimate Partner Violence Victimization	Female TANF recipients (3,545)	20 U.S. cities	Quantitative	Self-reported race: non-Hispanic White, non-Hispanic African American, Hispanic, Other
Wang (2020)	State TANF Time Limit and Work Sanction Stringencies and Long-Term Trajectories of Welfare Use, Labor Supply, and Income	Female TANF recipients (10,209)	U.S.	Quantitative	Black, Hispanic, Other, White as reference
Wu, Cancian, and Wallace (2014)	The Effect of Welfare Sanctions on TANF Exits and Employment	Female TANF recipients (1,599)	Wisconsin	Quantitative	Black, White, Hispanic, Other, Unknown
Wu (2008)	Severity, Timing, and Duration of Welfare Sanctions and the Economic Well-Being of TANF Families with Children	TANF recipients (13,171)	Wisconsin	Quantitative	Black, White, Hispanic, Other, Unknown

man 2019; Rodgers et al. 2006; Schram et al. 2008). For example, Chang and colleagues (2020) found that Hispanic and female-headed households were overrepresented in sanction-oriented counties, concluding that Latina mothers in sanction-oriented counties were at greater risk of the worst disadvantages of the CalWORKs program, California's version of TANF. Ojeda and colleagues (2019) found that as the proportion of Black or Hispanic TANF recipients increases in a state, its work hours, work sanctions, and time limits all become more stringent.

When studying specific TANF recipients, studies found that Black welfare leavers were sanctioned more frequently than white leavers, despite having fewer risk

characteristics on average (Cheng 2009; Kalil et al. 2002; Lee and Yoon 2012), and Black and Hispanic women are more likely to be sanctioned than white women (Monnat 2010). In a review of county-level sanctions by individual demographics, Keiser and colleagues (2004) found that it was difficult to measure exactly how, but that race played a significant role in predicting sanctions, finding differences in treatment between people of color and their white counterparts. Similarly, through a series of hypothetical vignettes posed to welfare workers, another study found that sanctions were more common and more severe when the clients being described had a Black-sounding name and a discrediting marker, for example, a prior sanction (Schram et al. 2009). Schram (2005) similarly

discusses how welfare reform allowed the program continue to contribute to and reinforce historic racial inequalities.

Studies that consider macro-level context add nuance to our understanding of disparities in sanctioning. Although Monnat (2010) found that Black and Hispanic women were at a greater risk of being sanctioned than white women, their study showed that Black women living in counties with a greater Black population were less likely to be sanctioned, whereas Hispanic women living in a county with a greater percentage of Hispanic residents were more likely to be sanctioned. Alternatively, Fording and colleagues (2011) did not find a significant difference in sanctioning based on the proportion of non-white residents in a community. Cheng and Lo (2018) reported a conflicting finding that the size of a state's Hispanic population was linked to an increase in restrictive policies, whereas the size of the Black population was associated with fewer restrictive policies. This finding is counter to many others in this analysis, but authors posit that it may be due to Hispanic populations increasing more rapidly than Black populations in recent years, triggering more dominant group resentment based on the group threat analysis used in the study.

Another nuance presented by Fording and colleagues (2007, 2011) was that duration of TANF receipt can have a large impact on sanctioning, and that sanctions in early months of receipt may be a form of "self-sanctioning" while later sanctions may be "true sanctions." A "self-sanction" refers to a recipient who begins a case without realizing all the related requirements to continue benefits, and thus perhaps having some alternative income source, exits the program by not complying with requirements. Monnat (2010) found that among cases that were closed due to sanction, Black women were more likely to receive a work-related sanction, whereas Hispanic women were less likely to receive a work-related sanction than white women. Alternatively, among active cases, Black women were less likely to receive a work-related sanction, but more likely to receive a sanction for an unidentified reason.

Outcomes of Sanctions by Race

Related to the primary outcome of interest for TANF, financial self-sufficiency, studies show that sanctions may in fact be a barrier to employment and long-term financial sustainability (Fording et al. 2013; Lee and Yoon 2012). Overall, nine studies looked at earnings,

employment, or poverty rates of those who had received TANF, using sanction experience as a variable in their models. Lee and Yoon (2012) found that the negative effects of sanctions related to employment were worse for Black welfare leavers who had been sanctioned than for white leavers, while Fording and colleagues' (2013) findings were significant across racial groups, though slightly more pronounced for Hispanic women. Wu and colleagues (2008, 2014) found that families who received sanctions were more likely to exit TANF without employment. Finally, Cheng and colleagues (2017) and Wang (2020) found that more restrictive policies led to less TANF dependency among Black recipients, though Cheng and colleagues suggest this outcome, caused by restrictive policies pushing participants off benefits, reflects an ability to earn enough to survive, not to thrive, or be financially stable.

Subsequently, experience with sanctions impacts a family's financial security. Kalil and colleagues (2002) found that those who received sanctions were more likely to experience financial hardship such as utility shutoffs. Lindhorst and colleagues (2000) found a similar environment in which those who were sanctioned were more likely to have unmet medical needs. While studies discussed the increased risk factors and differential treatment within the welfare offices and labor market based on race, these studies did not disaggregate these specific results by race.

In addition to the effects of sanctions on recipients' employment and financial well-being, studies have shown other impacts, including those on health and safety. Caiola and colleagues (2020) found that non-Hispanic Black women receiving TANF were more likely to have increased subsequent syndemic conditions, such as increased risk of substance use, intimate partner violence, and certain HIV risk behaviors. These increased risk conditions are partially explained by experiences of sanctions for non-Hispanic Black mothers, but not recipients of other racial/ethnic groups. In addition, when looking at risk factors of intimate partner violence, Spencer and colleagues (2020) found that in states with harsher worst-case sanctions, Black women were less likely to experience coercive victimization, defined as experiencing one of several forms of coercion, including: isolation from friends and family, work prevention, withholding money, and sexual coercion. The authors note the relationship between financial benefits and experience of intimate partner violence is complex and requires additional research.

Frontline and Contextual Factors

In addition to examining the rates and outcomes of sanctioning, some of the studies assess frontline practice or contextual factors as predictors of sanction outcomes. An examination of these environmental factors aid in our understanding of institutional constraints which allow for, or sometimes exacerbate, inequitable outcomes. These include health problems, level of devolution and discretion prescribed to caseworkers, caseworker characteristics, and local political and demographic environment.

Studies highlight lower or similar levels of employment and income among those sanctioned and lower levels of safety and mental health among those sanctioned. A few of these studies reported these outcomes by race. Crewe (2002) shows how recipients with disabilities are more likely to be sanctioned, and points to the need for additional resources for these recipients. This study also highlights increased prevalence of this experience for Black recipients. Crewe (2003) further argues this point, noting that welfare reform allowed for systemic barriers to be “camouflaged by the labels justifying sanctions, thus negating the need to examine the underlying reason an individual’s lack of movement toward self-sufficiency” (77).

Related to devolution and discretion, the practice of distributing program authority to lower levels of government and individual caseworkers, studies in this analysis show that there were significant differences in sanctioning rates and racial disparities based on local ideology and administrative decentralization of TANF (Chang et al. 2020; Fording et al. 2011). Due to the nature of service delivery, TANF relies heavily on the discretion of frontline caseworkers (Lens 2008). Studies showed that more white welfare workers correlated with higher rates of sanctions among all recipients when work requirements are involved, while increasing the likelihood of sanctions for Black recipients only when nonwork requirements are involved (Pipinis 2017). Further, the imposition of performance measures on caseworkers may increase their use of sanctions to improve their caseload and overall performance (Schram et al. 2008).

Schram and colleagues (2008), as well as Soss and colleagues (2011), show that this increase in the use of sanctions may be more prevalent in conservative areas, which have higher use of sanctions overall. For example, studies found that the political ideology of an area affects sanction rates for Black and Latino clients, while conservatism of an area increases the likelihood of sanctions for all recipients (Fording et al. 2011; Soss et al. 2011).

Discussion

This systematic literature review shows that there are differences in sanction administration and experiences based on race and ethnicity. Studies demonstrate disparities from different perspectives and data sources, analyzing individual-level administrative records, or state-level policy variables, to highlight these differences. They show that recipients who are not white are more likely to be sanctioned, and that the severity and effects of those sanctions are more severe. These effects were present both for individuals and at higher geographic levels, showing an increased use of sanctions in local areas or states with a more diverse population.

While TANF sanctioning policy as written may appear to be without bias, offering guidance for program requirements and enforcement mechanisms, our review raises concerns. Several studies discuss the level of discretion and variation in practice as the mechanism by which racism is embedded in the TANF sanctioning process. Research further exploring various reasons for these differences was at times contradictory. For example, Monnat (2010) found that while there were racial differences in sanctioning rates for individuals, the demographic makeup of their community mattered as well. Alternatively, Fording and colleagues (2011) did not find an effect on the rate of sanctioning based on the proportion of nonwhite residents in a community. These differences may be related to data sources, geography, definitions of race, or statistical methods used. These nuanced differences reflect the diverse local network of TANF operations across the country, operating within local organizations with discretion at the caseworker level. Such differences lead to varying experiences that depend on where a recipient lives, including the demographic and political composition of their area.

As such, future research is needed with an embedded equity framework to explore the mechanisms by which these inequities occur. Future research may benefit from widespread guidance on how to incorporate a detailed view of race in their analysis given various data sources and their limitations. Our conceptualization of welfare would also benefit from more analyses into the differences in need among different groups, and analyses that are rooted in both differing rates of need for program access as well as a nuanced understanding of the inequitable history of social programs. Due to the nature of data included and statistical limitations with small sample

sizes, most studies focused primarily on white, African American, and Hispanic populations. Future research would benefit from disaggregating groups such as Asian, American Indian/Alaska Native, Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, and exploring smaller categories within larger identities, such as those within Hispanic populations. In addition, broadening the geographical contexts of research would support validation of existing research. Studies included in this analysis note important limitations, including an inability to generalize beyond their study area, data limitations, inability to include additional barriers such as experiences of domestic violence or substance abuse, and restrictiveness of their calculation of a sanction or their sample. Future equity-focused research that replicates existing research would strengthen our knowledge of the administration and effects of welfare sanctions by investigating the potential consistency of program effects across time and place.

The field would also benefit from additional qualitative research to better understand the nuances of welfare and sanctions from recipients and caseworkers themselves, as this study included only one study using qualitative methods and four mixed methods studies. Building on studies done in other areas (Barnes 2021; Barnes and Henly 2018), future research could focus on TANF recipients who have experienced sanctions and caseworkers who issue sanctions, such as that of Watkins-Hayes (2011) examining the limits of caseworker discretion. This work may also allow research to uncover recipient understanding and perception of sanctions as it relates to their own goals, and the extent to which they are effective in motivating recipients to comply with program requirements.

Beyond future research, policymakers and TANF directors should assess the effectiveness of sanctions and their role in service delivery. As Kalil and colleagues (2002) offered, there may be race-specific barriers to program compliance that need to be identified and addressed to reduce racial disparities. Further, given the findings related to caseworker discretion, bias, and inequitable sanction rates, states should develop mechanisms by which to monitor and react to biases within their programs. One example of this is the Office of Equity within California's Department of Social Services, which seeks to make its department more equitable, and use their data to highlight inequities within their programs.

Our study has several limitations worth noting. In addition to reviewing research on U.S. welfare sanctions

and racial equity, our approach also sought to summarize the use of equity frameworks in studies of welfare sanctions. However, there are several components of an equity framework that would not be presented in a written manuscript. Rather, an author confronting their own biases occurs before and during their research and is reflected in their conceptualization and approach. As such, this analysis is unable to fully assess studies by their use of an equity framework, but rather components of such a framework. In addition, a review of a manuscript does not always account for the makeup of data used; that is, a scholar may not be able to choose to include nuanced definitions of their race variable because the data themselves are limited to two categories. This is particularly true of studies that used administrative data, which may not be collected in a way that is conducive to secondary research.

Finally, this study includes a relatively small sample of manuscripts compared to the larger body of research on welfare or social services more broadly. The scope of this analysis was limited, focusing on a specific feature of a relatively small public assistance program. Therefore, this study is unable to draw larger conclusions related to chronological changes in methods and approaches, as such patterns were not apparent within the limited sample size here, or to draw conclusions across the field more broadly.

Conclusion

Policy conversations in the United States have shifted from awe at the bravery and commitment of our frontline workers serving in a pandemic, to uncertainty regarding deservingness of government assistance for those who are out of work or living in poverty. This viewpoint is familiar to those who have studied welfare reform and its administration, particularly studies of welfare sanctions, which were included in the 1996 welfare reform legislation as the punitive measure to encourage work participation. Contrary to their intended purpose, welfare sanctions are correlated with greater financial instability and worse outcomes for recipients, with often varying levels of sanctions and their unintended consequences based on race.

In 2008, Marchevisky and Theoharis concluded their study with a call to action for future scholars: "PRWORA must be understood as an explicitly anti-civil rights policy. It has eroded most of the protections hard-won by the welfare rights movement, including greater transparency

and fairness in the application process, a universal system of eligibility standards and benefit levels, increased accountability on the part of caseworkers along with an expanded set of rights for welfare clients to grieve unfair actions, and a disentangling of welfare policy from local economic interests and politics” (91). A lot has changed in the 13 years since their study, including the development of the Black Lives Matter movement and a wave of recent global protests. In addition to many other positive outcomes of this movement, research organizations and scholars have assessed their ability to incorporate equity into their analyses, with many organizations publishing commitments to do so and toolkits to guide others to do so. In sum, progress has been made, but more work needs to be done. Gooden (2006) and many others since have offered guidance for how to conduct a study using an equity framework, and this analysis highlights the need for further research guided by that framework around welfare sanctions.

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Black Women Been Knew: Understanding Intersectionality to Advance Justice*

Brandi Blessett

Although the term intersectionality was coined by Kimberlé Crenshaw in the late 1980s, Black feminist scholars have long interrogated how having multiple marginalized identities reproduce inequity in their daily lives. Black women have been at the forefront of justice efforts way before it was popular and thus, continue to offer insight into ways to advance justice and equity for not only themselves, but for people and communities experiencing systemic oppression. This article examines Black Feminist Traditions to contextualize how Black women have remained resilient despite systemic racism and injustice. Additionally, this article offers strategies to thoroughly integrate Black Feminist Theory into public administration.

“We have always been the best actors in the world...I think that we are much more clever than they are because we know that we have to play the game. We’ve always had to live two lives—one for them and one for ourselves.”

—Ella Surrey, elderly Black woman domestic (as cited in Collins 2000, 107)

Public administration is a discipline and practice. Public service professionals are representatives of government and therefore are the bridge between the various systems and the people who are served by them. The legacy of U.S. society broadly, but public administration specifically is rooted in a system of hierarchical power that prioritizes the needs, voices, preferences, and values of white men over all others. This is evident in the genocide of Indigenous People (Loewen 2007; Zinn 2003); in the enslavement of Black people, whereby they were considered property; in the disenfranchisement of women until the 1920s (Davis 1983); the internment of Japanese immigrants; the Tuskegee experiment; the stronghold of Jim Crow in the 20th century (Alexander 2011), among a host of other atrocities. Consequently, Black, Indigenous, Latino/a, and Asian people have been largely marginalized from the sources of power and resource structures to live full and authentic lives without harassment, intimidation, or fear of death.

As bell hooks (2013) noted, the United States is an “imperialist, white supremacist, capitalist, patriarchy” (xx).

This is an explicit phrase that illuminates the varying structures that seek to marginalize Black, Indigenous, Latino, and Asian people globally. As a “superpower” the United States has exacted its military and cultural dominance to influence the political, economic, and social context of nation-states across the world. This, in turn, normalized white identity, preferences, and values, all of which are now deemed normal and natural, while all other realities and perspectives are violently subjugated. This frame was used to inform the development of the U.S. government and its respective governance style (e.g., objective, neutral, technical, and ahistorical). Colorblindness (a willful decision to not see difference) allows the United States to rhetorically stand behind the values of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness, without ever having to confront the racialized inequities that deny Black, Indigenous, and Latino people access to the rights and privileges of citizenship. Blessett (2015) argued:

the adoption of Constitutional Amendments (14 and 20), signed Executive Orders (8802 and 11246), approved legislation (Civil Rights Acts of 1866, 1871, 1964, and 1991), the court-mandated judicial remedies (*Brown v. Board of Education*, *Shelley v. Kraemer*) all sought to level the playing field, but were ultimately undermined by lack of implementation, lack of compliance, minimal enforcement, or overwhelming public opinion. (11)

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The stronghold of racist structures and ideologies (both conscious and unconscious) in the institutions, management, and administration of government prevents the United States from ever actualizing its stated values of fairness, justice, and equality.

To bring public administration into alignment with its espoused values, the field needs to shift toward a race-conscious perspective to better understand the nuance of life outside of white normativity. The ability to anchor the field and discipline in ways that honor the lived experiences and realities of people and communities of color will help public administration be more responsive to the needs of all its constituents. This article leverages the expertise of Black women activists, scholars, and practitioners to offer insight to advance equity and justice for all people. Black women specifically have always advocated to be seen, heard, and valued, yet even today they remain invisible and exploited within the ranks of society's hierarchy. Centering the experiences and insight of Black women is necessary and important because of their marginalized status in U.S. society. Amy Jacques Garvey, wife of Marcus Garvey, called to Black women to recognize their role as the "burden bearers of their race and for Black women to center their dedication to social justice and to national liberation, abroad as well as at home" (Terborg-Penn 2004, 72). In many ways, this sentiment has informed how Black women have been taught to lead their lives—putting all others ahead of themselves, oftentimes at the expense of themselves.

Malcolm X (as cited in Jones 2020) is famously quoted as saying "The most disrespected person in America is the Black woman. The most unprotected person in America is the Black woman. The most neglected person in America is the Black woman." Although these words were spoken more than 50 years ago, Jones (2020) aptly argued:

Malcolm's words . . . ring true and it is a shame . . . we continue to face institutional violence in health care, education, and employment. Our lives continue to be at greater risk than those of other women because of how devalued we are by others.

Throughout history, Black women have used their collective experience to not only survive, but also to create better circumstances for their families and communities holistically. An appreciation of a willingness to examine, and the thoughtfulness to understand, "the holistic nature of the struggle" experienced by the most vulnerable

people in society is the true foundation of equity and justice movements (Brown 2004, 48). Black feminist scholars have been ahead of their time. It is precisely this reality that has resulted in Black women's advocacy to be central to liberation and freedom.

Black Feminist Traditions

Subject to legalized rape by the slaveowners, confined to slave pens, forced to march for eight to fourteen hours with loads on their backs to perform back-breaking work, even during pregnancy, Negro women bore a burning hatred for slavery, and undertook a large share of responsibility for defending and nurturing the Negro family. (Jones 1949, 7)

Early feminist thinkers like Maria Stewart, Ida B. Wells-Barnett, Amy Jacques Garvey, Maggie Lena Walker, among so many others were on the front lines in the late 19th and early 20th centuries to advocate for the humanity of Black women, men, and children (Bobo, Hudley, and Michel 2004). Black people were rarely seen as thought leaders during this time. However, through Black women's interactions in women's clubs, civic organizations, religious institutions, and communal gatherings, they organized around the important issues of the day, which include the anti-lynching campaign, suffrage rights, educational access, exploitive working conditions, and more (Davis 1983; Jones 2013; Terborg-Penn 2004). These women recognized early the need to seek refuge from practices of race, sex, and class domination in public and private spaces (hooks 1989). Black women understood that their race and gender identities cumulatively created a disadvantaged reality for them. Therefore, collectively many spent their time advocating for a world that would allow people to navigate society without restriction or discrimination. Black feminist praxis understood the need to be antiracist and antisexist in their organizing practice because if Black women were free, everyone else would be free since freedom for Black women meant the eradication of all systems of domination and oppression (Hull, Bell-Scott, and Smith 1982).

Maria Stewart, one of the first Black feminists (Collins 2000; Davis 1983; Jones 2013), explicitly recognized the differential experiences between the races and genders, making special note of Black women's relationships

with one another (Collins 2000). As a Black woman suffragist and outspoken leader in the 1880s, Stewart's positionality was rather unique for the time. Her advocacy sought to bring Black women's talents and intellect to bear as real contributors to burgeoning U.S. society. She asks, "How long shall the fair daughters of Africa be compelled to bury their minds and talents beneath a load of iron pots and kettles?" (as cited in Jones 2013, 36). There is clear recognition that Black women have been isolated from opportunities beyond the physical backbreaking work of domestic life. She spends her life championing causes to advance justice for Black people, but especially Black women.

For example, after emancipation Black people remained in a cycle of economic exploitation. Whether working as sharecroppers, which placed farmers in a perpetual state of indebtedness (Blessett and Box 2016), educational opportunities were all but nonexistent, and the convict-leasing system served as the next iteration of slavery for many Black men and women (LeFlouria 2015). Black women were segregated into low-wage, low-skilled work, specifically domestic and personal service, agriculture, and manufacturing and mechanical industries (Jones 1949; Terborg-Penn 2004). Due to the segregated labor economy, white women rejected domestic work because it was a vestige of slavery, particularly as sexual abuse and harassment were considered occupational hazards (Davis 1983). In 1935, Black domestic workers and washer women worked in deplorable working conditions and earned approximately \$3 and \$.75 per week, respectively (Terborg-Penn 2004). The collective experience of economic isolation informed the ways Black women sought to organize, not only for themselves, but also in collaboration with people of the "Third World" (Davis 1983; Hull, Bell-Scott, and Smith 1982; Terborg-Penn 2004).

The nuance of identity and the necessity to navigate systems of oppression proved to be a gift and a curse for Black women. On the one hand, Black women and their allies were building a collective knowledge of resistance designed to bring about real change for the most vulnerable people and communities. From the various labor, anti-lynching, and political campaigns of the times, Black women were intimately involved, but were forced to the sidelines. However, the physical presence of Black women in positions of leadership has been met with opposition, irrespective of context. So whether in the 19th or 21st century, for issues of race or gender or class, Black

women have been told they have to pick a side, rather than being able to holistically fight against intersectional oppression in the ways for which their respective marginalized identities require. Black women's lived experiences are spaces for intellectual development, theorizing, and action, especially because even without formal recognition within the academy or policy spaces, Black women have advanced an intellectual legacy that is inclusive, intersectional, and liberating.

Womanism

Black Feminist Thought has continued to populate transformative understandings of resistance. Alice Walker introduces the term womanist to address the solidarity of humanity (Collins 2000). For Walker (1983),

Womanist is a Black feminist or feminist of color . . . Usually referring to outrageous, audacious, courageous or willful behavior . . . Wanting to know more and in greater depth than is considered "good" for anyone . . . Committed to the survival and wholeness of entire people male and female. Not a separatist, except periodically, for health . . . Loves music . . . Loves the moon . . . Loves the spirit . . . Loves love and food and roundness . . . Loves struggle . . . Loves the Folk . . . Loves herself. Regardless. Womanist is to feminist as purple is to lavender. (xi–xii)

Walker envisions a reality where Black women can live full and authentic lives by being seen, heard, loved, not only by society, but for themselves to fully embody these ideas and principles. Ogunyemi further articulates,

Black womanism is a "philosophy" that concerns itself both with sexual equality in the Black community and "with the world power structure that subjugates" both Blacks and women. "Its ideal is for Black unity where every Black person has a modicum of power and so can be a 'brother' or a 'sister' or a 'father' or a 'mother' to the other . . . [I]ts aim is the dynamism of wholeness and self-healing. (as cited in Brown 2004)

Black feminism and womanism embrace the idea of personhood as defined by oneself. Therefore, the ability for Black women to define themselves is an opportunity to upend the stereotypes and the controlling images that have historically dictated life outcomes.

Intersectionality

An acknowledgment of identity, its cumulative effect, and its multiplicative implication for life within the context of a global society is central to Black Feminist Thought. When Angela Davis wrote *Women, Race, and Class*, she was contextualizing Black womanhood from slavery through the mid-20th century. In this work, Davis (1983) interrogates how women (Black and white) intersect (sometimes cooperatively, most times competitively) for the advancement of rights and privileges in the United States. Within this context, white women are interested in partnerships that will advance their rights, at the expense of Black people holistically. bell hooks' *Ain't I a Woman* (1981) illuminates how the virtues of womanhood have never been recognized for Black women in the United States. Inspired by the famous speech by Sojourner Truth, hooks explained how racism and sexism dictate the marginal status of Black women. "Black women were placed in a double bind; to support women's suffrage would imply that they were allying themselves with white women activists who had publicly revealed their racism, but to support only black male suffrage was to endorse a patriarchal social order that would grant them no political voice" (hooks 1981, 3).

Audre Lorde's *Sister Outsider* is a collection of essays that speak to a "contemporary feminist theory" whereby Lorde is "at the cutting edge of consciousness" due to her ability to expand, deepen, and enrich what it means to be a feminist (Lorde 1984, 8). Lorde specifically understands that beyond the analytical framework that examines the nuance of identity, systems of oppression, and the dynamics of power and privilege, there must be praxis for action. Praxis, for Lorde, speaks to embracing all the identities individuals occupy and working to construct a new future. Building off earlier theories and frameworks, intersectionality is a term coined by Kimberlé Crenshaw (1991) to examine the experiences of Black women in the workplace. In her seminal work "Mapping the Margins," Crenshaw recognizes that Black women in the workplace experienced gender discrimination similar to their white women counterparts as well as the same racial discrimination as Black men. The unique and cumulative experience of gender and racial marginalization for Black women who are situated at the intersection of these systems of oppression creates a unique environment they must navigate.

The single axes of gender oppression do not require white women to also wrestle with racial discrimination. White identity offers racial privilege, which benefits white

women. Similarly, Black men are privileged by their male identity, thus must navigate racial issues, but not gender dynamics. While this conversation is not a game in the oppression Olympics, it does require us to interrogate the ways disadvantage can influence the quality of life for people with multiple identities who are being marginalized today. Because race and gender movements have been siloed, these false dichotomies prohibit interrogation into the ways multiple forms of oppression are experienced simultaneously and limit comprehensive advancement (Brown 2004). Consequently, Lorde (1984) argued, the acceptance of one's differences helps us to devise ways to use each other's differences to enrich our visions and our joint struggles. The inability of public administration to integrate intersectionality as a central analytical frame results in the field, through its policies, decision-making practices, resource allocation, engagement styles, and pedagogy, to deem the inequities experienced by Black women, as well as other people with intersecting and marginalized identities, as invisible and justified.

The Salience of Identity in Public Administration

In the end, Black women in vulnerable positions within disadvantaged communities fall so far from the gaze that is now sympathetic to some women who experience violence that they have virtually no right to safety, protections, or redress when victimized. (Richie 2012, 21–22)

Over the last decade, conversations regarding the salience of identity in public administration have garnered more attention. While inattention to identity may appear frivolous to critics, the subjugated status of people deemed as "other" has quality of life implications. The criminal, legal, housing, health care, and other systems demonstrate how inequity is built into practices that maintain the status quo, thus relegating Black women to some of the worse outcomes. Using Young's Five Faces of Oppression (exploitation, marginalization, powerlessness, cultural imperialism, and violence), Gaynor (2018) argues that the hegemony and universality of public administration research and practices reinforce unethical practices for people and communities of color. Additionally, the violence enacted on marginalized groups has a detrimental effect on the legitimacy of public institutions and their respective administrative professionals.

To better illustrate this point, Lopez-Littleton and

Sampson (2020) discuss the policy artifacts of structural racism to demonstrate how social policies have contributed to the systemic disadvantage of Black and other marginalized groups. With a focus on social security, education, mass incarceration, health care, housing, and residential segregation, the authors examine the collaborative nature for which policy systems contribute to an inequitable environment for communities of color. For example, maternal and infant mortality for Black women far exceed their white and Latina counterparts. From 2011 to 2015, the Black maternal mortality rate for Black women was 42.8 deaths per 100,000 live births compared to 17.2 deaths per 100,000 live births for all U.S. women and 13.0 deaths per 100,000 births for white women (Lopez-Littleton and Sampson 2020). Disparate health outcomes are complicated by interactions with law enforcement, housing that is economically isolated, inadequate schools, and limited employment opportunities, all which are informed by racist policies and decision-making practices designed to prioritize white preferences and values.

Law enforcement specifically comes to mind in thinking about the unequal impact of surveillance, contact, incarceration, and detainment. Blessett and Box (2016) used the Department of Justice (DOJ) report into the Ferguson Police Department to examine how race and class justified the entire municipal government's (law enforcement, city hall, and the courts) pattern of practice to use Black motorists as a revenue source. Gaynor and Blessett (2021) found that the New Orleans Police Department (NOPD) were more likely to reinforce modes of power (i.e., normativity) and use social control tactics (i.e., verbal or physical harassment, public shaming) when interacting with LGBTQ people of color. Using narrative interviews, participants discussed discomfort and fear when the NOPD are within their proximity. One person from the study stated, "is there a such thing as police involvement when your community is being brutalized, harassed, arrested, discriminated against, and not listened to?" (Gaynor and Blessett 2021, 5).

Housing policy is a steadfast indicator of racial inequity. The Federal Housing Administration (FHA) institutionalized discrimination across all aspects of housing from construction, finance, appraisals, and insurance (Rothstein 2017; Taylor 2019). On the surface, these were objective measures designed to protect the investment of government and increase equity for homeown-

ers. History reveals the patterns of practice of finance, appraisals, and insurance were all based in racist ideas about people and place. Taylor (2019) notes that despite evidence of collusion and mismanagement by FHA, Housing and Urban Development (HUD), real estate speculators, and bankers, poor and working-class Black women were targeted as the culprit for an urban housing market gone awry in the 1960s.

Black women homeowners were labeled as "unsophisticated" and domestically dysfunctional, thus adversely affecting federal housing initiatives (Taylor 2019). Provisions were made for low-income residents, but its implementation lacked the requisite infrastructure (e.g., staff, resources, and technical assistance) to really bring equity to bear for participating families. Again, an intentional decision was made to not fully fund and operationalize the low-income homeownership program. The callousness of this decision reflects a total disregard for the social and political implications of people who would participate in this program—mostly poor Black women. Given the scarcity of the housing stock available to Black families, acknowledged predatory practices, and exorbitant rents, participating in a federal housing program appeared to be a better option. Unfortunately, this proved not to be the case. Housing policy continues to exemplify how Black women became the scapegoats for racist narratives and policy decisions.

Dantzer (2021) specifically argued that the modalities of racial capitalism (e.g., redlining, slum clearance, foreclosures, and exclusionary zoning) all reflect the intention to dispossess and displace undesirable people and communities. This commodification produces divergent outcomes for long-standing urban residents of color. Their neighborhoods are intentionally disinvested and, thus, prime for rehabilitation to benefit white middle-class residents (Blessett 2020a). Whereas slum clearance was the mid-20th century policy of the day, gentrification and resegregation evolved to recapture and reorganize land and neighborhoods 60 years later. Despite Fair Housing laws and provisions, Black women are still more likely to be renters and are disproportionately threatened with eviction. Now more than ever, race and gender increase the likelihood of eviction, with Black women facing the compounded risk of eviction compared to Black men and women of other races (National Partnership 2021). Despite what we know to be institutional failures, society continues to point to Black women as examples of individuals who are predisposed to make bad decisions; thus,

outcomes are attributed to their status as low-income and working-class. As a result, the harm (institutional, political, economic, emotional, social) caused to them is virtually ignored.

Significant discussion of representation within public bureaucracies often advances the idea that diversifying the demographic makeup of an organization will produce more equitable outcomes. As Balfour, Adams, and Nickels (2020) note,

Ordinary people may simply act appropriately in their organizational role—in essence, just doing what those around them would agree they should be doing—and at the same time, participate in what a critical and reasonable observer, usually well after the fact, would call evil. Even worse, under conditions of what we call *moral inversion*, in which something evil has been redefined convincingly as good, ordinary people can all too easily engage in acts of administrative evil while believing that what they are doing is not only correct, but in fact, good. (4)

Laws, alone, cannot and will not right the wrongs of injustice, discrimination, and oppression. The people inside of bureaucracy must be willing to act on the side of equity and justice. Public administration as a field of scholarship and practice needs to raise its consciousness and be honest about the harms caused when we align with the narratives of objectivity, meritocracy, and neutrality. It remains disingenuous to applaud these narratives while simultaneously seeing the ways disparity is perpetuated in ways that victimize “other” people and communities outside of white, male, and heterosexual identities.

The reality is that our bureaucratic institutions are racialized. Bureaucracies shape the agency of individuals (access to education, employment, healthcare, political power). They legitimize the distribution of resources for deserving populations, while justifying scarcity for undeserving populations. And, they consolidate political power in ways that sustain the status quo (Ray 2019). Whites’ identity and their respective communities are atop the social, political, economic, and racial hierarchies, and thus overwhelmingly benefit from the existing structures. Leveraging colorblindness allows for adverse policy decisions to operate without question, which ultimately hurt Black, Indigenous, and Latino people and communities. Vague language absolves public administrators and officials from taking ownership or seeing themselves as

purveyors of injustice through policy decisions and administrative actions. Use of such language mimics the “just doing my job” sentiment used by British functionaries when subjugating Indigenous populations in Africa and India as expendable and superfluous (Alkadry and Blessett 2010).

Public administration needs to be better. The legitimacy of U.S. institutions hangs in the balance as racism, sexism, classism, homophobia, and transphobia become political platforms for local, state, and federal leaders. The politics of today will continue to inform the practices of tomorrow. With less and less room for compromise, people who fall outside of white, male, heterosexual, able-bodied, and affluent identities will continue to be harmed and the violence inflicted upon them will be justified. The evidence is clear on the subjugated status of Black women and their respective lives. Despite this reality, Black women have remained resilient and have developed non-traditional strategies to navigate the world, support each other, and advocate for ideas that empower other oppressed groups. Moreover, as stated in the Combahee River Collective “. . . it is apparent that no other ostensibly progressive movement has ever considered our specific oppression a priority or worked seriously to ending that oppression. . . . We realize that only people who care enough about us to work consistently for our liberation is us” (Hull, Bell-Scott, and Smith 1982, 15–16).

Black Feminist Epistemologies and Methodologies Applied

Black Feminist Theory (BFT) is “a political and intellectual intervention developed by women activists and scholars challenging the traditional body of knowledge about Black women and the ways it is produced and validated” (Richie 2012, 127). BFT is not just theorizing. It is also praxis, which is the action that leads to liberation and empowerment. To advance Black Feminist Theory in public administration,

- There needs to be a clear understanding and analytical framing of the way interlocking oppression uniquely affects Black women;
- Black women’s experiences need to be at the center of analysis;
- Lived experience (everyday knowledge) is given authority to serve as a source of authentic expertise;
- Dialectical images/depictions of Black womanhood are allowed to be nuanced and complex without being

circumscribed by narrow, normative notions of femininity; and

- Scholarly work should be in service to activism (Richie 2012).

Black Feminist Theory recognizes that U.S. Black women have produced social thought designed to oppose oppression.

The integration of Black Feminist Theory into public administration has largely been absent, despite its ability to offer context into the myriad ways oppression has and continues to operate for people and communities of color. Within public administration (PA), quantitative methods continue to reign supreme based on their premise of objectivity, rationality, and ability to determine causality. BFT, along with other approaches like Participatory Action Research (PAR) and interpretive and indigenous methods, are less likely to be valued because they center women of color, LGBTQ individuals, poor people, disabled folks, and others who sit outside of the status quo. In other words, the desire to prioritize the lived experiences of directly impacted people, to leverage their expertise, to use and honor their voice, as well as to utilize “nontraditional” methods (e.g., poetry, dialogue, relationship building, and art) to understand the nuances of life have been scorned as less sophisticated and not as rigorous.

Black Feminist Theory and intersectionality specifically can be used in PA to embrace inclusive perspectives, ideologies, and methodologies as alternatives to the inhumane treatment of people with multiple intersecting identities (Blessett 2020b). Public administration can then pose questions about how disparity emerges, the role of institutions in perpetuating inequality, and why and how communities of color have the lowest quality of life statistics. This will facilitate examination of the individual and societal consequences of being burdened by administrative actions and public policy (Blessett, Gaynor, Witt, and Alkadry 2016). With these questions, race cannot just be a variable in some statistical analysis; it requires an in-depth level of interrogation about the social, political, economic, and cultural context of institutions and society. Rather, these approaches take time, require trust, need active listeners, use deliberation, demand flexibility, and necessitate patience. Understanding the implications of intersectionality cannot be explored with a survey or a one-off interaction. There are just some things numbers cannot explain; adding the necessary context of interpersonal experiences and relationships may offer insight behind the numbers. More than anything, research-

ers and practitioners must be willing to step outside of normativity and learn how to thoughtfully and authentically engage with people who have been marginalized, if there is a desire to be responsive to the needs of all citizens, but especially the most vulnerable.

Within the classroom, centering what has been traditionally known as subjugated knowledge helps to expand the collective understanding of oppression, struggle, tension, and engagement. Therefore to advance justice, there must be a rejection of race-neutral perspectives and a growing capacity (beyond rhetoric) to embody a just and liberated world (Gaynor and Lopez-Littleton 2021). This, indeed, is the work, the praxis of public administration, to actively dismantle old practices and develop new strategies and varied ways of knowing, and to push for change in ways that restructure a new world. Classes, for instance, like Intro to Public Administration, Human Resource Management, Strategic Planning, Organizational Theory, and Qualitative and Quantitative Methods, can benefit from having discussions, projects, and engagement around intersectionality to explore the ways identity is affected by theory and practice. For research, this means modifying tenure and promotion requirements to acknowledge the time to work collaboratively with community. It requires foundations and philanthropic organizations to reward funding proposals that are mindful of the complexity of the wicked problems and that acknowledge the flexibility needed in working with community members. The social ills of society did not emerge in a one-year funding cycle, so it is important for organizations to manage their expectations with respect to the types of solutions and progress that can be garnered within that time. Funding should support longitudinal studies that allow researchers, in partnership with community members, to develop projects designed to address root cause issues. Time and resources are essential for the investigation into complex problems. Additionally, as community partners have to navigate external factors, flexibility is important to demonstrate care, concern, and commitment to sustain working relationships with people and organizations within the community. Social ills are systemic issues, and therefore more time, attention, and resources must be dedicated to efforts to address the root cause of these issues rather than the symptoms.

Conclusion

Black women are resilient, not necessarily because they want to be, but because they have to be. The non-tra-

ditional tools and approaches to build community have allowed Black women and other marginalized communities to create networks and develop collaborations outside of formal institutions and mainstream society. White identity, ideologies, and values are threatened by the thought of centering people deemed as “others.” This may be part of the reason Black Feminist Theory and other interpretive approaches are viewed as less valuable and sophisticated. The status quo will be disrupted when public administration centers the lives of people with intersecting identities; offers a counter-narrative about a field that has largely been white-washed; includes the contributions of Black women and people of color who helped to build the United States, its institutions, and culture; decenters whiteness; and situates the field within the appropriate historical, political, and economic context. While the backlash will be great (see responses to the 1619 Project, critical race theory (CRT), divisive language bills, anti-trans laws), public administration must take a stand, interrogate, and be honest about the harm caused by the field via its research and practice.

It was difficult to write this article because none of this information is new. The writings and teachings of the Black feminist go back for centuries. The societal ills Black women were interrogating then, are literally the roots of our oppression now, but because of their low social status, no one viewed them as credible. As a result, the oppression has been reified into a system that seems almost impossible to disrupt. However, if we listen to Black women, if we honor their experiences navigating a society that is hierarchical and oppressive, if we leverage their intellectual contributions to activism, advocacy, and resistance, there is a possibility we can recreate a new world.

To honor the legacy of Black women who tried to tell us, here are a few of their names: Jarena Lee (b. 1783), Sojourner Truth (b. 1797), Maria W. Stewart (b. 1803), Harriet Ann Jacobs (b. 1813), Mary Ellen Pleasant (b. 1814), Harriet Tubman (b. 1820), Anna Julia Cooper (b. 1858), Ida B. Wells-Barnett (b. 1862), Mary Church Terrell (b. 1863), Amy Jacques Garvey (b. 1895), Florynce Kennedy (b. 1916), Dr. Pauli Murray (b. 1910), Dorothy Height (b. 1912), Shirley Chisholm (b. 1924), Audre Lorde (b. 1934), Frances Beal (b. 1940), bell hooks (b. 1952), Toni Morrison (b. 1931), Akasha Gloria Hull (b. 1944), Alice Walker (b. 1944), Angela Y. Davis (b. 1944), Patricia Hill Collins (b. 1948), Barbara Smith (b. 1946), Beverly Smith (b. 1946), and exponentially more.

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The Oblivious Organization: Understanding Racial Stereotypes in the Public Sector*

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Domonic Bearfield
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Organizational obliviousness is a theoretical framework that acknowledges how socially constructed stereotypes of marginalized groups become embedded individually, culturally, and institutionally within organizations. Prior work on organizational obliviousness has focused on exploring gender within organizational contexts. This work builds on previous scholarship on organizational obliviousness in the public sector and discussions of race in public organizations. It also builds on applying the organizational obliviousness framework in order to understand how racialized and intersectional forms of oppression manifest within public organizations. Specifically, we use the organizational obliviousness framework to explore how grooming and appearance policies that seem neutral on the surface can be exclusionary and grounded in racial stereotypes.

Public administration scholarship and practice are grounded in ideals that emphasize neutrality and objectivity. Historically, both public organizations and public employees were tasked with being neutral actors. Ideals of neutrality were grounded in a push for professionalism at the outset of the field. However, an overemphasis on neutrality grounded in professionalism leads to administrators and organizations overlooking the complexity of managing competing values present within the communities they govern, and an inability to fully grasp their role in shaping public life (Green, Wamsley, and Keller 1993). The tradition of the neutral administrator, or the neutral organization was first challenged in the era of New Public Administration. Specifically, literature from this era highlights that we cannot expect neutrality from public employees because implementation of public laws and policies require interpretation and discretion (Frederickson 2010) and individual values of the employee are bound to manifest in their administrative behavior.

More recently, several public administration scholars have studied the ways that neutral organizational policies and practices may actually generate disparate outcomes or have uneven impacts across social groups. This line of research has sought to identify how organizational processes

that seem neutral on the surface actually harm marginalized identities (Bishu, Guy, and Heckler 2019; Mastracci and Bowman 2015; Portillo, Bearfield, and Humphrey 2022; Portillo, Humphrey, and Bearfield 2020; Starke, Heckler, and Mackey 2018). This literature builds on understandings of equity from New Public Administration, suggesting that we should not assume neutrality in the development and creation of policies surrounding public organizations. In this article, we build on this previous scholarship by exploring organizational obliviousness as a theoretical framework within public administration.

Developed by Doan and Portillo (2019), organizational obliviousness highlights “the intangible ways that stereotypes influence the everyday practices of the individual and organization” (1). This builds on their early work, which used a gendered organization lens to explore organizational resistance to women serving in the Special Forces of the United States military (Doan and Portillo 2017). Specifically, using interview and survey data, the authors found that military members’ resistance to integration was often embedded in their perception of gender as a fixed, static trait, and grounded in socially constructed gender stereotypes. Many of these stereotypes were subtly legitimized through organizational policies and practices and

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became so deeply entrenched in the organization that they were taken for granted and inconspicuous. Doan and Portillo (2019) describe this phenomenon as organizational obliviousness, which operates at the individual, cultural, and institutional level of an organization. Based on their data, the authors contend that organizational obliviousness is frequently exercised without malicious intent; however, the impact of it results in creating barriers for female employees to thrive and succeed in an organization. While Doan and Portillo (2019) highlight the implications of organizational obliviousness with respect to gender, the authors also suggest that this theory can be applied to other identities, such as race.

Our central purpose in this article is to expand the application of an organizational obliviousness framework to the concepts of race and intersectionality. By connecting race, intersectionality, and organizational obliviousness, we make several contributions to public administration scholarship. First, we utilize the organizational obliviousness framework to explore equity in the public sector. This framework helps connect the actions and behaviors of administrators with biased organizational policies that become institutionalized within the public sector, but has received little attention in public administration scholarship. Second, we expand this discussion by incorporating race and intersectionality, providing a critical analysis of the implicit ways that public organizations can exclude racially marginalized groups. Third, by discussing race explicitly and connecting it with a theoretical framework that previously was applied empirically to the study of gender, we demonstrate how this framework functions with an intersectional perspective. Finally, we explore workplace grooming policies, which are organizational policies that appear neutral, but in practice, have implications for racial and gender equity.

In the following sections, we explore organizational obliviousness in more depth, providing an explanation of how the framework takes place in workplace settings. We follow this review of the literature with a discussion connecting race and organizational obliviousness. We then further connect previous work on gender and current discussions of race to present an intersectional discussion of organizational obliviousness. Next, we apply this framework to organizational grooming policies within the U.S. military. Specifically, we explore how organizational policies involving the hairstyles of employees can be exclusionary and grounded in stereotypes. After this application, we conclude with a discussion of directions for future research.

Race in Public Administration

Doan and Portillo's (2019) analysis of organizational obliviousness focuses on gender. In this article, we build on their work and apply organizational obliviousness to race. The exercise of soft power is maintained through a negative social construction of a marginalized group's identity and enforced through institutional hierarchies to produce inequitable policy outcomes. "The visibility and apparent salience of some issues and the invisibility and apparent unimportance of others is an effect of the political process, not an outcome. This 'second face of power' is intimately linked to the maintenance and preservation of dominant interests . . . [that] are sustained through both tangible means such as institutions, laws, and resource distribution, and intangible means such as the reinscribing and reinforcement of socially created understandings of groups" (Doan 2011, 32). Race is a social construct (Carroll, Wright, and Meier 2019), meaning that it is a phenomenon which is created and given meaning by people (Yanow 2003). Specifically, race is often treated as a means of categorization, where people deemed as similar are placed within the same group (Yanow 2003). These categories are socially constructed because they reflect shared meanings and interpretations from a collection of people (Yanow 2003). Furthermore, these meanings and interpretations are not static. Shared perceptions of race change over time.

For the individual, race is a lived experience (House-Niamke and Eckerd 2021). It shapes the way someone interacts with other people, as well as the organizations and institutions they encounter on a daily basis. While someone may possess an individual understanding of their race, the way they are treated by people, organizations, and institutions, are often a reflection of how each actor perceives that individual's race (House-Niamke and Eckerd 2021). In short, race is relationally constructed and helps justify differential treatment by individuals and institutions (Ray 2019).

The United States has a history of racial bias (Alexander and Stivers 2020), which reached one of its most tumultuous points in the summer of 2020. Specifically, George Floyd was killed during an interaction with four police officers from the Minneapolis Police Department, in which one of the officers knelt on Floyd's neck for more than nine minutes. A bystander caught Floyd's death on camera. Within a few days, the video of his murder was shared around the world. This situation seemed difficult for the field of public administration to fully grasp—a constituent was killed by a

local public servant in a horrific and public display. The calls for reform were immediate (Navratil 2020; Reinan 2020). In addition, calls for reform were not just directed at the Minneapolis Police Department but included the profession of policing. Police departments were charged with addressing racism (Lippman 2020; Walsh 2020), while local governments sought to show their commitment to racial equity before backlash could ensue (Mills 2020).

The last time the field of public administration struggled with the concept of race to this extent was likely during the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s. During this time, the field of public administration hosted the first Minnowbrook conference. Catalyzed by political and social turmoil grounded in racial inequity, scholars attending the conference explored how the field of public administration could contribute to resolving these issues (Gooden and Portillo 2011). More than 50 years later, we find ourselves in a similar place—political and social turmoil deriving from long-standing racial disparities have reached a breaking point, and the public is calling for change. Described as a time of racial reckoning (Blessett and Gaynor 2021; Chang, Martin, and Marrapodi 2020), the summer of 2020 brought race to center stage in public administration scholarship and practice.

The field of public administration has a complex history with the concept of race. Scholars have described it as a neglected area of public administration scholarship (Stivers 2007), with several suggesting that the field has avoided explicit discussions of race and racism (Gooden 2014; Starke et al. 2018). At the same time, race is a foundational part of the administrative state (Alexander and Stivers 2020), and the development of public administration as a field of research and practice (Portillo et al. 2020; Portillo et al. 2022). In short, what we often see across public administration scholarship is a contradiction between the influence of race, and the attention we give race. Although socially constructed understandings of race are deeply embedded into our public institutions, we often overlook the ubiquity of race. Our purpose is to highlight the omnipresence of race within the public sector using the organizational obliviousness framework.

Intersectionality and Public Administration

The traditional discourse concerning issues of race and sex has long minimized, silenced, or pushed aside the experiences of Black women (Giddings 2006). Kimberlé Crenshaw (1989) uses the term *intersectionality* to de-

scribe this phenomenon. In case law, Black women often face discrimination because they are both Black and female. A focus on just one of those categories obscures the particular form of discrimination they experience. According to Crenshaw, “[t]hus for feminist theory and antiracist policy discourse to embrace the experiences and concerns of Black women, the entire framework that has been used as a basis for translating ‘women’s experience’ or ‘the Black experience’ into concrete policy demands must be rethought and recast” (1989, 140).

Since then, intersectionality scholars have built upon Crenshaw’s initial framing to explore questions involving women of color, sexual orientation, class, and national origin, among other categories of marginalized groups. The scholarship also moved beyond legal studies to include a variety of academic disciplines and fields (Cho, Crenshaw, and McCall 2013). This includes Public Administration, where several scholars advocated for the use of an intersectional approach (see Bearfield 2009; Hutchinson 2001). In the past decade, scholars used intersectionality to examine important Supreme Court decisions (Gaynor and Blessett 2014), satisfaction with family-friendly policies among federal workers (Hamidullah and Riccucci 2017), public leadership (Breslin, Pandey and Riccucci 2017), representation in higher education (Fay, Hicklin Fryar, Meier and Wilkins 2020), the need for an increase in scholarship focused on policy and actions directed toward lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer populations (Larson 2022), and women of color in federal law enforcement (Yu 2021).

Still, a recent call to action from many of the field’s leading social equity scholars suggested a need for more research on intersectionality and highlighted that it lags behind other areas of interest (Blessett et al. 2019). The field still has not fully tapped into the potential of intersectionality to illuminate cases and stories that are often missed when organizations and researchers focus on a single point of identity. We contend that the lack of understanding around intersectionality contributes to organizational obliviousness, given the tendency of organizations to focus on the concerns of single or dominant identity groups and not those of marginalized populations with overlapping claims of discrimination.

Organizational Obliviousness

Organizational obliviousness centers the “assumed naturalness” of an organization’s culture, policies, and every-

day practices in its analysis. This framework examines the exclusion of marginalized identities in workplace settings through the use of three concepts: organizational identity, organizational resistance, and stereotyping. Specifically, organizations possess identities that are established through shared values among dominant members. Members that align most with the organization's identity often rely on stereotypes, based on the prevailing social construction of a marginalized group's identity, to challenge the ability of others to fit within the organization. Doan and Portillo (2019) demonstrate this through their exploration of integrating women into the U.S. Special Forces. When an organization is presented with opportunities to adjust its policies or structures to be more inclusive, there is resistance to change, and this resistance is often embedded in institutionalized—or taken for granted assumptions—about the organization's need for the policy or practice. Organizational obliviousness becomes an embedded behavior when it is reflected at the individual, cultural, and institutional levels of an organization (Doan and Portillo 2019) (see Figure 1).

Individual Level

As Doan and Portillo (2019) highlight in their study, the individual level of organizational obliviousness is rooted in the social construction of a marginalized group. Dominant members of the organization draw on stereotypes and anecdotes about a marginalized group to create broad generalizations about them that rationalize and justify their subordinate status in the organization. For example, offhand comments about where a person lives or where certain individuals are willing to move based on their racial or ethnic background may be shared to justify why members of a particular race or ethnicity are underrepresented in a workforce. An example of this is claiming that people of color do not want to live in the suburbs and therefore may not apply to jobs in suburban jurisdictions. That is a stereotype about an entire group that is used to justify the lack of representation and to discriminate against individuals who might apply to jobs in the suburbs. These stereotypes apply assumptions to entire categories of people and rarely take into account how racialized redlining shaped particular neighborhoods or regions (Rothstein 2017).

Cultural Level

At the cultural level, organizational obliviousness can look like individuals being held up as tokens to symbolize the values of an organization. An example occurs when a leader in an organization points to a Black or Latinx

manager to “prove” that the organization is inclusive without working to understand the lived experiences of employees of color throughout the organization. Similarly, the organization can point to the missteps of one person with a particular identity to imply that all people with a similar identity may not “fit” in the organization. This is often an example of confirmation bias that keeps people of color and women from receiving equal opportunities within organizations.

Institutional Level

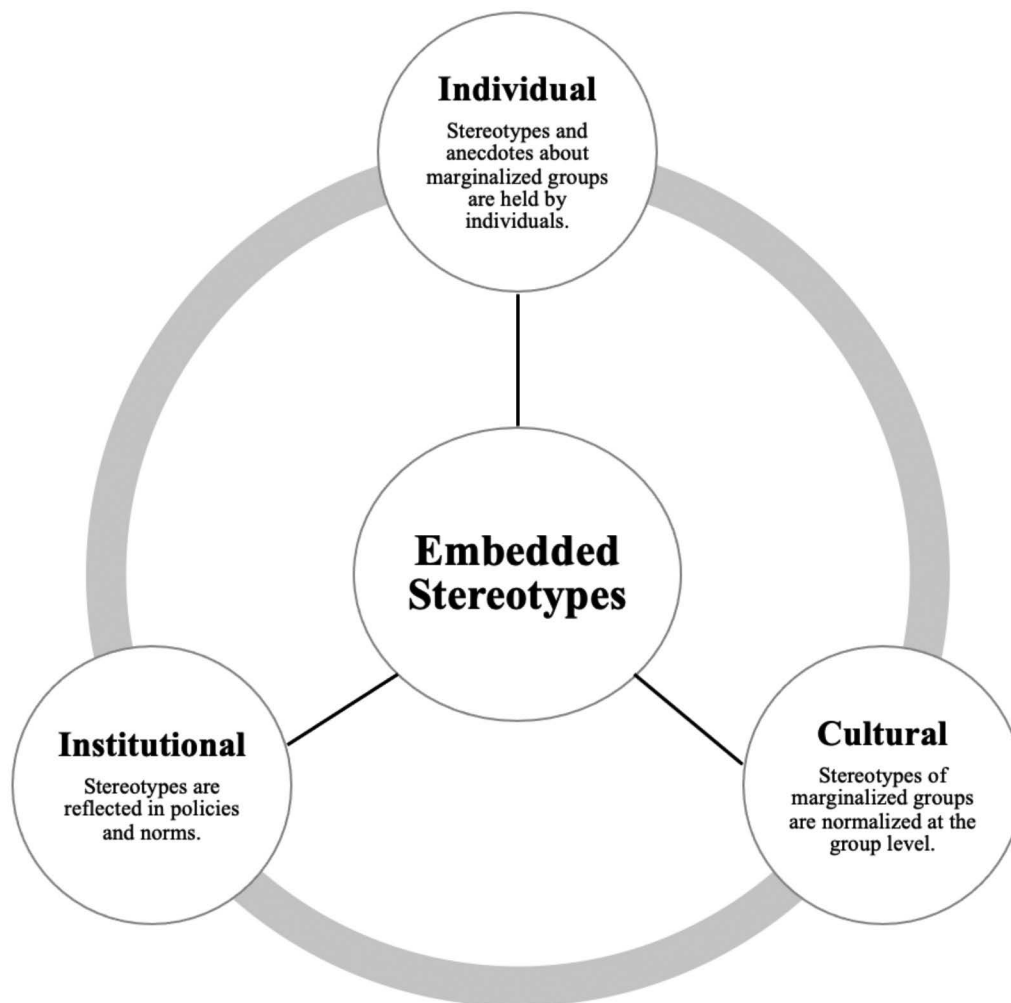
At the institutional level, organizational obliviousness manifests itself in policies that may appear as neutral, but have disproportionate impacts on women, people of color, and other historically marginalized identities. One complicated example is policies requiring public servants to live in jurisdictions where they are serving. While these policies may increase a sense of community commitment, they make it more difficult for dual career households that are balancing living arrangements for two careers. Specifically, because the household must reside in the community where residency is required, other employed household members may struggle to maintain employment or face additional challenges commuting to work. With more than 85% of police officers in the United States identifying as men (National Institute of Justice 2019), these types of policies can have gendered implications. Again, these policies are seemingly race and gender neutral, but their impact is not. They are often not intentionally designed to target marginalized members of an organization, but the result is that they cause harm to employees who do not fit the norms of the organization.

An Application to the Public Sector

Central to the organizational obliviousness framework is the idea that those reinforcing biased policies and procedures are often (not always) oblivious to their bias and the implications it has for marginalized groups. Recognizing this central tenet of organizational obliviousness, it was essential when we selected a policy to explore this framework that we chose a policy that presented as neutral, but had underlying implications for the treatment of racially marginalized groups. One policy that fits this criterion is grooming policies in the U.S. military. Grooming policies are often presented as neutral and focused on professionalism, regardless of identity, but they have significantly gendered and racialized implications.

Congress determines who can serve in the military,

Figure 1. Organizational Obliviousness Framework



and under what conditions; however, the military is tasked with developing detailed policies and regulations as well as designing training for its members. As the largest public institution, the military was created to serve and protect citizens, while reflecting the values and priorities of the nation. The military prides itself on crafting universal policies and regulations intended to be applied uniformly across service members and ostensibly uphold norms of professionalism and respectability in the institution. However, the implementation of these regulations has always been subject to the interpretation, assumption, and preferences of military leadership who enforce them, which has resulted in disparate treatment of racial and gender minorities (Bailey et al. 2022).

At times, the military has been at the forefront of challenging, shaping or defining societal norms, while at other times, it has been forced to change through the courts and Congress (Bailey et al. 2022). The evolving policies targeted

at, and treatment of, female service members exemplifies the fluidity of military regulations that both challenge the status quo while also maintaining norms of professionalism and white middle class respectability. In 1943, the Women's Army Corps (WAC) was awarded full military status. Women were subjected to the same military regulations as men; however, they also had to abide by an additional set of morality regulations that focused on maintaining their femininity, marriageability, and virginity or face discharge (often dishonorably) from WAC (Bailey 2022). Responding to the changing gender norms ushered in by the women's movement, by 1973 the Army modified several of these blatantly gendered regulations. The "moral character" restrictions on female service members and prospective enlistees were rescinded. Prospective female enlistees were no longer required to provide three character reference letters or provide a waiver for any pregnancy they had outside of marriage. Yet, while the military has liberalized some poli-

cies and regulations, other less obvious gendered regulations persist. For example, under the guise of neutrality, lactation rooms were not provided for nursing service members until July 2020 when the Army issued Regulation 600-20, Army Command Policy, which required breastfeeding and lactation support in the workplace for nursing service members. The institutional logic animating this decision was rooted in the appearance of gender neutrality and fairness. Lactation rooms provide a separate space uniquely for nursing women. But more telling, many military leaders believed that women breastfeeding in military uniforms were “unprofessional” (Vuic 2022).

Professionalism and Organizational Grooming Policies

Professionalism is a core tenet of public administration. As a field, we often trace the genesis of public administration to the Progressive Era. At this time, reformers sought to end the spoils system and machine politics through the incorporation of *professional* practices in government administration. Central to the idea of professionalism in public administration is achieved competence (Gargan 2007). Prior research suggests that professions should contain the following qualities:

- (1) application of skills based on technical knowledge; (2) requirements for advanced education and training; (3) some formal testing of competence on admission to the profession; (4) existence of professional associations; (5) the existence of codes of conduct or ethics; and (6) the existence of an accepted commitment or calling, or sense of responsibility for serving the public. (Fox, 1992, 4)

Broader and more contemporary explanations of professionalism suggest that the defining features of a profession include, “the establishment of jurisdiction over an esoteric body of knowledge, as well as self-regulation over membership and appropriate conduct by professionals” (Kadowaki 2015, 325).

Organizational grooming policies are often grounded in ideals of professionalism. These policies seek to outline standards of appearance for organizational members. Across disciplines and professions, we regularly fail to recognize how expectations of professionalism are often embedded in our understandings of race and gender. As prior research suggests, professionalism is culturally rooted in a manner that penalizes women and people of

color (Ferguson and Dougherty 2022). Role congruity theory (RCT) helps provide an explanation of this phenomenon. Specifically, RCT suggests that people possess stereotypes of different social groups, as well as behavioral expectations of different organizational and social roles. When someone stereotypes an individual as incongruent with a certain position, it can lead to harsher evaluations of that individual’s behavior and performance (Eagly and Karau 2002). For instance, multiple studies have found that employees of color are less likely to be viewed as congruent with prototypic behavior of managerial and leadership positions (Chung-Herrera and Lankau 2005; Rosette, Leonardelli, and Phillips 2008), which can negatively impact evaluations of employees of color. In short, expectations of professionalism are often implicitly connected to race and gender and have implications for people of color and women. The following example demonstrates the point. In 2010 Catastrophe Management Solutions (CMS) hired Chasity Jones, a Black woman, but rescinded her job offer when they requested Jones remove her dreadlocks and she refused. The organization argued that Jones had violated their professional conduct requirements:

At the time, CMS had a written policy that said: “All personnel are expected to be dressed and groomed in a manner that projects a professional and businesslike image while adhering to company and industry standards and/or guidelines. . . . [H]airstyle should reflect a business/professional image. No excessive hairstyles or unusual colors are acceptable[.]” (*EEOC v. CMS* 2016)

Further explanation was given by a human resources manager for CMS who told Jones that dreadlocks “tend to get messy” (*EEOC v. CMS* 2016). The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) filed a lawsuit on behalf of Jones, suggesting that her hairstyle should be protected under Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. Specifically, the EEOC argued that because dreadlocks have a cultural association with people who are Black or have African descent, the rescinding of her job offer should be considered discrimination. In the end, “the federal district court and the Eleventh Circuit in *EEOC v. Catastrophe Management Solutions* strictly applied the immutability doctrine to hold that CMS’ prohibition against Ms. Jones’ locks did not constitute unlawful race discrimination” (Greene 2017, 992). Immutability often

describes characteristics that are considered to be unchosen by the individual (Clarke 2015) and unchangeable (Hoffman 2010). With the court strictly applying the immutability doctrine and siding with CMS, it is arguing that Ms. Jones' hair is chosen and changeable.

Furthermore, the court argued that the CMS policy was race-neutral: "Under our precedent, banning dreadlocks in the workplace under a race-neutral grooming policy—without more—does not constitute intentional race-based discrimination" (*EEOC v. CMS* 2016). Here the court is recognizing that while dreadlocks may often be associated with Black communities, they are not a hairstyle worn exclusively by Black individuals. Because of this, the court can argue that Jones has not experienced racial discrimination because it is a policy that would apply to her regardless of her race. However, it is important to consider why Jones, as a Black woman, may prefer or even need to wear a natural or protective hairstyle like dreadlocks.

Natural hairstyles are those that do not require straightening or chemically relaxing one's hair, while protective hairstyles describe styles that tuck in the ends of the hair, like braids, locs, and twists. The key benefit of protective hairstyles is that they can be worn for an extended period of time and allow hair to grow while minimizing breakage (Bosley and Daveluy 2015). In contrast, straightening one's hair involves using heat to transform hair from curly (or wavy) to straight (Quinn, Quinn, and Kelly 2003). An important feature of straightening is that it cannot withstand water or humidity. Upon exposure to water or humidity, the hair will return to its state prior to the straightening. In comparison to straightening, "chemical relaxing straightens curly hair using chemicals that alters the hair's natural texture" (Quinn et al. 2003, 282). It is important to note that chemical relaxation does not fully straighten someone's hair. It typically makes someone's hair wavier and is a step toward straight hair. Once chemical relaxation is complete, it is followed by straightening the hair until it is no longer wavy. Chemical relaxing is often viewed as providing an extended benefit, since it keeps hair from returning to its natural state when exposed to water or humidity (Quinn et al. 2003).

Prior research has described straightening and chemically relaxing hair as "traumatic hair care practices" (Bosley and Daveluy 2015, 78), because of the long-term damage this process can cause. Extant research suggests that continued use of chemical straightening products for more than a year can result in, "itching, burns and scars on the scalp, thinning and weakening of

the hair shaft, discoloration and hair loss, apart from allergic reactions to chemicals" (Miranda-Vilela, Botelho, and Muehlmann 2014, 9). Because of this, an increased number of people have begun using natural and protective hairstyles in the United States (Bosley and Daveluy 2015). In short, there are several reasons why someone may choose a natural and/or protective hairstyle, or a straightened hairstyle. However, it is important to remember that the reasons are often more complex and personal than realized.

While courts have argued that Title VII does not necessarily address natural or protective hairstyles, there has been a legislative push to correct this. In 2019, Representative Cedric Richmond of Louisiana introduced the Creating a Respectful and Open World for Natural Hair Act (known as the CROWN Act). In 2022 the Act passed the House but it has not yet passed in the Senate. Many state level elected leaders and advocates are not waiting for federal legislation. Currently, 14 states have passed the CROWN Act, with legislation filed in more than a dozen additional states (<https://www.thecrownact.com/about>). This legislation would update hair texture and protective hairstyles as a protected class by expanding the definition of race to protect traits associated with race, such as hair texture and protective hairstyles.

Race and Organizational Obliviousness in the Army

On March 31, 2014, the United States Army issued its updated grooming and appearance policy, AR 670-1. Within this updated policy, the Army prohibited women from the wearing of dreadlocks and twists, while placing several limitations on the wearing of cornrows and braids. See Table 1 for a complete description of the Army's requirements. Similar to the policy from Catastrophe Management Solutions, the Army's grooming appearance was considered race-neutral. However, although the policy makes no reference to race, many viewed this as a means to target the appearance of Black women (Byrd and Tharps 2014; Cooper 2014).

While this seems to be a recent issue, the policy only continues a long-standing conflict over the hairstyles of Black soldiers in the military. During the 1960s and 1970s, there were problems over Black men wearing afros (Bailey 2019). As Bailey (2019) suggests, "Despite army hair regulations' uniformity—or at least the intention of uniformity—they nonetheless drew charges of unfairness and preferential treatment" (647), with Black soldiers feeling as though their hair was policed more than their white counterparts.

Table 1. Hair Appearance Policies for Braids, Cornrows, Dreadlocks, and Twists 2014

Army Regulation 670-1	
<i>Braids</i>	Medium and long hair may be braided. Multiple braiding (defined as more than two braids) is authorized. When worn, multiple braids will be of uniform dimension, small in diameter (approximately ¼ inch), show no more than ⅛ of an inch of scalp between the braids and must be tightly interwoven to present a neat, professional, well-groomed appearance. Foreign material (for example, beads and decorative items) will not be braided into the hair. Braids must continue to the end of the hair in one direction, in a straight line, and can be worn loose per medium hair length guidelines or secured to the head in the same manner as described for medium or long length hair styles. Ends will be secured only with inconspicuous rubber bands. If multiple braids are worn, they must encompass the whole head. When braids are not worn loosely and braided close to the scalp, the braids must start at the front of the head.
<i>Cornrows</i>	Cornrows are defined as hair rolled (not twisted using two strands) or braided closely to the scalp producing a continuous, raised row of hair. When worn, cornrows must be of uniform dimension, small in diameter (approximately ¼ inch), show no more than ⅛ inch of scalp between the cornrows and must be tightly rolled or braided to present a neat, professional, well-groomed appearance. Cornrows must start at the front of the head and continue in one direction in a straight line and end at a consistent location of the head. Only one cornrow style (braided or rolled) may be worn at one time.
<i>Dreadlocks</i>	Dreadlocks are defined as any matted, twisted, or locked coils or ropes of hair (or extensions). Any style of dreadlock (against the scalp or free-hanging) is not authorized. Braids or cornrows that are unkempt or matted are considered dreadlocks and are not authorized.
<i>Twists</i>	Twists are defined as twisting two distinct strands of hair around one another to create a twisted ropelike appearance. Although some twists may be temporary, and can be easily untwisted, they are unauthorized (except for French twists). This includes twists formed against the scalp or worn in a free-hanging style.

Note: From AR 670-1 (2014), Chapter 3: Appearance and Grooming Policies, pp. 4–6.

When considering how the U.S. Army implemented organizational policies both banning and limiting hairstyles associated with Black women, the organizational obliviousness framework can provide a helpful lens. Specifically, applying the framework allows us to explore the connection between individual stereotypes, cultural practices, and institutionalized policies. The following sections address this topic, incorporating race and intersectionality into the framework by analyzing stereotypes of hairstyles often associated with Black women, and how these stereotypes become embedded in organizations. See Table 2 for an application of organizational obliviousness at each level of an organization.

Individual Level

At the individual level, obliviousness starts to become embedded in the organizational environment through socially constructed stereotypes of a group (Doan and Portillo 2019). Within the context of their study, Doan and Portillo (2019) focused on gender stereotypes. However, in the context of this research, we focus on racial and intersectional stereotypes. Stereotypes depict, “over-generalized beliefs about the characteristics of a group of people” (Grandey, Houston, and Avery 2019, 2165).

For instance, Koval and Rosette (2021) conducted four experimental studies, each of which depicts a bias against natural hair among the research participants. Notably, across

Table 2. Application of Organizational Obliviousness

Level of Resistance	Example
<i>Individual</i>	Racial stereotypes regarding professionalism or competence
<i>Cultural</i>	Whiteness is implicitly considered the norm within the organization
<i>Organizational</i>	Racial policy prohibiting or restricting natural and protective hairstyles

each study the authors find that Black women with natural hairstyles are less likely to be viewed as professional, and this bias becomes even more salient in industries with strong dress norms and etiquette (Koval and Rosette 2021). These findings support additional research from Opie and Phillips (2015), another experimental study, which also finds that Black women with natural hair are viewed as less professional compared to Black and white women with straight hair.

Cultural Level

At the cultural level, “obliviousness becomes further embedded in the organization through the normalization of collective stereotyping that reinforces the dominant culture of the organization where it often remains invisible” (Doan and Portillo 2019, 27). Organizational culture represents the shared norms, values, and assumptions among the dominant group in an organization (Schein 2010). Following the gendered organizations literature, Doan and Portillo (2019) highlight how the military has an organizational culture embedded in masculinity. Our discussion follows the racialized organizations literature, highlighting how there is also an implicit culture embedded in whiteness. The military as a public organization is shaped by both gendered and racialized identities, and is an organization embedded in white masculinity.

Several public administration scholars have explored how whiteness can become a cultural element of public sector organizations (Heckler 2019; Humphrey 2021; Portillo et al. 2022), referred to as white normativity. Within organizational settings, white normativity depicts, “the cultural norms and practices that make whiteness appear natural, normal, and right” (Ward 2008, 564). The grooming practices introduced by this policy center whiteness as the professional norm, while failing to explicitly acknowledge race.

Institutional Level

The military has a reputation of regulating every part of an enlistee’s life (Smith 2018). This means that the mil-

itary dictates appearance standards for everyone based on policies and regulations that are introduced at basic training and followed throughout an employee’s career. At the institutional level, we see organizational policies that reflect individual stereotypes and the established culture (Doan and Portillo 2019).

The military has historically been a racialized and gendered institution (Bailey 2019; Cohn 2000; Doan and Portillo 2022; Rosen, Knudson, and Fancher 2003). While passage of the updated grooming and appearance policy in 2017 (AR 670-1) improved upon the 2014 policy (e.g., allowing twists), it still limited natural hairstyles through complicated requirements of how hair could be worn (see Table 3). It reinforced the way that racialized and gendered stereotypes show up in policy. A policy that was presented as race and gender-neutral codified taken for granted stereotypes about who belonged and who did not in this particular work environment. When the policy change was introduced in 2017, the media reported that soldiers were feeling pressured to have a “white” appearance though discussion of race did not explicitly come up in the regulation (Terkel 2017). Initial criticism was met with a response from Sgt. Major Raymond Chandler, who defended the policies noting, “The Army is a profession and one of the ways our leaders and the American people measure professionalism is our appearance” (quoted in Terkel 2017). The blowback and discussion that followed the 2017 updates were explicitly racialized and gendered. Black women in the military spoke out as well as the Congressional Black Caucus. When the Army changed its standards in January 2021, it explicitly noted the goal was to be more racially and gender inclusive (U.S. Army Public Affairs 2021). This reversal acknowledged the ways that race and gender were institutionalized through the policy. The policy change was necessary to move toward a more inclusive institution.

Table 3. Hair Appearance Policies for Braids, Cornrows, Locks, and Twists 2017

Army Regulation 670-1	
<i>Braids, cornrows, twists, and locks</i>	<p>Medium and long hair may be styled with braids, cornrows, twists, or locks (see glossary for definitions). Each braid, cornrow, twist, or lock will be of uniform dimension, have a diameter no greater than a 1/8 inch, and present a neat, professional, and well-groomed appearance. Each must have the same approximate size of spacing between the braids, cornrows, twists, or locks. Each hairstyle may be worn against the scalp or loose (free-hanging). When worn loose, such hairstyles must be worn per medium hair length guidelines or secured to the head in the same manner as described for medium or long length hair styles.</p> <p>Ends must be secured inconspicuously. When multiple loose braids, twists, or locks are worn, they must encompass the whole head. When braids, cornrows, twists, or locks are not worn loosely and instead worn close to the scalp, they must stop at one consistent location of the head and must follow the natural direction of the hair when worn back, which is either in general straight lines following the shape of the head or flowing with the natural direction of the hair when worn back with one primary part in the hair (see para 3-2a(1)(c)).</p> <p>Hairstyles may not be styled with designs, sharply curved lines, or zigzag lines. Only one distinctive style (braided, rolled, twisted, or locked) may be worn at one time. Braids, cornrows, twists, or locks that distinctly protrude (up or out) from the head are not authorized.</p> <p>The bulk of the hair may not be such that it impairs the ability to wear the advanced combat helmet (ACH) or other protective equipment or impedes the ability to operate one's assigned weapon, military equipment, or machinery. A fully serviceable ACH including all of its component parts must be worn in accordance with its technical manual to ensure proper fit for safety.</p>

Note: From AR 670-1 (2017), Chapter 3: Appearance and Grooming Policies, pp. 6-7.

Discussion and Conclusion

Ultimately the U.S. military revised their grooming regulations to allow Black women to wear some protective hairstyles. The Army is the largest of the military branches and revised their policy first, followed by the Air Force and the Marines. After protests and critiques by organizational members, the public, and the Congressional Black Caucus, the military explicitly tied the revisions to their efforts to increase diversity, equity, and inclusion within the organization (U.S. Army Public Affairs 2021). Earlier revisions of grooming standards were presented as race-neutral and tied to classic public administration values of neutrality, objectivity, and professionalism. This shift to explicitly discussing how grooming standards and notions of professionalism shape the racialized and gendered identity of organizations matters. Open and explicit discussions allow for policy and cultural changes that create more equitable organizations.

Our analysis of the grooming standards in the military extends the organizational obliviousness framework (Doan and Portillo 2019) to consider racialized and intersectional practices within a public organization. By centering the intangible and difficult to measure aspects of organizational hierarchies in its analysis, the organizational obliviousness framework interrogates how dominant groups within an organization exercise power to maintain their interests. Originally applied to an analysis of gender, this robust framework can be expanded to examine other dominant values—in this case normative whiteness—to distill how social constructions of historically marginalized groups' identity subtly inform institutional policies and practices that produce inequitable outcomes for members of the organization.

The organizational obliviousness framework can be used to understand how the application of seem-

ingly neutrally written policies can produce inequitable treatment among different members of the organization, and account for the disconnect between different groups' experiences of belonging and exclusion. By focusing on historically marginalized groups' experiences, the organizational obliviousness framework can illuminate how systemic oppression becomes embedded and maintained in organizational hierarchies through individual, cultural, and institutional practices that often subtly reflect the assumed naturalness of white male normativity.

Organizational obliviousness offers a robust framework for public administration scholars; however, it has limitations. Doan and Portillo (2019) analyzed gendered policies in the military, and in this article, we applied the framework to examine the ways in which grooming policies target Black, female military members. Organizational obliviousness has not been used as a framework to examine public organizations outside of the military setting. The framework is also limited by its assumption that much of the inequity in contemporary organizations is unintentionally produced through the application of policies and practices that appear neutral, but in reality, they are gendered and raced. While Doan and Portillo's (2019) research found instances of intentional gender-based discrimination, their framework theorizes that overt acts of discrimination reinforce systemic oppression in organizational settings, as opposed to causing it.

Organizational obliviousness can be leveraged in future public administration research to distill how invisible intersectional logics of oppression shape the policies, practices, and everyday behavior of institutions. Illuminating and challenging these logics is a productive means of attaining a more equitable public organization. In addition, this framework may be useful for understanding how the processes within organizations that lead to inequity for its members may also shape disparate outcomes for the constituents served by it. Future studies should consider using the organizational obliviousness framework as a more robust lens through which inequities in institutions, such as those tasked with addressing issues such as education, welfare, or incarceration, to name a few, can be examined.

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Rethinking Diversity in Policing: An Analysis of Diversity Training Standards in Basic Police Academies Across the United States

Galia Cohen
Doug Goodman

Recent events of police interactions with citizens have raised a nationwide debate on the effectiveness of police training and whether police officers are prepared to address the needs of and successfully interact with populations of diverse cultural backgrounds. This research uses a mixed methods design to explore the emphasis placed on diversity training in state-mandated basic police curricula across 49 U.S. states from a public administration-oriented perspective. The study analyzes interviews and course content and hours to evaluate the coverage of four dimensions for effective diversity training: 1) **Why** is diversity relevant in basic police training? 2) **Who** are “the diverse” addressed in the training? 3) **What** is the diversity content in the basic police curriculum? and 4) **How** is diversity taught in basic academies? The article concludes by offering practical recommendations on how to improve diversity competencies in police training and practice.

The United States has become more diverse over the years, and it is projected that non-Hispanic whites will drop below 50% of the population by 2060 (Vespa et al. 2020). The rapid changes in our society’s characteristics have sparked renewed interest in the role that effective diversity practices play in the workforce in general, and the need for diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) training, in particular.

The importance of diversity education has long been recognized in the public administration literature. Hewins-Maroney and Williams (2007) state that diversity education promotes social concern about humane values which are essential for the development of a democratic state. When public employees fail to understand diverse populations, it limits their ability to achieve equity, fairness, representativeness, and responsiveness—the core values that underlie public service jobs (Mullins, Charbonneau, and Riccucci 2021). Thus, understanding the extent to which DEI training exists in public organizations and what it teaches public sector employees is important in the context of public human resource management and employment.

More than that, in the context of policing, the need for DEI training goes beyond the need to simply understand the changing demographics of the citizenry. Salient issues of institutionalized racism and discrimination remain unresolved in the criminal justice system and continue to derail the trust between racialized groups and the police (White and Escobar 2008). One example is the death of George Floyd in May 2020, which led to violent protests throughout the country under the “Black Lives Matter” banner—a movement that brought to the public eye the systematic social and racial injustices experienced by African Americans for centuries (Lopez-Littleton, Blessett, and Burr 2018).

Such high-profile incidents of police brutality and deadly force in situations involving members of racialized groups due to their perceived criminality have caused many to question police training. Of particular interest is whether such training adequately educates officers to overcome the presumption of dangerousness and guilt that has become entrenched within the criminal justice system to this day (Davis 2017; Narnolia and Kumar 2021).

Police leaders and policy makers are looking to the training function as a part of the remedy for these problems. For example, the *Report of The President's Task Force on 21st Century Policing* (2015) recommended major changes to policing in the United States. Among those recommendations, there is a need for police departments to better emphasize areas of culture, diversity, equity, and inclusion and become more culturally competent in the way that they deal with diverse populations and communities. A central theme of DEI training is that future police officers will be better able to meet community expectations and manage successful interactions with residents if they understand the culture of their community. The DEI training that police officers receive in the police academy builds that foundation for the rest of their career (Birzer 1999).

The purpose of this study is to examine state-mandated diversity training for new officers and provide a comprehensive model for diversity competence training in basic police training academies. The study contributes to the literature by offering police leaders, policy makers, and curriculum designers insights into the current state of mandated cultural diversity training in basic academies and how it can be improved. Specifically, we present a model for diversity training that focuses on the most important aspects for the police to address if they wish to develop an effective DEI curriculum.

Diversity Training in Public Administration Literature: A Missing Component

The law enforcement profession has a duty to provide safety services to a diverse society while protecting citizens' multiple interests. To uphold such duties, police officers must be able to understand and appreciate the concept of diversity (White 2004). Police academies play a significant role in future police officers' knowledge of diversity and the extent to which they are exposed to the diversity issues at the center of the police and the policed. By providing effective diversity training, law enforcement academies help develop street-level bureaucrats (SLBs) that effectively represent the public interest, a fundamental principle of a democratic society (Lipsky 1971).

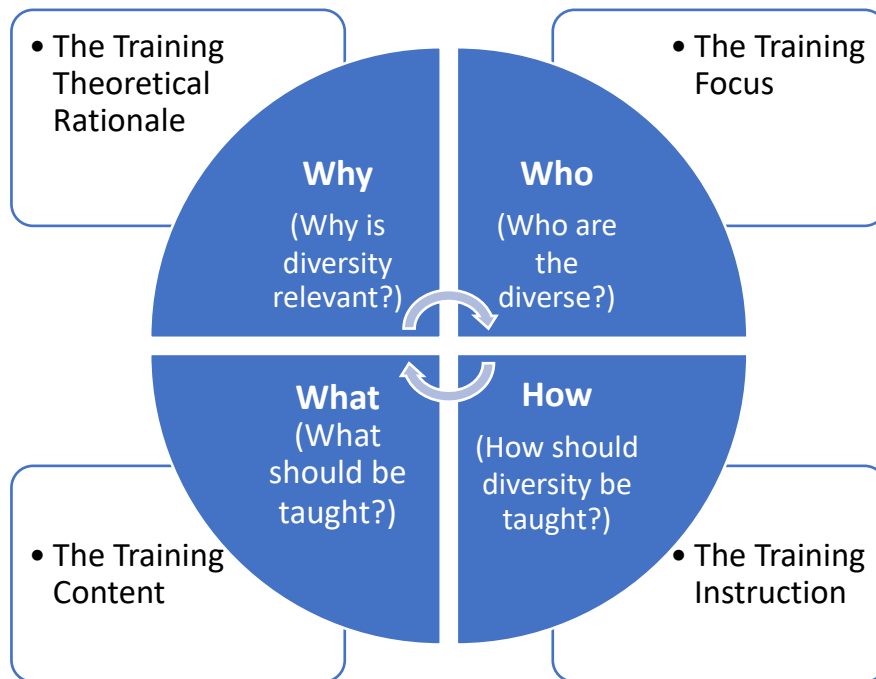
The plethora of diversity studies in the public administration literature is primarily focused on diversity within public organizations, and the ways in which di-

versity management can promote work outcomes (e.g., Andersen and Moynihan 2018; Hoang and Sabharwal 2022), improve representative bureaucracy (e.g., Carroll, Wright, and Meier 2019; Das 2019; Vinopal 2018), ensure inclusion in public programs implementation (e.g., Denhardt and deLeon 1995; Sowa and Selden 2003; McCandless et al. 2022), and enhance the overall delivery of public service (Ricucci and Van Ryzin 2017; Ricucci, Van Ryzin, and Li 2016). However, what remains unclear is *how* public employees become diversity competent, in other words—what training do they receive to learn why it is important and how to practice it?

The literature does not offer a unified or accepted list of knowledge, skills, and abilities (KSAs) that public employees need to possess to successfully operate in a diverse community. In fact, our attempt to conduct a systematic review of the published research on diversity training in the public administration literature was abandoned after yielding only 35 studies (e.g., Bernotavicz 1997; Blessett and Pryor 2013; Carrizales 2010; Kim and Ofori-Dankwa 1995; Lopez-Littleton and Blessett 2015; Rice 2004; 2007; 2015; White 2004). Moreover, the studies that were retrieved either focused on diversity training policies (e.g., Groeneveld and Verbeek 2012), or on the effectiveness of training programs through employee perceptions of the training (e.g., Kim and Ofori-Dankwa 1995; Naff and Kellogg 2003). The few studies that analyzed the actual content of diversity training focused on diversity curricula for graduate students in public administration academic programs (e.g., King 2022; Sabharwal, Hjal-Moghrabi, and Royster 2014; Sabharwal, Levine, and D'Agostino 2018), rather than for professionals in the public workplace (excluding Cohen 2021 and Carrizales 2010).

As a result, in order to learn “what works” in diversity training in public organizations, we moved to review the interdisciplinary scholarly literature on diversity training programs. In this section, we provide a comprehensive review of the dimensions of diversity training which according to scholars, contribute to the development of successful training programs in organizations. In other words, the model we present explores the why, who, what, and how of diversity training. Figure 1 presents the framework for this study and a summary of the dimensions discussed.

Figure 1. Diversity Training: The Why, Who, What and How



The Theoretical Rationale: Why Diversity?

The term diversity is broadly defined as the cultural and demographic differences between members of society (or organizations) (Norman-Major and Gooden 2012). In the public administration literature, discussions of diversity are often used interchangeably with concepts such as cultural competency, inclusion, and social equity (Lopez-Littleton and Blessett 2015). However, Lopez-Littleton and Blessett (2015) explain that while the relationship between these terms is interdependent, each concept has a distinct and significant meaning on its own.

In a comprehensive analysis on the progression of diversity research in the field of public administration, Sabharwal and her coauthors (2018) demonstrate how the attributes that comprise the term diversity in public administration scholarship have shifted from a focus on race and gender to also include “ethnicity, nationality, socioeconomic class, sexual orientation, political affiliation, educational attainment, religion, physical ability, and even generational cohort” (249). Blessett (2021) adds that diversity goes beyond individual attributes to encompass “the ways in which people, ideas, and approaches are integrated within and across the discipline” (197).

One of the basic tenets of training research dictates that effective diversity training programs should be based on a clear theoretical rationale that answers questions

about when, for whom, and how prejudice is reduced. Simply stated, it needs to answer why diversity is important (King et al. 2010; Paluck 2006). In the public administration literature, this rationale is inherently connected to democratic theory and its fundamental principles of autonomy, equality, and freedom (Ansell et al. 2021). Such principles integrate with core values of public administration such as racial justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion (Chordiya 2022). DeHart-Davis et al. (2018) underscore that public institutions derive their performance and legitimacy from relying on these foundational principles. Additionally, Gaynor and Carrizales (2018) explain that the democratic ethos of public administration requires public servants to be accountable to the citizenry and to espouse democratic values on those who are impacted by their professional decisions. As such, when public administrators engage in discriminatory activities or decisions, they fail to fulfill their duty to uphold the constitutional values of fairness, justice, due process, and equity, which in turn suppresses the process of democracy (Gaynor and Carrizales 2018).

Diversity scholars agree that a theory-driven approach to diversity training programs has better potential to deliver effective outcomes, such as prejudice reduction and increased social inclusion (van Knippenberg and Schippers 2007). In a reflection essay on the behavioral public administration movement, Hassan and Wright (2020)

write that the utilization of theories from psychology and experimental research designs by public administration scholars is much needed and can improve the rigor of public administration research. In diversity training scholarship, such theories are extremely noticeable. Perhaps the most prevalent theoretical framework utilized is the developmental model of intercultural sensitivity (DMIS) (Bennett 2006). The underlying assumption of the model is that trainees develop intercultural sensitivity through six developmental stages (denial, defense, minimization, acceptance, adaptation, and integration). As their experiences of cultural difference become more sophisticated, their intercultural competency increases.

Another framework that has also received attention in diversity training literature is intergroup contact theory (Pettigrew 1998). This theory specifies four optimal conditions under which prejudice is reduced and perceptions of similarities increase among group members, even when they do not come in direct contact. Other diversity training theories recognized in the literature are the theory of planned behavior (Wiethoff 2004), social identity and social categorization theories (Tajfel and Turner 2004), and theories of group processes (e.g., Gibson and Vermeulen 2003).

However, diversity training in the world of practice shows a different picture. While almost all workplaces in the United States utilize some type of diversity training, most training programs remain atheoretical in the way they are designed and evaluated (Bennett 2006; Bezrukova, Jehn, and Spell 2012). In a meta-analysis of 178 studies on diversity training, Bezrukova, Jehn, and Spell (2012) report that more than half of the training programs they reviewed did not follow any theoretical framework. Similarly, a recent meta-analysis on diversity training in the multidisciplinary literature by Devine and Ash (2022) discovered that of the 250 studies reviewed, only 15 articles were theoretical. The authors conclude that diversity trainers often choose a training approach that is based on personal preference or intuition rather than on a specific theoretical approach (also see Cox and Devine 2019).

In her call for action research in diversity training, Paluck (2006) states that more effort should be made to connect diversity training programs with theory. She urges researchers and practitioners to join in a coordinated effort to develop programs that are guided by established diversity theories. This can give insight to real world contexts (Paluck 2006). In the public administra-

tion literature, Lopez-Littleton and co-authors (2018) also call for the incorporation of antiracist pedagogy in public administration education and training curricula. They argue that effective academic and professional training programs for public service personnel, at all levels of government, must draw from race theories. According to them, such purposeful discussions of race and racism promote a deeper level of understanding of the impact of race as a disruptive social factor (see Kato 2016) and enhance racial and social justice.

The Training Focus: Who Are “the Diverse”?

A second dimension in the design of effective diversity training pertains to the focus of the training, or in other words, “Who are the diverse?” The literature suggests that effective training programs should embrace a broad definition of diversity, one that emphasizes inclusiveness across multiple groups rather than focus on group-specific differences such as race, gender, or other categories (Bezrukova, Jehn, and Spell 2012; Thomas, Tran, and Dawson 2010).

The group-specific focus in diversity training has been criticized by scholars as one that hinders the transformation of organizational culture (Thomas and Ely 1996), increases intergroup tensions (Gilbert and Ivancevich 2000) and leads to group polarization attitudes (Stratton et al. 2006). Thomas, Tran, and Dawson (2010) argue that group-based methods do not promote appreciation of inclusion because they drive the majority group to look at members of minority groups as “the other” rather than as a part of “us.” In addition, he states that by focusing on a certain cultural group, such as women or Latinos, we fail to recognize the diversity between individuals in those groups.

Conversely, an inclusive focus, as Bezrukova, Jehn, and Spell (2012) explain, shifts attention away from “‘what is wrong with this outgroup’ . . . to ‘what is wrong with this organization that treats outgroups worse than ingroups?’” (216). Other scholars agree that the adoption of an inclusive approach in diversity training is likely to yield more opportunities for intergroup contact (Gilbert and Ivancevich 2000) and increased openness to learning about other cultures (Goldstein Hode, Behm-Morawitz, and Hays 2018). Furthermore, an inclusive focus is more likely to result in trainees’ greater understanding of the value of diversity (Goldstein Hode, Behm-Morawitz, and Hays 2018) and greater awareness to the varied perspec-

tives and contributions that members of different identity groups bring to the workforce (Thomas and Ely 1996).

Nonetheless, most diversity training programs in organizations present culture as a static concept, depicting a specific group as the stereotypical “other” (King, Gullick, and Avery 2010). Bezrukova, Jehn, and Spell (2012) found that most diversity training programs focused on group-specific training, typically on race and gender as the primary group attributes. In a study that explored the construction of cultural diversity in medical curricula in the Netherlands, Zanting, Meershoek, Frambach, and Krumeich (2020) found that while the explicit definition of culture in the curricula was broad and did not target specific groups, the implicit interpretation suggested that the “exotic other” was a non-Western person located outside the Netherlands. Irving, Perl, Trickett, and Watts (1984) explain that this is an example of how the realities of training have fallen short of the aspirations from training. “Diversity training” eventually turns into “minority training.”

However, this is not to say that training on group-specific issues should be completely abandoned. While there is a common agreement among scholars that diversity training programs should expand their content beyond the teaching of group-specific attributes to include all segments of the diverse workforce, they also acknowledge that the group-specific approach can be beneficial. Thomas et al. (2010) state that group-based methods of diversity instruction have some merits as they promote an appreciation of differences. According to Roberson, Kulik, and Pepper (2003), training that is narrowly focused on a specific group attribute such as race or LGBTQ+, is highly effective when the organizational goal is very specific (e.g., increase LGBTQ+ awareness). Similarly, in their future agenda for diversity training, Bezrukova, Jehn, and Spell (2012) suggest incorporating individual group experiences as examples within an inclusive program instead of making them the focus of the training.

The Training Content: What Should Be Taught?

The third dimension of diversity training pertains to the content of the curriculum. Although training content should be adjusted to the specific needs of each organization, the literature identifies several core content areas that should be addressed in any effective diversity curriculum. We adapt Carrizales’ (2010) framework for a cultural competency curriculum in public administration to

divide these curricular components into two conceptual domains: knowledge-based curriculum and skills-based curriculum.

Knowledge-Based Components

The knowledge-based curriculum is comprised of curricular components that focus on information (Kripalani et al. 2006) and provide trainees with basic definitions and principles that are fundamental for an in-depth understanding of cultural diversity (Carrizales 2010; Lopez-Littleton and Blessett 2015; Rapp 2006). Carrizales (2010) states that nothing is more important than understanding and appreciating the importance of cultural diversity in the public sector. They explain that principles of cultural competency present a theoretical challenge for trainees because they do not fit the neutrality and equality principles that are at the core of public administration (see Rice 2007).

For example, Rice (2004) argues that the core curriculum in diversity training should address the concept of social equity because it is critical that public servants understand the practical meaning behind it. He writes that although social equity is a basic pillar in public administration that focuses on fairness and equity in the delivery of public service, this perception does not fit the practice of cultural differences in public administration. Public servants should be taught that a diverse public has diverse needs, and that equity does not always mean treating all clients the same. It can also mean giving different treatment for the purpose of achieving equality of outcomes (see Rice 2007).

Pendry, Driscoll, and Field (2007) describe another core content area which underscores the policy and legal aspects of cultural diversity. They state that when employees understand their legal responsibilities under the various anti-discrimination laws, they are more likely to value diversity (as well as to decrease their organizations’ exposure to legal action over employee bias). In the context of public administration, Carrizales (2010) explains that understanding legislation is a prerequisite for promoting cultural diversity among employees who are recipients of public funds. Other scholars also asserted that public administrators must understand the legislative background and history of congressional legislations such as civil rights, equal employment opportunity, and affirmative action (Bernotavicz 1997); how public sector diversity has been influenced by landmark court decisions (Pitts, Recascino, and Wise 2010); and how the

legal environment affects dimensions of diversity, such as disability status (Harding and Peel 2007), sexual orientation (e.g., Israel et al. 2017), and other protected classes (Bernotavicz 1997).

On the other hand, Bezrukova, Jehn, and Spell (2012) warn against diversity training programs that rely too heavily on teaching legalistic terms and compliance issues, thus turning the program into a “check-the-box” training in which attendance is the only aspect that is being considered (see Anand and Winters 2008). Dobbin and Kalev (2018) explain that the combination of mandatory participation and legal curriculum makes participants feel that an external power is trying to control their behavior.

Clearly, the knowledge-based component of a cultural diversity curriculum has many other topics that can be further taught through definitions and policies. Other diversity themes include knowledge about the local and national demographic trends and the diversity of communities being served (e.g., Rapp 2006), understanding the concept of social disparities (e.g., Lopez-Littleton and Blessett 2015), and incorporating the concept of a representative bureaucracy (e.g., Carrizales 2010).

Skills-Based Components

The skills-based curriculum addresses acquisition of diversity-related skills that enable professionals to evaluate their behavior and cultural biases on an ongoing basis (Gilbert 2003). Naturally, such curricula focus on the teaching of tools and strategies related to communication, problem-solving and conflict resolution skills, especially when cross-cultural differences exist (Knipper, Seeleman, and Essink 2010). The basic premise here is that public administrators should possess a set of skills that would allow them to deliver high quality service to their customers (Betancourt 2004). Two content examples, communication and decision-making skills, are explored further here.

According to Carrizales (2010), one way to effectively advance communication skills is by helping trainees recognize diverse languages and understand the need to improve the ability to communicate in diverse populations. Kellar (2005) wrote, “languages are the front door to another culture” (8). Many municipalities apply this principle by providing programs, websites, and published materials in multiple languages (Kellar 2005). In addition, Gilbert (2003) argues that diversity training should be taught in a *realistic* way for practitioners, one

that teaches them how to assess their own proficiency in cultures and languages.

An additional skill that should be covered in the training curriculum is effective decision-making. Decision-making skills are of particular importance in public administration training because of the high discretionary power and autonomy available to street-level bureaucrats when performing their jobs (Ellis, Davis, and Rummery 1999). While the ambiguous nature of frontline decision-making and its impact on policy making has been extensively researched in the literature (e.g., Cohen and Hertz 2020), the mechanics of how decision-making is being taught and what content is included in the training curricula have been largely overlooked.

The medical discipline is one field where diversity training curricula have been extensively researched. For example, in their examination of cultural competence training in the healthcare profession, Jernigan et al. (2016) recommend that courses on diversity-related decision-making courses should include learning the history of stereotyping, recognizing bias, discrimination and racism, and understanding the impact of stereotyping on decision-making. Studying police cadets, Marion (1998) found that during diversity courses, cadets demonstrated a poor understanding of the impact that cultural bias might have on their decision-making. Cadets argued that they do not hold any of the negative attitudes mentioned by the instructors in class and that they would never make decisions about suspects based on racial or ethnic characteristics. In her analysis of basic police training curricula across the United States, Cohen (2021) concluded that police academies should incorporate into their curricula more decision-making training that teaches trainees methods for developing effective decision-making patterns and strategies for assessing the effects that diverse groups can have on their decision-making processes.

The Training Instruction: How Should Diversity Be Taught?

Lastly, our review shifts from the way diversity training is designed in terms of rationale, focus and content, to the way it is delivered. How diversity training is implemented in the classroom is another dimension researchers identify as critical for effective diversity training programs. Castillo-Montoya (2019) argues that instructors need to develop ways of teaching students diversity by using

“interim points” which connect conceptual academic content and students’ experiences. Interim points can be enacted through various pedagogical strategies such as providing relevant real-life examples, asking open questions, and facilitating classroom discussions around cultural and personal topics. In addition, King, Gulick, and Avery (2010) found that instructors can improve trainees’ diversity competence by utilizing group activities, such as written and video case studies, role play scenarios, and simulations. According to Castillo-Montoya (2019), such strategies create opportunities for students to learn about each other as well as on the subject matter.

Yet, learning diversity implies that diversity instructors know how to teach diversity, which raises an important question: What are the qualifications of the instructors who teach diversity? In a study by Wentling and Palma-Rivas (1999), 58% of the diversity experts that were interviewed for the study identified “utilizing qualified trainers” as a critical component of effective diversity programs. The experts stated that diversity trainers should exhibit professional, academic, and interpersonal skills. They explain that the volatile nature of diversity issues requires trainers that are not only experts in the subject matter but can also reduce resistance and defuse conflict that may arise in the classroom (Wentling and Palma-Rivas 1999). Gilbert (2003) adds that diversity instructors should be proficient in teaching methods, have strong teaching skills, and be knowledgeable in the literature and resources available for training on cultural diversity.

In addition, demographic shifts and increased diversity in our society have led college students to demand increased racial diversity in faculty. In the fall 2015, in an effort to bring awareness to systematic and structural racism on campuses, students from 80 U.S. universities wrote open letters demanding the hiring of culturally competent educators who can demonstrate accountability on issues of race and equity and utilize teaching practices that accommodate cultural differences (Sensoy and DiAngelo 2017).

However, in reality, while diversity training has been getting increased attention in the academic setting, the standards related to the qualifications of those expected to do the training have been largely overlooked (Gilbert 2003). Comparing the diversity training and diversity education frameworks, King et al. (2010) argue that when it comes to instructor qualifications, the diversity training model should follow the diversity education model because the latter requires instructors to demonstrate a

minimum level of competence, such as an advanced degree, to be eligible to teach diversity. This is rarely the case in the training model. In a study examining the preparedness and abilities of cultural competency instructors in the nursing field, 78% of the faculty participants said that they do not believe that their school has faculty that are formally prepared to teach diversity. The study also found a serious shortage in development programs for faculty who teach cultural diversity (Ryan, Hodson Carlton, and Ali 2000).

Nonetheless, an academic degree is not the only criterion for qualified instructors. According to Gilbert (2003), the ability to provide effective training is not necessarily degree dependent. She asserts that it is also important that trainers have credibility with their focus audience, the knowledge, and skills relevant to their trainees’ field, and a thorough understanding of their work settings and the type of service they provide. King, Gulick, and Avery (2010) emphasize the importance of selecting instructors who are able to give students a realistic “preview” of how the diversity skills they are taught would be implemented in their world of practice. This means that trainers should also know how to recognize the limits of their own knowledge and be open to supplementing it with contributions from community members (Gilbert 2003).

The knowledge and expertise of the instructors is of particular importance in law enforcement, a field that is traditionally known as highly resistant to change (e.g., Cohen 2018). Israel and her coauthors (2017) explain that when “outsiders” provide training for law enforcement, they can anticipate more resistance to the training because it is harder for them to establish their credibility, as well as to predict potential sources of resistance they might encounter. When law enforcement trainees feel that trainers understand their perspective and the climate in which law enforcement operates, it neutralizes some of the resistance that emerges during diversity training, and trainees are more receptive to the trainers and their content.

Methodology

Study Design and Data Sources and Collection Procedures

This study utilized an exploratory, mixed-methods study design to analyze and compare state-mandatory diversity training for police recruits in 49 U.S. states. We use two main data sources: (1) Our primary data source is

49¹ basic training curricula (N = 49) and their accompanying support materials and (2) to augment the validity of our data and their interpretation, 20 semi-structured interviews with police training experts from 16 states were conducted (N = 20).

To obtain our data, during 2020–2021, the law enforcement standards and training agency in each state was contacted with a request to send their state-mandated basic police curricula and other supportive materials, such as lesson plans and PowerPoint presentations. In addition, the email message also included a request to interview the agency's director or his/her delegate. These agencies, which depending on the state, are known as The Peace Officer Standards and Training (POST) commission, The Law Enforcement Training and Standards Boards (LETSB), or The Criminal Justice Standards and Training (CJST) Commission, serve as the regulatory agencies responsible for developing and approving the mandatory basic training requirements and curricula for the state. All states cooperated with the requests to submit their curricula, and 20 executives out of the 49 states agreed to an interview.

For the interviews, we used a convenience sample of key informants. A total of 20 key informants (N = 20) from 16 states across the United States were interviewed via phone or video call. Each of the key informants participated in an in-depth interview, lasting between 45 to 60 minutes. According to Marshall (1996), a key informant is an in-depth understanding of and extensive work experience in the researched topics. We consider our interviewees key informants because they are executive level officials at LETSB and have a key role in creating and updating the mandatory basic training curricula in their respective states.

Our key informants sample consisted of 20 male respondents, 17 (85%) white and 3 (15%) Black, with an average age of 46.7 years. Their highest completed level of education varied from an undergraduate degree (77%) to a master's degree (23%). With regard to tenure, the average overall experience in law enforcement or law enforcement-related agency was 21.5 years.

We recognize that because we used a convenience sample for our interviews, the findings may be prone to selection bias. However, the purpose of key informant interviews is to gather experts' thoughts, ideas, and insights on the topic of interest (Knaak et al. 2019).

This aligns well with the primary purpose of this study, which is to analyze state mandated diversity curricula. In this study, the key informant technique provided us with the opportunity to strengthen the content analysis by deepening our understanding of curricula through knowledgeable experts.

Data Analysis Procedures

Once all curricula were collected, we used a hybrid approach of inductive and deductive thematic analysis to gain a contextual understanding of the diversity training within these curricula. First, using Tutty et al.'s (1996) approach, the narrative data of each curriculum was analyzed inductively to identify the diversity-related courses. For this article, diversity training was defined as any course that deals with race, ethnicity, class, gender, sexual orientation, age, religion, and other categories that represent differences between people. We also searched for general terms such as diversity, multiculturalism, culture, or variations of these words.

Second, the course descriptions, learning objectives, and other diversity course contents were deductively coded into an organizing framework (Braun and Clarke 2006) of the four dimensions of diversity training programs: the "Why, Who, How, and What" as described earlier. Lastly, we calculated the required diversity training hours (when applicable) for each state to identify the percentages devoted to diversity training out of the overall basic training program.

Two coders evaluated the data independently and then shared their interpretations of the texts. Disagreements were discussed until intersubjective consensus was achieved (Yanow and Schwartz-Shea 2015). Once the thematic analysis of the diversity curricula was completed, we deductively analyzed the interview data by coding it "against" the analyzed curricula data. We used statements from the interviews to clarify information and add meaning to our thematic map.

Results and Analysis: The Case of Basic Police Academies

In this section, we use the aforementioned dimensions as a conceptual framework for analyzing basic police training curricula from a new public administration-oriented perspective. We explore how state-mandated diversity training programs in basic police academies are

¹ The State of Hawaii does not have mandated training standards and was therefore excluded from the sample.

constructed in terms of rationale (why), focus (who), content (what), and instruction (how and by whom). As previously stated, these dimensions are identified in the academic literature as key components for effective diversity training and can serve as a blueprint for diversity curriculum design and evaluation. Table 1 presents a comprehensive picture of the theoretical model derived from our analysis.

Descriptive Analysis

All U.S. states, excluding Hawaii, (98%, N = 49) utilize a state-mandated curriculum which outlines the minimum training standards in terms of hours and/or content for basic police academies in that state. Of the 49 states, 69% include in their curricula a required diversity course which yielded a sample of 34² curricula (i.e., states) for our study's content analysis (n = 34). As Table 2 demonstrates, 26 states out of the 34 (76%) specify the minimum training hours required for the diversity course.³ On average, diversity training constitutes only 0.78% (5.09 hours) of the overall basic police training program hours (n = 26). These extremely low hours across the nation already suggest that the coverage of diversity issues in basic academies does not constitute anything close to a reasonable amount of coverage needed to fully understand the concept of diversity.

In an initial mapping of course titles, we found three major categories of diversity curricula utilized in states. The first category, with the largest number of courses (82%, n = 28), used general diversity titles such as "cultural diversity," "cultural awareness," "cultural competency," and "human relations," which suggests coverage of multiple aspects of diversity. In the second category, 9% (n = 3) of the courses used a group-specific element of diversity in their title, such as gender (e.g., Montana with "gender diversity"); religion (e.g., Pennsylvania with "cultural and religious considerations") and race (e.g., Iowa with "cultural competency and race relations"). A third category of three courses (9%, n = 3), utilized a title that connected diversity with ethics-related topics such as sexual harassment (e.g., Michigan with "cultural

competence and sexual harassment"). Table 3 provides a summary of the characteristics of our research sample.

Content Analysis

The "Why": Why Is Diversity Relevant in Police Training?

The first dimension in our framework is the "why" of diversity training. Here we looked for theoretical frameworks states use in their curricula to explain the rationale behind teaching diversity. We found Nebraska's curriculum to be the *only* one to specifically mention a diversity theory. The curriculum includes a single course objective asking students to be able to "define contact theory." As outlined in the literature review, the contact hypothesis states that under certain conditions, intergroup contact can reduce bias and prejudice between groups (Pettigrew 1998). Moreover, the instructor's manual highlights the importance of a theory-driven curriculum by stating, "the Nebraska Law Enforcement Training Center is not a 'boot camp' style of academy. It is based on adult learning theories with the emphasis placed on the learner." In addition, in the Connecticut curriculum, we found mention of ethnology and ethnocentrism.

No other state referenced (in their curriculum at least) a unifying framework for diversity theory that makes a clear *theoretical* connection between culture, beliefs and norms, and law enforcement behavior with different populations. In fact, in the rest of the curricula, the question of *why* it is important to teach diversity in law enforcement was addressed from an *atheoretical* perspective, mostly by pointing to pragmatic personal, professional, and organizational outcomes that result from practicing diversity. In other words, the focus shifted from "why is diversity important?" to "why *should I* practice diversity for my own good?" The curricula list benefits such as avoiding liability caused by unlawful acts of discrimination (i.e., personal), developing the skills needed to perform the job effectively and achieving professional success (i.e., professional), and developing positive police–community relations (i.e., organizational).

² Although a rigor attempt was made to identify all diversity-related courses, it is possible that some courses included content that applies to diversity and that was not mentioned in the course name, description, objectives, or other teaching materials. Therefore, it is important to note that excluding a certain state from this sample does not mean that diversity is not taught in the training program but rather that we were not able to identify it.

³ The number of training hours represents the minimum hours required by the state. Some regional academies across the country exceed the compulsory minimum training standard set by their state.

Table 1. Analysis of Diversity Domains and Subdomains Addressed in State-Mandated Basic Police Training Curricula (N =34)

Category of Analysis	Main Themes	Subthemes	Example Course Objectives, Assignments, Keywords and Phrases
Why <i>Why is diversity relevant?</i>	Theoretical rationale	Diversity theories	Define contact theory; Define ethnocentrism; Identify ethnology.
	Atheoretical rationale	Avoiding liability	Communities complain about officers who make assumptions and respond in inappropriate and biased manners; officers need to become aware of stereotyping that could lead to prejudicial viewpoints and unlawful acts of discrimination.
		Professional success	Identify the personal benefits of valuing diversity within the community; list communication factors which get negative public response.
		Organizational benefits	Positive police-community relations; increased law enforcement funding; improved media relations; greater community cooperation in solving/preventing crime; you need the public's respect, support, and cooperation to provide effective law enforcement services.
Who <i>Who are the diverse?</i>	Group-specific focus	Gender focus	Understand the importance of fair representation of people of different genders; instructors should reference the academy's policy regarding sexual harassment.
		Ethnicity focus	List some cultural differences between Hispanic and American population; learning experiences about race/ethnicity.
		Race focus	Understand the conceptual definition and the legal definition of racial profiling; discuss the impact of racial profiling; identify statutory reference related to racial profiling; identify the basic responsibility of the officer related to filling out racial profile forms.
	Multiple groups focus	The multiple dimensions of diversity	Getting to know the various cultures within the communities; law enforcement officers interact with people of many backgrounds, cultures, religious beliefs, and ethnicities; officers need to communicate with people from and with various socioeconomic backgrounds, ages, physical abilities, religious beliefs, living situations, sexual orientations, political beliefs, and ideologies.
What <i>What should be taught?</i>	Knowledge-based training content	Basic definitions and concepts	Differentiate between discrimination and prejudice; what is culture; understand the difference between stereotype and bias; recognize the relationship between bias, prejudice, and cultural diversity; define power; define the term cultural diversity.
		Laws and policies	State the legal definition of a hate crime based on the Penal Code; Identify statutory reference related to "racial profiling"; Identify the basic responsibility of the officer related to filling out racial profile forms; discuss Fourth Amendment, Fourteenth Amendment, current case law; state the legal definition of sexual harassment; discuss the federal and state laws dealing with sexual harassment.

		Community demographics	Identify relevant demographics; explain the historical and current cultural composition; learn the demographics and social characteristics of your community; community demographics and cultural background; demographical and cultural composition; socioeconomic background.
	Skill-based training content	Communication skills	Recognize essential elements of communication; understand active listening; recognize basic cultural differences in nonverbal communication; demonstrate appropriate verbal and nonverbal communication; communicate with a “low EQ” citizen; emotional Intelligence (EQ) and its importance in communication.
How <i>How should diversity be taught (and by whom)?</i>	Pedagogical strategies for curriculum implementation	Instructor-led discussions	Discussion of the major subcultures in the academy’s service area; discussion of methods of overcoming barriers between law enforcement and each subculture; small group discussions which address perceptions, experiences, fears, and stereotypes concerning contact with cultural groups.
		Tabletop exercises and video cases	Video reenactments depicting law enforcement contacts with cultural groups. . . the student will participate and evaluate the appropriateness and professional quality of the contact; video reenactments depicting possible sexual harassment; tabletop scenario or a video clip that depicts a law enforcement officer’s response to an incident involving individuals from a different culture.
		Self-assessments	Diagnostic instrument; questionnaire; personal inventory; self-assessment to determine your own level of cultural sensitivity.
		Role-playing exercises	Role playing exercises are used to demonstrate how culture and other factors can affect an individual’s perceptions of an officer’s behavior; written scenarios involving law enforcement are used to explore the dynamics of officer/citizen interactions; based on scenarios of peace officer situations, practice making decisions in real time.
	Instructors qualifications		N/A

The question of whether states purposely exclude theory from their curricula is an interesting one. The Ohio curriculum explicitly states that the purpose of the diversity course is “to assist you, as peace officers, in performing your duties in a safe, effective, and professional manner . . . it is not our intention to present a lot of theory.” This specific example suggests that the state does not overlook addressing diversity theory unintentionally, but rather purposely avoids it.

The reason for discounting theory as an essential part of diversity curricula can be twofold. First, since diversity instructors in basic academies are police officers themselves, it is possible that they rely more on their personal and professional practice to plan their lessons and do not have the conceptual understanding needed to teach the-

ory and the way it is applied to practice. As one interviewee stated, “we are police officers, not professors, we don’t think in those terms [theory].” This point will be further explored under the “how” dimension.

Second, there is a common perception among professionals that theory-driven discussions are not as relevant to the job as technical knowledge that emphasizes the “do’s and don’ts” of a topic. The health literature specifically highlights the dilemma of incorporating theory in training professionals and the difficulty they face when trying to make sense of theoretical explanations (e.g., Kaihlanen, Hietapakka, and Heponiemi 2019; Yardley, Walshe, and Parr 2009). The statement in the Ohio curriculum reflects this idea. The subtext behind “it is not our intention to present a *lot of theory*” is that the course

Table 2. Summary of Diversity Courses in Basic Police Training Curricula (N = 34)

State	Course Title	Total Hours for Basic Police Training Program	# Min Required Hours (% of Total Training Hrs.)
Average		646.88 (n = 26)	Avg. 5.09 (.78%) (n = 26)
Alaska	Cultural Diversity	650	NA ⁴
Arizona	Cultural Awareness	585	8
Arkansas	Cultural Diversity (Implicit Bias)	520	1
California	Cultural Diversity	664	3
Colorado	Law Enforcement Ethics and Anti-Bias Policing	556	8
Connecticut	Cultural Awareness and Diversity	871	4
Delaware	Cultural Diversity and Community Relations	584	12
Florida	Knowing Your Community: Interactions in a Diverse Community	770	NA
Georgia	Cultural Diversity	408	4
Idaho	Cultural Diversity	NA	NA
Iowa	Cultural Competency and Race Relations	620	7
Kentucky	Cultural Awareness	800	4
Louisiana	Diversity in the Community	496	2
Maine	Cultural Diversity	720	3
Michigan	Cultural Competence and Sexual Harassment	594	4
Minnesota	Recognizing and Valuing Diversity and Cultural Differences	NA	NA
Missouri	Cultural Diversity	600	4
Montana	Gender Diversity	508	2
Nebraska	Community Relations	626	6
Nevada	Cultural awareness	480	NA
New Hampshire	Cultural Diversity	653	2
New Jersey	Cultural Diversity	NA	NA
New Mexico	Cultural Diversity	675	4
New York	Cultural Diversity/Bias Related Incidents and Sexual Harassment	699	5
North Dakota	Cultural Awareness	NA	NA
Ohio	Community Diversity and Procedural Justice	737	16
Oklahoma	Cultural Awareness	583	2.5
Oregon	Community Competency	640	6
Pennsylvania	Cultural and Religious Considerations	859	3
Tennessee	Human Relations	480	NA
Texas	Multiculturalism and Human Relations	696	8
West Virginia	Cultural Diversity	800	2
Wisconsin	Cultural Competence I and II	720	8
Wyoming	Human Diversity	605	4

⁴ NA represents states that do not specify minimum required hours for specific courses and/or for the basic police training program as a whole.

Table 3. Characteristics of Research Sample (N = 34)

Title's Subject Theme	n	States
Diversity (general)	28	Alaska, Arizona, Arkansas, California, Connecticut, Delaware, Florida, Georgia, Idaho, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maine, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, Nevada, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New Mexico, North Dakota, Ohio, Oklahoma, Oregon, Tennessee, Texas, West Virginia, Wisconsin, Wyoming
Group-specific	3	Iowa, Montana, Pennsylvania
Sexual harassment (ethics)	3	Colorado, Michigan, New York

is not aimed to “burden” officers with philosophical ideas, but rather to give them the practical knowledge they need to perform their job effectively. This idea was reinforced by this statement from an interviewee: “officers will usually ‘tune-out’ when they hear this word [theory] . . . they feel [that it does not] actually help with the day to day job . . . it’s not practical.”

The “Who”: Who Are “the Diverse” in Basic Police Training?

The second dimension in our framework pertains to the “who” of diversity training. The objective here was to determine the focus of the training and answer the question “who are the diverse that the curricula are designed to address?” When trying to differentiate between curricula that emphasized group-specific topics and curricula that emphasized inclusiveness across multiple groups (Bezrukova, Jehn, and Spell 2012), we noticed an interesting pattern in the data. On the one hand, the explicit definitions of diversity used in most curricula take an inclusive approach and do not target a specific group of people. However, on the other hand, the operationalization of such definitions, as expressed in the course titles, descriptions, and objectives, suggests, albeit implicitly, that “diversity” is indeed a group-specific concept that predominantly refers to race, ethnicity, and gender.

One example is the California curriculum. The learning objective for the course, entitled “cultural diversity” states, “Peace officers need to recognize and respect the complexities of cultural diversity to develop skills necessary for identifying and responding to California’s changing communities.” However, a thorough review of the course content showed that the course, in fact, focuses on race-related issues such as defining the term racial profiling, understanding the impact of racial profiling, and discussing the legal considerations related to racial profiling. Similarly, in Arkansas, a one-hour

block, under the “legal issues” module, is dedicated to “understanding and valuing cultural diversity,” but the only group recognized in the curriculum is “Hispanics” under “emergency Spanish for police officers.” In this four-hour block, students learn basic Spanish phrases as well as to recognize cultural differences between Hispanic and the American non-Hispanic population.

One of the most comprehensive answers to the question of “who are the diverse?” was found in the Florida curriculum, where the course “interactions in a diverse community” is divided into multiple lessons, each dedicated to a unique subculture. Among the communities specifically identified are the hearing impaired, autistic, veterans, juveniles, elderly, homeless, mentally ill, and substance abusers. Other states also utilize diversity curricula that, on their face, appear to be structured around multiple group attributes. However, a careful examination of the content still suggests a clear preference for the narrow, group-specific training approach.

For example, in Texas, the “Multiculturalism and Human Relations” curriculum lists multiple groups that are subjected to prejudices, such as age, religion, weight, and physically challenged. However, the exercises utilized in the class seem to focus on students’ race and ethnicity experiences. In Michigan, community diversity is defined as encompassing “multiple dimensions of race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, socio-economic status, age, citizenship, physical abilities, religious beliefs, political beliefs, and other ideologies” and yet, the course is entitled “cultural competence and sexual harassment” and focuses on teaching students how to avoid stereotyping based on gender, race, or ethnic background. Overall, in these curricula, other minority groups receive little, if any, attention, which sends the message that diversity training is eventually no more than racial discrimination or sexual harassment training, with the “other” being mainly Blacks and women.

The “What”: What Diversity Content Is Taught in Basic Police Training?

The next dimension in our analysis addresses the “what” of diversity training. Following frameworks presented in the literature review, we distinguish between knowledge-based and skill-based training content in the state-mandated curricula. In terms of *knowledge-based content components*, three recurring themes were identified in the sample: (a) basic definitions and concepts, (b) laws and policies, and (c) community demographics. First, all curricula included broad definitions of diversity and other concepts associated with it. The vast majority of course objectives across curricula are mostly limited to students’ ability to define and memorize basic concepts and terms such as culture, discrimination, prejudice, stereotype, and bias (implicit and explicit). In some cases, curricula went beyond conceptual definitions to also explain the difference between certain concepts. The Connecticut curriculum, for example, addresses the difference between intentional and unintentional discrimination and how to prevent both.

One common issue we have noticed is that curricula had a tendency to cluster several concepts under the same definitions as if they have the same meaning. For example, “multiculturalism” and “diversity” were often used interchangeably, implying they are synonyms. According to Rice (2015), these two concepts might share common themes in their definitions, however, each concept is operationalized differently and leads to different implementation strategies and outcomes. Multiculturalism emphasizes cultural differences and creating an environment in which everyone feels valued and accepted; managing diversity is a pragmatic way to build specific skills within employees to drive productivity and service delivery (Rice 2001).

The second most frequent content subtheme is laws and policies that address diversity. All curricula mentioned legal considerations related to diversity that peace officers are obligated to know. Course objectives in this content area varied from simply stating legal definitions based on the Penal Code and explaining federal and state laws, to a more in-depth expectation for discussing current case law and understanding the available legal remedies.

Even more than that, we noticed that in some states, while courses are entitled “diversity” or “cultural competence,” the course descriptions and objectives do not go much beyond the legal issues surrounding topics such

as racial profiling, hate crimes, and sexual harassment. It is possible that the inclusion of the term “diversity,” without actually covering its various dimensions, in these curricula, is used more as a “safety net,” possibly for accreditation purposes.

The third subtheme of diversity knowledge-based content is community demographics. Course descriptions across our sample address the need for officers to learn the demographics and social characteristics of the communities they serve. Some states also require cadets to identify the relevant demographics of the state (e.g., Connecticut) and to explain its historical and current cultural composition (e.g., California). The demographic composition of a community includes, but is not limited to, factors such as socioeconomic background, age, geographical origin, sexual orientation, political beliefs, religious beliefs, and even political beliefs and ideologies. Having such knowledge of their communities allows officers to recognize differences between people in the community, avoid biased responses, communicate better, and overall to be more effective in their job. However, it is important to note that having knowledge of community demographics is not enough to drive such outcomes. To really earn the public’s respect and trust, it must be accompanied by a sincere effort by police officers to use this knowledge to actively learn about the belief systems of those they serve.

As for *skill-based content components*, the most frequent content area focused on interpersonal communication skills. All curricula emphasized the importance of understanding the ways culture can impact communication. The Florida curriculum offers the following explanation for intercultural communication: “intercultural communication takes place when people from different cultures communicate. . . [and] information is filtered through your life experiences and shapes your opinions. When you communicate with someone from another culture, and don’t take intercultural differences into account, misunderstanding can result.”

Furthermore, our analysis shows that states consider the most essential elements for effective communication to be verbal and nonverbal communication, active listening, and emotional intelligence. Course objectives outline barriers to cross-cultural communication and relations, and strategies for effective and improved communication within a diverse community. We did not identify other skill-based content areas in the diversity curricula; however, it is important to note that topics such as de-

cision-making, problem-solving, and conflict resolution were often included as stand-alone courses rather than as part of the diversity course.

The How: How (and by Whom) Is Diversity Taught in Basic Police Training?

The final dimension of our conceptual framework is concerned with the “how” of diversity training. For this dimension, our analysis focused on identifying the pedagogical strategies used to facilitate trainees’ learning and the types of instructors who are teaching the course.

In terms of pedagogical methods, it seems like the variety of tools and curricular approaches to learning used by curriculum designers in basic police academies has undergone extensive development in the last two decades. We found four major instructive tools for delivering cultural and diversity curricula content: 1) *instructor-led discussions*, 2) *tabletop exercises and video case studies*, 3) *self-assessments*, and 4) *role-playing exercises*.

Instruction-led discussions address a variety of topics, from discussing the subcultures’ perceptions and attitudes toward law enforcement to understanding the major subcultures in the academy’s service area. For example, in Connecticut, instructors are required to facilitate discussions in which recruits examine their own cultural differences and life experiences. *Tabletop exercises and video case studies* present participants with scenarios to review and analyze. For example, in Michigan, scenarios and cases are utilized to evaluate officers’ responses to incidents involving individuals from diverse groups. For example, participants are asked to identify the cultural issues involved in the incident and how to solve them effectively.

Self-assessments are diagnostic instruments that serve as a starting point for instructor-facilitated classroom discussions. In California, students are required to complete self-assessments, such as personal inventories to determine their own level of cultural sensitivity when interacting with cultural groups. Finally, many academies utilize *role-play exercises* that allow recruits to practice, observe, and learn through trial and error how to effectively communicate and solve problems with diverse citizens. In Arizona, the curriculum utilizes role playing exercises to practice the dynamics of officer/citizen interactions as well as methods for effectively communicating with members of different groups such as the elderly and non-English speakers. At the end of the scenario, the instructor is expected to facilitate a debrief in which officers can receive feedback on their actions.

One thing that is clear from these progressive pedagogical tools is that they require skilled instructors to facilitate them effectively. However, the one area not discussed in the curricula, and perhaps is taboo, is the qualification of the instructors who deliver diversity instruction. It is important to note here that while POST agencies set the mandatory curricula in terms of content and hours, the instruction itself is left in the hands of the regional academies and is much less regulated (or standardized) by the state. Since none of the state mandated curricula provided information about the instructors of these courses, we addressed the topic of instructors’ qualifications in the interviews we conducted with 20 training officials across the United States.

The content analysis of our interviews yielded several interesting findings. First, law enforcement diversity instructors are typically current (or retired) certified police officers who are employed by law enforcement agencies or police training commissions. In most cases, they are full-time police officers who are not compensated separately for their instruction, but rather teach during their official work hours and as part of their job.

Second, no state-mandated minimal level of knowledge, expertise, or education is required of diversity instructors. While law enforcement instructors must be certified as training instructors for teaching of tactical skills such as firearms, defensive tactics, and vehicle operations, they are not likely to get special certifications on academic topics such as human diversity and interpersonal communications. Therefore, as indicated by our interviewees, it would be rare to find training officers who are diversity experts or have received some type of diversity education. For the most part, each instructor is responsible for conducting their research and developing their lesson plan.

All interviewees agreed that selecting a diversity instructor is a very important decision because diversity issues are sensitive in nature and can be volatile. Diversity education requires trainers who not only have the academic knowledge of diversity but also individuals who have interpersonal, communication, and presentation skills. Unfortunately, budget constraints and the small pool of volunteering instructors make it difficult for police academies to utilize qualified instructors who can teach diversity. As one interviewee explained: “*We don’t have money to bring in fancy educated instructors like yourself [the researcher] to teach our officers. We have to use who is available and free; that’s the reality.*” Another said: “*We*

had some terrible instructors who couldn't stand in front of a class. They were chosen only because they had some kind of a diversity background . . . it was like 'hey, you're black, so surely you understand diversity.'"

Even more than that, it seems that utilizing under-qualified instructors is somewhat institutionalized in academies by using “problem officers” as instructors. This practice, referred to by interviewees as “common knowledge” was explained by the following executive: “*many times, you use ‘problem officers’ as instructors . . . you put them in the academy because you can’t trust them on the streets . . . for example, officers that are on the Brady list, district attorney won’t take their testimony . . . so it is basically useless to have them work cases, they can’t work cases but you also can’t fire them—so what can you do? You just put them on ‘special assignment’ in the academy.*”

The lack of qualified instructors has critical implications for policing. Diversity trainers are responsible for laying recruits’ foundational understanding and skills of cultural diversity. What recruits are taught in class will be later applied on the streets, and the way they behave with citizens will naturally bring attention to the training they have received in the academy. This practice of moving failed officers from the streets to the classroom, as instructors of future police officers, is concerning. Diversity instructors bare a great amount of responsibility for the performance of their recruits and the extent to which they expose their agencies to liability risk.

Recommendations for Practice

The results of our study highlight the need to address cultural diversity within basic police training curricula, particularly given the importance of cultural diversity to the practice of the modern day police officer. As a public service profession, law enforcement should make an active commitment to cultural diversity awareness. We offer recommendations as to how this can be accomplished.

First, to develop the next generation of law enforcement professionals who can understand, appreciate, and effectively interact with diverse groups of people, police academies must first get their own basic training curricula in order. One way to achieve this is for academies to shift from curricula that treat diversity as a liability to curricula that focus on diversity as an asset. In addition, they need to increase the length of training so that diversity can be taught in a more substantive way as well as restructure their learning objectives to align with

the changing demographics of society and the increased public expectations for social justice and equity. This means articulating of a clear rationale for learning diversity and contemporary topics that are more relevant in this postmodern policing era (e.g., LGBTQ+).

Second, commitment to quality diversity programming is not only established through rigorous curricula. As our findings suggest, the selection of competent instructors who are well versed in the diversity literature and can effectively reduce emotional and negative reactions to the training is just as critical to the effectiveness of the training. We recommend that state POST or related agencies also develop educational and professional training standards for diversity instructors to ensure that basic academy instructors have at least some level of diversity training expertise. Some possibilities here include adding explicit certification requirements related to culture and diversity, establishing educational programs for diversity instructors, and implementing train-the-trainer models by utilizing academic institutions and advocacy groups to better prepare diversity trainers. The use of advocacy groups for the development and implementation of police training curricula was also highlighted in the final *Report of The President’s Task Force on 21st Century Policing*. It recommended that police academies obtain “assistance of advocacy groups that represent the viewpoints of communities that have traditionally had adversarial relationships with law enforcement” (2015, 58).

We also believe that an action plan is needed to establish nationwide diversity training standards for basic police training that aligns with 21st century policing principles and replaces new officers to deal with the current challenges faced by today’s police officers. Such centralized standards would include mandatory minimum training hours, learning objectives, and instructors’ qualifications. In fact, a call for national training and certification standards for policing was also recommended by the Task Force on Policing (2021). It recommended training on the topics of procedural justice and implicit bias. Lack of diversity awareness and lack of respect is not an isolated problem that affects a specific state—it is a nationwide problem and should be addressed as such.

Finally, beyond recommendations for basic police academies, the law enforcement profession as a whole should commit to the promotion of professional diversity practices. Diversity training is not “a one and done” and should be mandated throughout the career of law enforce-

ment officers as part of their in-service training (which is presently not the case). Other than training, an active commitment to diversity must come from within police agencies by incorporating a culture of diversity awareness into their missions and management practices. Police leaders and agency heads must make concerted efforts to provide officers with continued experiences related to diversity outside the classroom. This can include forming long-term partnerships with local academic institutions and community organizations, involving officers in community programs that address diversity issues, and inviting speakers from underrepresented cultural groups in the community. Such activities can help promote officers self-reflection and increase “real-time” self-awareness to cultural diversity (DiAngelo 2018; Kendi 2019).

Conclusion

Given the national crisis in police–public relations, diversity awareness in public safety delivery is a primary concern for basic police academies. The purpose of the present study was to analyze the content and length of state-mandated diversity training curricula in basic police academies in the United States. The overall findings are disappointing, suggesting that DEI training is a missing component of the basic police curricula. Although it is difficult (if not impossible) to say what percentage of the overall curricula would reflect states’ positive commitment to diversity, our finding is that, on average, only about 0.78% (5.09 hours) of the overall basic training program hours address diversity issues. This is an indication that states do not address diversity training in basic academies in a meaningful way.

This study also identified a serious gap in the public administration literature related to diversity training of public employees. We hope this article is useful for public agencies who wish to develop effective diversity training and enhance the development of public servants’ diversity readiness. We encourage public administration scholars to consider further addressing this gap in research and practice by working toward developing an effective, evidence-based, diversity training that is focused on public employees.

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Signal Fires: The Use of Diversity Value Signaling in Local Government Job Advertisements Following the Summer of Racial Reckoning

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Following the events of the summer of 2020, public and private sector organizations have engaged in a variety of actions related to promoting, valuing, and celebrating diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI). Perhaps due to their role as direct providers of public safety, local governments are along the front lines of DEI efforts and values. Using a novel dataset of International City/County Management Association job advertisements from July 1, 2020–November 1, 2020, this article examines why some local hiring authorities utilize DEI signaling language in their job advertisements while others do not. Results indicate that both external and internal characteristics are associated with diversity value signaling in local government administrations.

For 8 minutes and 46 seconds, a police officer knelt on the back of a citizen's neck. Onlookers pleaded for the officer to stop. The man underneath the officer's knee (as well as three other officers), George Floyd, did not survive the encounter. The video taken by one of the onlookers would soon go viral, sparking protests and unrest around the globe and in cities across the United States, especially in the City of Minneapolis, Minnesota where this event took place. The protests, unrest, and calls for justice and accountability would endure through the following months despite the ongoing presence of a global pandemic. In short, the summer of 2020 was marred by disease, fire, and social unrest. For some, the flames would indicate the destruction of property and rage, but for others, the flames signaled a cry for help, especially from marginalized communities across the globe.

The summer of 2020 would come to be referred to as the Summer of Racial Reckoning (Chang, Martin, and Marrapodi 2020), and, in the wake of these events, many public sector organizations were compelled to as-

sess (or reassess) their roles in contributing to the continuation of historical and systemic inequities. Among these organizations, local government administrations stand out as particularly important. Local governments make hiring decisions, identify employees eligible for promotion, and sanction employees when necessary. They are also direct service providers to the public in a multitude of ways, ranging from providing public safety to building public parks and spaces. Moreover, through their police powers, local law enforcement agencies may simultaneously deprive an individual of his or her liberty while protecting another's right to protest (Fisk et al. 2020).

Local governments, when acting as an employer, have a variety of options relative to the language used in their recruitment materials. For some organizations, diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) is on the minds of decision-makers with such language reflected in the advertisement itself. In this way, a commitment to DEI is signaled alongside traditional information such as required skills, educational requirements, salary, and

benefits, as well as expected years of experience. For others, however, the emphasis of DEI within job advertisements is more muted with employers including a notation that they are an equal opportunity employer. Finally, cities and counties may also prioritize other organizational values and avoid verbiage relative to DEI or equal opportunity.

Decisions about the language used in job advertisements are paramount for both the employer and the potential employee. For job seekers, the job advertisement fills an information gap and enables the applicant to gain information relative to his or her perceived fit within the organization (Andreassen 2021). From an organizational perspective, Schmidt, Chapman, and Jones (2015) explain that job advertisements are a vehicle for organizations to present information about their ideal candidate's knowledge, values, skills, and abilities. If they fail to do so, the employer risks losing out on applicants who self-select out of the recruitment process, thus reducing the quantity and potential quality of the applicant pool. Additionally, job advertisements, when they signal something about values or skills, are more likely to make that job attractive to someone who shares the desired values or skills (Ashraf et al. 2016; Gaucher, Friesen, and Kay 2011). Yet, even before applicants can decide on their perceived fit, they must first receive, process, and evaluate information in a crowded labor market, meaning the choice of language used in the advertisement can matter a great deal (Lazear and Oyer 2012, 494). This signaling process and applicant assessment, according to Keppeler and Papenfuß (2021), is not fully understood by students of public administration.

Thus, the purpose of this study is to determine the degree to which local government contexts explain variation in the use of diversity value signaling language. To do so, we examine the language utilized in job postings for local government administrators posted via the International City and County Management Association (ICMA) job center web portal from July 2020–November 2020. Each job advertisement ($n = 113$) is examined for language germane to DEI and analyzed via logistic regression to determine the degree to which community characteristics and government structures are associated with diversity value signaling. This time frame offers an important window into how organizations respond to changes in their environment and the degree to which social movements serve as impetus for change.

Theoretical Background

Public administration scholarship has long sought to understand how and why public sector organizations make the decisions they do, especially as it relates to diversity, equity, and inclusion. In general, researchers have found that organizations make decisions to mitigate the effects of uncertainty in their environment and to take advantage of environmental conditions (Aldrich and Mindlin 1978; Downey, Hellriegel, and Slocum 1975; Galbraith 1973). Scholarship also notes that for organizations to survive, they adapt and be nimble enough to effectively respond to an evolving environment (Aldrich and Mindlin 1978; Boyne et al. 2011; Galbraith 1973). However, organizations confront and understand their environments differently, and, as such, adopt and implement differing strategies to respond to their environment. Perceptions of the environment, we note, may also guide the behavior and decision-making of an organization (Aldrich and Mindlin 1978; Galbraith 1973). In fact, in some instances, perceptions can be more valuable than the objective data that surrounds the organization (Duncan 1972; Pfeffer and Salancik 1978).

A subset of this scholarship has focused on organizational decision-making and outcomes relative to diversity, equity, and inclusion (Pitts 2009; Cole, Haun, and Silvera 2022). One vein of DEI scholarship elucidates the differences and relationships between diversity management (and other proactive and voluntary management efforts) from more legalistic approaches. Ng and Burke (2005) identified three key differences. First, diversity management involves the recruitment and subsequent selection of qualified employees from disadvantaged groups, especially those individuals who would have been “missed” through more traditional recruitment methods. Second, diversity management goes beyond quantitative targets and toward celebrating/capitalizing on employees’ cultural and experiential differences. Third, intentional and institutionalized efforts are needed to realize the benefits of diversity management and may include new policies, programs, and organizational support (see also Ely and Thomas 2001; Pless and Maak 2004). In a similar effort, Fisk and colleagues (2019) categorized diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts as fitting within a 2×2 typology based on the degree of institutionalization and the degree to which diversity management principles were practiced within an organization.

Scholarship has also examined the outputs and mech-

anisms of DEI programming. While noting the potential for increased intergroup conflict and bias (Ashikali and Groeneveld 2015), recent scholarship has observed positive relationships between diversity management efforts and increases in the number of minority employees (Groeneveld and Verbeek 2012), job satisfaction (Pitts 2009), turnover (Groeneveld 2011), employee loyalty and commitment (Groeneveld 2011), and employee performance and outputs (Choi and Rainey 2010). Ashikali and Groeneveld (2015, 149) add, “in practice, diversity management should aim to foster the positive cognitive effects of diversity and to mitigate the negative affective effects that arise from intergroup biases. . . . Diversity management should therefore include policies, programs, and management activities that address the diversity in the organizational workforce to bring about its potentially positive effects.” Noting the positive benefits of DEI, Pitts, Hicklin, and Hawes (2010), unpacked the factors that distinguish more effective DEI efforts from those that are less effective. Their results pointed to environmental uncertainty, that is, efforts to promote stability and mitigate ambiguity as well as environmental favorability, including ample organizational resources, time, and a supportive intergroup culture as key explanatory factors that shape how well organizations implement their DEI programming. According to Pitts et al. (2010), organizations with greater resources and expertise are more likely to implement DEI programs effectively and, as such, are more likely to realize performance dividends. Similarly, organizations operating in an uncertain environment are also more likely than others to adopt and effectively implement diversity management programs as a way of promoting stability.

Efforts at unpacking the factors that shape the recruitment and selection of qualified candidates from historically disadvantaged groups have also taken on increased importance. Drawing from Chapman et al. (2005), researchers have observed the importance of an applicant’s perceived fit within the organization and suggest that it is among the strongest predictors of an applicant’s decision to apply (Cable and Judge 1996). Building on this foundation, Linos (2018) utilized a field experiment to understand the utility of various job advertisement messages and the impact of such messages on the recruitment of new police officers. Results demonstrated that those job advertisements with messaging that addressed personal benefits were “three times as effective as the control and are particularly effective for applicants of color and women. Importantly, public service messages alone do

not seem to attract more people to the police than the control group” (Linos 2018, 68–70).

Environmental Factors

Local government decision-making scholarship has also begun to unpack why some local governments are moving in the direction of adopting DEI polices/values while others are not.

Research has observed a variety of need-related factors. Kerr and Mladenka (1994), for example, found a direct connection between increasing percentages of minority residents and the willingness of those communities to support minority employment programs. Hur and Strickland (2012) also observed relationships between DEI efforts and city-level characteristics via a sample of local governments in North Carolina. They found a larger population, a higher percentage of African American residents, and increases in affluence/wealth were associated with increased likelihood of DEI policy adoption. They also noted that governmental structure (i.e., local form of government) is influential in a locality’s willingness to promulgate DEI policies. Similarly, based on a sample of local governments in Oregon, Nishishiba (2012) observed an association between the adoption of diversity management programs and changing demographics. Cooper and Gerlach (2019) found that as communities become more diverse, they are more likely to support the creation of a chief diversity officer position within city hall.

Finally, Fisk et al. (2020) reported a strong relationship between the percentage of foreign-born residents and the adoption of three measures aimed at inclusion (i.e., offering cultural competency training, translation services, and a preference for multilingual job applicants).

In short, organizations tend to be more responsive to their external environment, especially when it is an environment that is favorably inclined to DEI programming (Pitts, Hicklin, and Hawes 2010). Based on previous work, we offer the following hypothesis:

- H1: Local governments with more non-white populations are more likely to signal diversity values in job advertisements.
- H1a: Local governments with higher economic inequality are more likely to signal diversity values in job advertisements.

The literature also suggests that organizations exist in a dynamic environment and that they are responsive to

that environment (Hur and Strickland 2012; Kerr and Mladenka 1994). Therefore, we hypothesize that local governments are responsive to their environment. We also anticipate that communities whose populations are becoming diverse are more likely to signal diversity values in job advertisements while those communities that are losing minority populations will not. The aspects of the community that are examined in this study to represent environmental change is the change in the percentage of the non-white population by directions (i.e., increase or decrease).

H2: Local governments in changing environments are responsive to their environment.

H2a: Local governments that are losing non-white populations will be less likely to include diversity values in job advertisements.

H2b: Local governments that are gaining non-white populations will be more likely to include diversity values in job advertisements.

Institutional Structure and Capacity

Previous research also points to the important role of institutional structure and capacity in terms of engendering more inclusive policies and procedures (Huang and Liu 2018). Researchers have demonstrated that the institutional structure of local government matters and shapes commitment to inclusionary practices (Fisk et al. 2020; Huang and Liu 2018; Hur and Strickland 2012). The presence of strong elected executives have contributed to the adoption of climate policies (Krause 2011), immigration (Huang and Liu 2018), and economic development incentives. Because our data involves primarily city and county managers, we turn to the institutional differences in city councils. Local government council members are generally elected as either an at-large or districted representative. At-large members are based on the number of votes cast for each member and typically, a specific number of candidates are selected to serve on the council regardless of which parts of the city or county they live in. It could be the case, for example, that the three winners of an election could all live within one neighborhood. District-based elections, on the other hand, elect council members based on geographic districts, and members are elected for each district. Geographic boundaries for districts often come along with demographic characteristics (for example, race and income) (Forest 2018). Therefore, the local government's job post may reflect more diversity values when the city/county's so-

ciodemographic characteristics are more districted. Based on the literature, we hypothesize that as the percentage of districted councilmembers increases, the greater the likelihood of including diversity value signaling.

H3: Local governments with more councilmembers elected by geographic district are more likely to signal diversity values in job advertisements.

For capacity, many researchers have adopted population as a measure of institutional capacity and found a relationship between the capacity and the adoptions of inclusive practices and policy innovations (Fisk et al. 2020; Huang and Liu 2018; Krause 2011; Sullivan 2002). Sullivan (2002), for example, utilized the natural log of population and found that local governments with larger population size tended to engage in more policy innovation. Huang and Liu (2018) also found that localities with a larger population were more likely to adopt pro-immigrant policies. Similar results were reported by Fisk et al. (2020). Here, local governments with larger populations were associated with an increased likelihood of adopting inclusionary policies. Given these findings, we utilize the population size as a proxy for local government capacity and hypothesize that local governments which are home to a larger number of citizens will be more likely to signal diversity values in job advertisements.

H4: Local governments with a higher population size are more likely to signal diversity values in job advertisements.

Data and Method

Descriptive Statistics

The statistical analysis is based on data acquired from the ICMA job center website (<https://icma.org/job-center>) during the observation period of July 1, 2020 through November 1, 2020. A keyword search was administered within the website to locate job advertisements for major leadership positions only (i.e., City Administrator and Assistant/Deputy Chief Administrator). This created a total sample of 113 job advertisements (n = 113). A keyword search was then conducted within each job advertisement. In our analysis, keywords included: diverse environment, diversity, equity, inclusion and/or their abbreviations (Ng and Burke 2005). We did not include EEO as a measure of diversity signaling.

Table 1. DEI Value Signal Language in Job Ads

	Number	Frequency
Total Ads Signaling DEI	25	22%
Frequency of DEI Signaling		
Once	16	64%
Twice	7	28%
Three or more	2	8%

The dependent variable was dichotomized (1 = includes a keyword, 0 = does not include a keyword). As outlined in Table 1, 25 of 113 job posts included at least one DEI signaling keyword (22% of all job ads). For the 25 advertisements that signaled DEI, the frequency of signaling varied as well. The majority (16) included a single mention of DEI value signaling (64%), but seven ads mentioned DEI twice (28%), and two signaled more than 3 times (8%). Among those 113 observations, 86 were at the city level and three at the county level. The rest of the observations consisted of 21 townships and three census-designated places (CDP). Of those that used signaling, 22 are city governments, 2 are townships, and 1 is a CDP. We did not observe any diversity keywords in the county job advertisements.

Most of the job advertisements included only one DEI keyword and it was located near the EEO statement or at the beginning of the introduction of the jurisdiction. The city of Brawley City, CA, for example, starts the text by introducing the city “with a diverse and growing population of over 26,000.” The rest of the content, however, does not talk about any DEI related concern. The job advertisement posted by City of Fort Collins, CO is the only one that includes four diversity signaling words. Starting with the summary of the job opportunity, the ideal candidate should “embrace our commitment to equity and inclusion” and “bring their own set of diverse experiences that add value and perspective.” It then states the city government’s commitment to high-quality public service and desire to “attract and employ diverse and competitive talent.” It ends with a formal statement of EEO and “values diversity at all levels of its workforce.” By comparing contents, we find that even though there are just three more DEI keywords identified in the Fort

Collins job posts compared to the Brawley City posts, the gap of DEI information conveyed between the two localities is huge. For most of the advertisements with only one keyword, they seem to just comply with the public value and include the statement of DEI as a formality. For those with more keywords, the governments seem to put efforts on not only indicating their commitment to DEI but also on recruiting candidates who commit to the same values. For this reason, we conduct statistical analysis on not only whether local governments signal DEI values in their job advertisements, but also the magnitude of the signal.

Key independent variables for each of the 113 communities relative to context were collected for 2018 demographic characteristic (*NonWhite %*), an economic inequality indicator (*Gini*), and demographic change variables between 2010 and 2018¹ (*NonWhite change*, *Absolute NonWhite Change*). These demographic and economic data were derived from the American Community Survey (ACS). The demographic variable (*NonWhite %*) ranges from 0 to 80.339%, with an average of 19.839% across the observations. Gini index is a measure of income equality and ranges from 0 to 1, where a “0” suggests absolute equal distribution of income and a “1” suggests absolute inequality. The Gini index in this sample group ranges from .061 to .558, with a mean of .427. The change variables capture the non-white population changes between 2010 and 2018. *NonWhite change* measures the population change with directions (i.e., increase or decrease). This measure captures whether the community is losing or growing minority population and ranges from -23.707% to +19.227% in this sample. The *Absolute NonWhite Change* calculates the absolute values of the non-white change variable, measuring the magnitude

¹ At the time the manuscript was drafted, the 2018 data were the most recent data available.

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics for All Variables

Variable	Obs.	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max
Diversity Binary	113	.221	.417	0	1
Diversity Count	113	.327	.713	0	4
Log Pop	113	9.605	1.683	4.585	14.153
NonWhite %	113	19.839	17.806	0	80.339
Gini	113	.427	.064	.061	.558
NonWhite Change	113	.814	5.569	-23.707	19.227
Absolute NonWhite Change	113	3.86	4.08	0	23.707
District %	113	35.690	46.033	0	100
Council Size	113	6.496	1.571	5	15

of the non-white population change without counting for the direction.

The internal context variables include the size of the council (*Council Size*), as well as the percent of the council membership who are districted as opposed to being members elected at large (*District %*). This council information was captured from the jurisdictions' websites in 2020. The smallest council size includes 5 committee members while the largest contains 15. Some local government's council members are elected totally at large (0%) while others' council members are elected totally by districts. On average, 35.69% of the council members are elected by districts across the 113 communities. Control variables include the natural log of population (*Log Pop*) in 2018, which was also collected from the ACS. Descriptive statistics of all variables are available in Table 2.

Analytic Strategy

To analyze the data, maximum likelihood estimation (MLE) is utilized to examine the relationship between diversity signaling language and the covariates in our primary analysis. We utilized logistic regression as our dependent variable is dichotomous, that is, whether job advertisements include diversity signaling language ("1" if included and "0" else). The first model is a static model where independent indicators are static (i.e., no percentage or amount changes of the variables). The second model substitutes the *NonWhite %* variable with *Absolute NonWhite Change* in order to measure whether the change in non-white population has an impact on diversity signaling language, regardless of the direction of changes. The last two models include the same variables utilized in the static model but consider the direc-

tion of changes. For each significant predictor, examples of predicted probabilities are presented as graphs. For the robustness model, Poisson regressions are conducted to estimate the variation of diversity signaling word count with the same independent variables and the same conditions as in the logistic regression. In the Poisson regression, the dependent variable is a count variable measuring the number of diversity keywords.

Results

Results from the four logistic regression models are presented in Table 3. Models 1 and 2 include the static percentage of non-white population and the absolute change of non-white, respectively. Models 3 and 4 include the non-white change variable, which is non-negative (*NonWhite change* ≥ 0) and negative (*NonWhite change* < 0), respectively. In general, all models present strong statistical power in the estimation (LR X^2 , $p \leq .05$). Variables approximating population size, non-white population and percentage of district produce statistical significance, whereas variables representing economic inequality, absolute non-white change, and council size present no relationship with diversity signaling.

The population size (*Log Pop*) is positively associated with diversity signaling across all but the last model: Model 1 (.541, $p \leq .05$), Model 2 (.729, $p \leq .001$), Model 3 (.620, $p \leq .05$). In Model 1 for example, a 1% increase in population results in it being 1.718 ($exp(.541)$) times more likely for local governments to include diversity signaling language in their job advertisements. Figure 1 shows the predicted probabilities of including diversity signaling word as the population changes based on Model 1. We

Table 3. Logistic Regression for Diversity Signaling Language

	Model 1 Static Model	Model 2 Absolute Change Model	Model 3 Positive Non- White Change	Model 4 Negative Non- White Change
Log Pop	.541* (.222)	.729*** (.210)	.620* (.302)	.383 (.375)
NonWhite %	.034* (.016)		.031 (.020)	.039 (.030)
Absolute NonWhite Change (.072)		.003		
Gini	8.402 (5.876)	6.934 (5.654)	6.127 (7.537)	16.623 (10.978)
District %	-.023** (.008)	-.020** (.008)	-.019* (.010)	-.039* (.017)
Council Size	.206 (.186)	.165 (.190)	.146 (.219)	.631 (.496)
Constant	-11.746*** (3.387)	-12.025*** (3.304)	-11.365** (4.418)	-15.983* (6.630)
Observations	113	113	71	42
Pseudo R2	.248	.207	.268	.268
LR χ^2	29.63***	24.77***	20.30***	11.69*

Note: Standard errors are in parentheses. Beta coefficients are reported above standard errors.

The dependent variable is whether job ads include diversity signaling language (“1” if included and “0” else). Asterisks indicate statistical significance (** $p < .001$, ** $p < .01$, * $p < .05$).

can see from Figure 1 that across the scale of population, the predicted probability of signaling diversity in job posts increases from .013 to .72 when the natural log of population changes from 4 to 15, holding all else equal.

The non-white population (*NonWhite %*) is also positively associated with diversity signaling in Model 1 (.034, $p \leq .05$). In effect, this means that local governments are 1.035 ($exp(.034)$) times more likely to include diversity signaling language in their job posts for every 1% increase in non-white population. Figure 2 shows the predicted probabilities of including diversity signaling languages over the different percentages of non-white population. The probability of a local government signaling diversity in job advertisements increases from .126 to .558 when localities have no non-white citizens as compared to those with an 80% non-white population.

The percentage of district (*District %*) has a negative relationship with diversity signaling across the static model (-.023, $p \leq .01$), the absolute change model (-.020, $p \leq .01$), and the non-negative and negative change models (-.019, $p \leq .05$ and -.039, $p \leq .05$). In other words, local governments are 2% ($exp(-.023)$) less likely to include diversity signaling language in their job posts when there is a one unit increase in the percent of council districts in the absolute change model. Figure 3 shows the predicted probabilities of diversity signaling keywords based on Model 1. There is .342 probability for local governments whose council members are elected at-large (present as “0” in the *District %* axis) to signal diversity in their job posts. For governments whose council members are totally elected by district (present as “100” in the *District %* axis), the predicted probability decreases to .091.

Figure 1. Effect of Population Size on Diversity Signaling Language

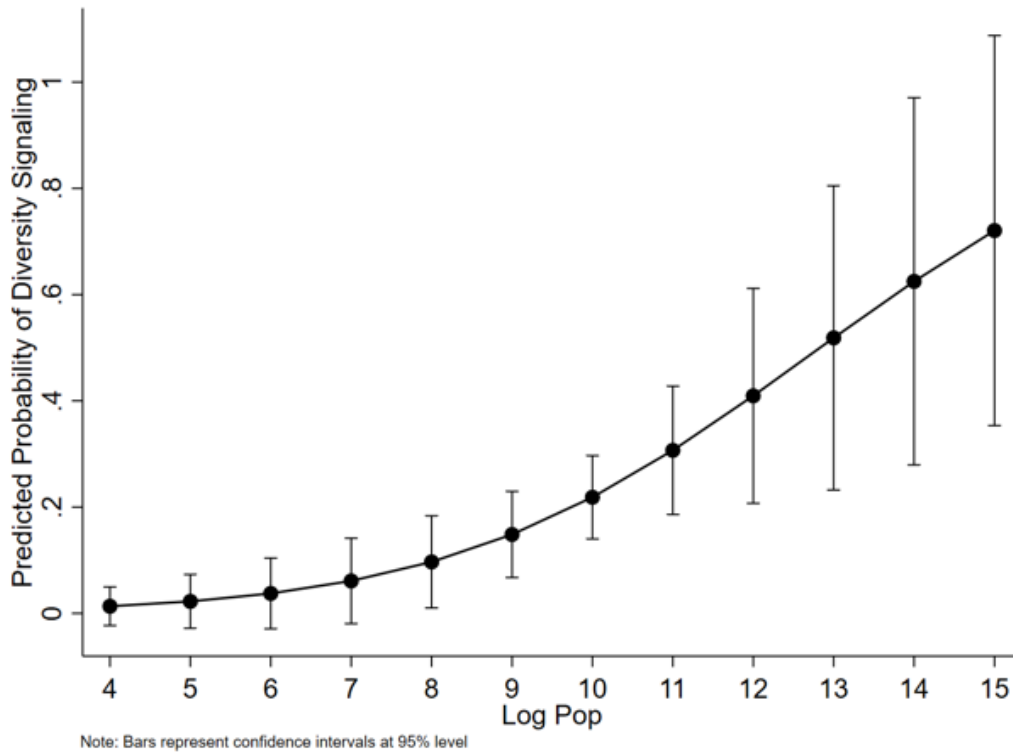


Figure 2. Effect of Nonwhite % on Diversity Signaling Language

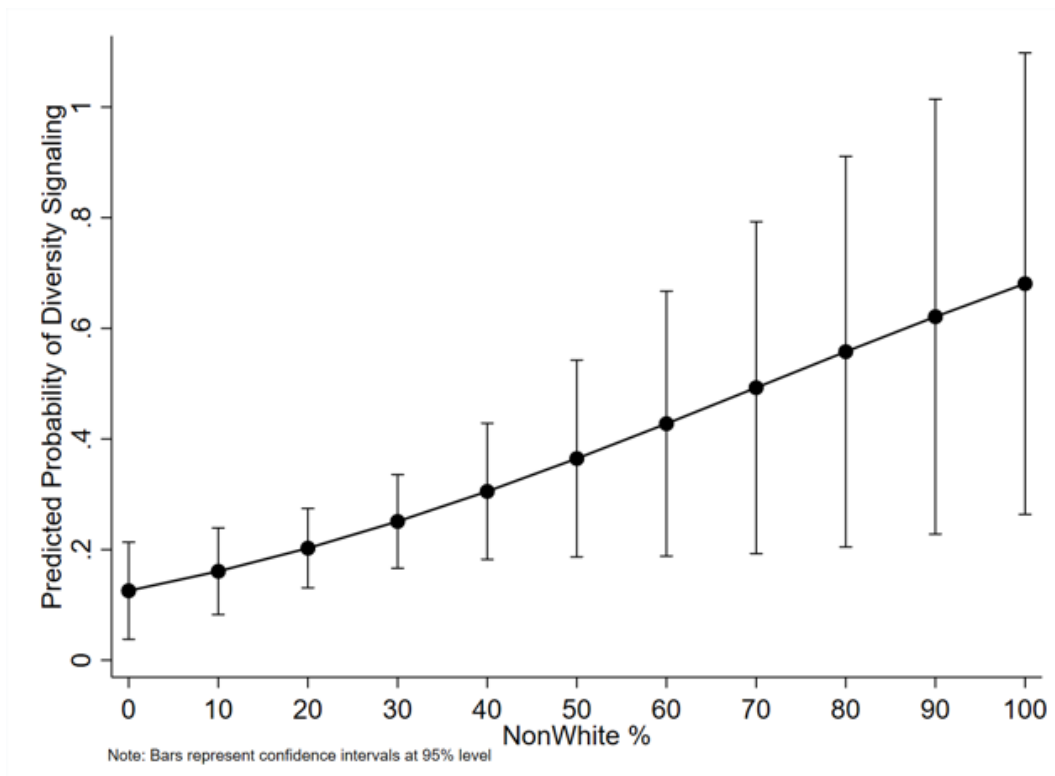
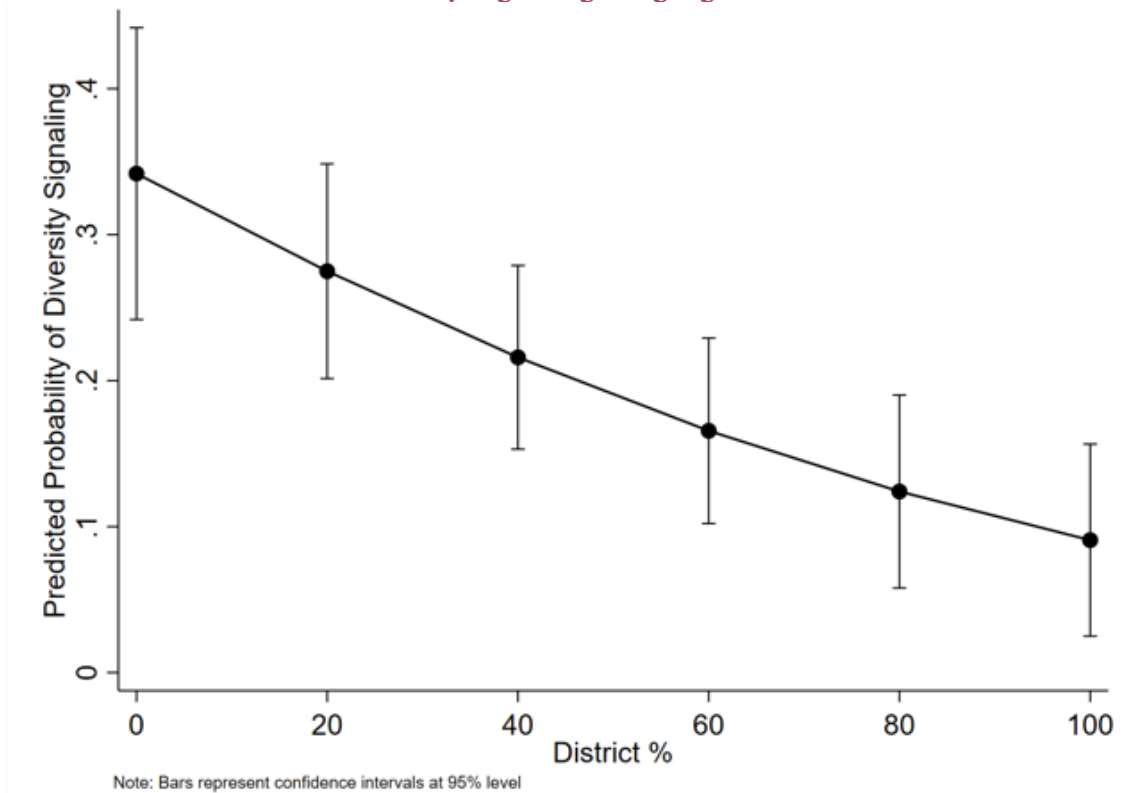


Figure 3. Effect of District % on Diversity Signaling Language

Robustness Model

An additional analysis was executed to determine the degree to which the results were consistent in instances in which diversity values were strongly signaled. Of these, the majority of job advertisements mentioned diversity signaling language once or not at all. But in several instances, diversity value signaling language is repeated throughout the job advertisement. To account for this, a count variable that measures the word count of diversity keywords as a dependent variable was created. There were two options for estimating models with a count dependent variable: Poisson Regression and Negative Binomial Regression (NBR). When the count dependent variable was over dispersed (i.e., its mean does not equal to variance), NBR would be utilized for the estimation because it provided less restriction on the assumption that the mean of the variable must be equal to its variance in Poisson regression (Long 1997, 230–238). To determine the appropriateness of the regression model, we conducted a *Poisson goodness-of-fit test* and found no overdispersion in the distribution of the dependent variable. Therefore, Poisson regression was appropriate, and several Poisson regressions were conducted using the same variables in the main analyses.

Results in Table 4 showed the same directions of re-

lationship as the logistic regression models. In the static model (Model 1 in Table 4) for instance, natural log of population (.412, $p \leq .001$) and the percent of non-white population (.017, $p \leq .05$) are positively associated with the number of diversity keywords, while the percent district ($-.009$, $p \leq .05$) are negatively associated with the word count. However, the percent district variable is not statistically significant in Models 2 and 3 in the Poisson regression, and is only significant at the 95% confidence intervals (99% in the logistic regression) in Model 1. In addition, the percentage of non-white population becomes statistically significant in the Negative Non-White Change model (Model 4) in Poisson regression and is positively associated with the diversity word count (.034, $p \leq .05$). This new significance indicates that those local governments with a higher percentage of non-white residents are more likely to signal diversity values in the governmental job posts when they are facing the problem of losing minority population. The percentage of district is no longer significant in Models 2 and 3.

Discussion

The results of this study paint a complicated picture of DEI signaling and offer mixed support for our hypo-

Table 4. Poisson Regression for Diversity Signaling Language

	Model 1 Static Model	Model 2 Absolute Change Model	Model 3 Positive Non- White Change	Model 4 Negative Non- White Change
Log Pop	.412*** (.119)	.506*** (.111)	.521*** (.149)	.372 (.288)
NonWhite %	.017* (.009)		.007 (.012)	.034* (.015)
Absolute NonWhite Change (.049)		.001		
Gini	3.537 (4.002)	2.377 (3.948)	.045 (4.975)	13.090 (7.633)
District %	-.009* (.004)	-.008 (.005)	-.003 (.009)	-.035* (.015)
Council Size	.112 (.116)	.100 (.125)	.062 (.131)	.611 (.365)
Constant	-7.798*** (1.927)	-7.770*** (1.925)	-7.064** (2.274)	-14.548** (4.929)
Observations	113	113	71	42
Pseudo R2	.203	.183	.228	.290
LR χ^2	35.81***	32.32***	26.88***	16.86**

eses. Results showed partial support for Hypothesis 1, which linked the use of DEI signaling language to diverse populations and economic inequality. In general, as the percentage of the non-white population increased, so did the likelihood that a job advertisement would include DEI signaling language. We also observed support for Hypothesis 4, suggesting a relationship between population size and diversity value signaling. However, we saw limited support for Hypothesis 2, which tested for the role of changing environments on diversity value signaling, and our data did not show support for our third hypothesis. To test the robustness of our findings, we also assessed whether the frequency of diversity value signaling language is associated with % non-white and population size.

Similar to Pitts, Hicklin and Hawes (2010), the use of diversity signaling language appears largely related to organizational capacity and environmental favorability, that is, those local governments located in environments that are inclined to support DEI efforts. While data cannot pinpoint precise reasons, there are still several possibilities that help explain our findings. We begin with unpacking our

population variable. One possibility is that population size is driving uncertainty as opposed to the uncertainty being driven by growth of specific demographic groups. Similarly, it may be that as the city's population has grown, the local government is responding to changing preferences, values, and needs of citizens, which are reflected in the job advertisement. Finally, population size may be unrelated to needs or values, but rather may be a function of capacity and resources. In other words, larger local governments have more specialized staff and in-house expertise, which again may be reflected in the choice of language within the advertisements (Fisk et al. 2020).

We also note the relationship between the percentage of non-white residents and diversity signaling. One possible explanation is that the local government is responding to the needs of its diverse citizens via a job advertisement. Conversely, this relationship may not be in response to a need, but rather a preference, that is, communities with a greater percentage of non-white residents are seeking out an administrative leader who shares the community's values. Another alternative is that hiring authorities may decide to signal diversity in order to intentionally seek out

individuals who share values related to DEI without regard to the external environment but driven instead by their internal needs or normative beliefs. In sum, the results provide some indications that local governments are responding to environmental favorability and uncertainty.

Conclusion

The results of this examination indicate that both external and internal characteristics are associated with diversity value signaling in local government administrations. An additional test of robustness confirms these findings, as they find that stronger diversity value signaling in the job advertisement is related to the same characteristics. The present study is not without limitations and sets the stage for a long line of future research. Data used for the study were collected July 2020 through November of 2020 and examined the immediate response of local government administrations to the events of the summer of 2020. The specificity of the dataset captures the short-term response but that specificity limits our study's generalizability to the present status of DEI value signaling. Future research should examine these questions over a longer duration to test the durability of these changes and should also consider pre/post analysis as to whether such advertisements contribute to a more diverse applicant pool.

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The Rage of Innocence: How America Criminalizes Black Youth

By Kristin Henning. New York: Pantheon Books, 2021.
484 pages, hardcover.

Reviewed by Hope Yohn, University of Colorado Denver

Public discourse on defunding the police (or funding more police de-escalation training) is growing and Kristin Henning's thorough and poignant examination of the criminalization of Black youth strikes at the heart of the issue. *The Rage of Innocence: How America Criminalizes Black Youth* demonstrates the multidisciplinary, intersectoral, and deeply cultural problem that exists between the American criminal justice system and the most vulnerable Black Americans, who are children. Henning draws upon her experience as a public defender, professor, and director of the Juvenile Justice Clinic and Initiative at Georgetown University Law Center. She brilliantly applies a critical eye gained from 25 years of experience representing juvenile defenders in Washington, DC. Using statistics and news stories, she soberly examines the intersectional and intersectoral elements at play in criminalizing Black youth. The book seamlessly weaves together the stories we already know, like the Central Park Five and Trayvon Martin, with lesser-known stories, personal anecdotes, research, historical and sociological data, and comparisons to criminal behavior of white youth.

Despite a title that plainly indicts the criminal justice system, the heart of Henning's book—and one can presume her life's work—is the fierce call to let Black children be children. This is a conversation that deserves more attention from discourse on criminal justice reform. *The Rage of Innocence* chronicles deeply ingrained and systemic ways that America's criminal justice system inculcates Black youth with a fear and distrust in police and penal authority and unfairly criminalizes adolescents for the color of their skin. But perhaps more important, this book illuminates how the treatment of Black youth disrupts their development and undermines their childhood. Henning relates the myriad ways in which policing in America robs Black youth of their freedom to test boundaries and experiment with

notions of self. This ultimately denies Black youth the right to healthy adolescent development. Henning's fierce defense of children is a rallying cry to change a system that the world has already acknowledged does not protect, serve, or rehabilitate.

More than half of the book's chapters focus on the criminal justice system's role in criminalizing Black youth, but Henning's foundational focus on the psycho-social development of Black children allows her to explore the many intersections of Black adolescence. The book connects an array of ideas, from fashion trends to playing with toys to sexual experimentation to the criminalization of Black children. In different hands, this book's reach across sectors and arenas may have come off untethered. But, Kristin Henning's unmistakable devotion to affording Black children the same rights and privileges of white children—to explore, be reckless at times, make mistakes, and learn about themselves—anchors the book's many directions.

Ultimately, it offers readers an important truth couched in sobering stories. For example, she introduces the book with a story about one of her clients. The story reveals Henning's path to realizing how racism is at play and how it results in the unjust criminalization of the client. The story sets the tone, introducing readers to the author's goals. She seeks to take readers on a journey of realization—the same journey she has been on for many years—of a reality she is committed to correcting. She draws upon personal anecdotes, stories of Black youths' experiences, as well as data and research that spans child development, history, sociology, criminology, and more. Her ability to intersperse anecdotes with history and crime statistics turns hard-to-acknowledge realities into a gripping read. She carries the reader on a journey as powerful as the one Henning has been on herself.

The first chapter sets forth the thesis to which Henning continually returns. Titled “American Adolescence in Black and White,” Henning contrasts the severity of any interaction between the criminal justice system and Black youth with the freedom and latitude afforded white youth, even those who cause more harm. This chapter also takes a look at the history and science of (white) adolescence, a recent invention of white middle class parents of the Western world. Despite such adolescence being a recent design, Henning also looks at the science of adolescent brain development, which is remarkably consistent across the globe. She cites developmental psychologists who argue it is normal and necessary for youth to “take risks, chase excitement, act without thinking, and [be] easily influenced by friends” (12). These are fundamentals of adolescence, but the benefits are afforded only to “White, middle-class, able-bodied, heterosexual, college-bound boys” (13). Risks and room to make mistakes while pursuing one’s own interests and ambitions is not a privilege afforded every young person.

In subsequent chapters, Henning outlines the many privileges that are *not* comfortably afforded to Black youth in America and the harm that does to their development. Chapter 2 looks at how Black youth playing with toys, using cell phones, and attending parties is criminalized, all the while reminding readers that these are normal and necessary parts of growing up. Chapter 3 examines the criminalization of Black dress and culture, showing both how clothing is an important part of how young people express themselves and that Black youth are criminalized for it. Chapter 4 discusses adolescent sexuality and experimentation alongside the harmful myths of hypersexuality projected onto Black youth.

Chapters 5, 6, 7, and 8 take a deep dive into the role of policing and how it dehumanizes and criminalizes Black children. These chapters explore topics from school resource officers to vigilante racism to contempt of cop (arrests of Black youth for “disrespecting” police officers). In chapter 9, Henning explores trauma and damage, both direct and vicarious, that racist policing causes. Then, chapter 10 describes the utter dehumanization and erasure of Black youth that occurs when courts try Black children as adults, incarcerate Black youth in adult prisons, and execute Black adolescents. The chapter draws a through-line from the executions of a 14-year-old Black child in 1944 and a 16-year-old

Black child (sentenced) in 1945 to the modern day decisions to place Black children in adult prisons and solitary confinement, effectively ending their lives. In chapter 11, Henning takes a closer look at the impact of America’s criminalization of Black youth on their families. It outlines the pain, trauma, and fear Black families face every day, as well as the impossible situations that the criminal justice system puts Black parents in and the impossible choices they must make. This chapter also outlines the impact on siblings of criminalized and incarcerated Black youth, a reality with which Henning is personally familiar. These chapters chronicle the deep and insidious consequences of criminalizing Black adolescents and unfairly treating Black youth like adults.

In the final chapter (chapter 12), “#BlackBoyJoy and #BlackGirlMagic: Adolescent Resilience and Systems Reform,” Henning offers the hope she clings to and gives suggestions on moving forward with an intention to do no (further) harm. The resilience and persistence of Black children and their families is inspiring and heartening (though we hope one day unnecessary, as well). She recalls the story of the client she introduced in the first chapter. The client, then wrongfully pulled from school, arrested, and charged, is now an activist with a thriving passion and purpose of feeding protesters. The chapter is divided into sections subtitled “Help them heal,” “Let them lead,” “Let them learn,” “Keep them safe,” and “Treat Black children like children.” The syntax of these subtitles is not without meaning. Henning calls on readers not to be saviors, but to let Black children be children and to prioritize their voices and that of their families when reforming policy and process.

Each section of chapter 12 deserves to be read, reread, and reread again by public administrators until the harm has been repaired and new standards are in place. Henning’s guidance is no more or less revolutionary than other calls to defund the police or to fund de-escalation training. Yet, Henning’s call to provide all children, not just white children, with the rights and privileges of adolescence make her words that much more pressing and pertinent. The book is a powerful indictment of the criminal justice system and the pervasiveness of racist, inequitable structures that permeate our culture and influence our criminal justice decisions. More importantly, the book calls on readers to trade in the collective criminalization of Black youth for a collective care of all Black youth.

The book challenges readers, and encourages them

along the way to make connections, see the bigger picture, and ultimately to examine their own role in America's criminalization of Black youth. She reminds readers that police officers and those who call police to complain about Black youth do not view their actions as racist and they likely do not intend to do harm. But the most powerful biases are unconscious, insidious, pervasive, and deep-seated. Indeed, Henning does not let individuals off the hook. She ends the last subsection with the clarion call: "Every actor in the criminal legal system—the lawmakers, police officers, probation staff, prosecutors, judges, and defenders—has an opportunity and a responsibility to resist the criminalization of Black adolescence" (341). She reiterates that Black youth are an important part of the community and deserve to be treated as children and offered the same grace as white children. The first step is to reduce harm to Black youth by not calling the police and by staffing schools with educators and support staff instead of school resource officers.

Simultaneously, Henning addresses the systemic issue, connecting police interventions with harmless Black children to larger cultural issues, policy, and budget decisions. Her words demonstrate the harm and trauma done to Black children in America when criminalization stifles their psychological and social development. The book paints a powerfully compelling picture of the contrast between white and Black adolescence. It ends with hope and suggestions for next steps, which range from school-based reforms to regulation of police contact with youth to the role of courts, jails, and prisons. It concludes with calls for the stories of Black children to be heard. Henning consistently evokes images of all that Black children can be: of their resilience, persistence, and potential. Listening to the stories of Black

children and to their thoughts, opinions, and needs in the discourse of reform is critical to healing the past and building a better future.

To call this book timely would be to ignore the pattern of controlling, criminalizing, and erasing Black people, as well as the American tradition of editing out those parts of history. Throughout the chapters, Henning interweaves this history with the social tools that have long been used to criminalize Black youth. She reminds readers that this is not a new phenomenon but, rather, a deeply ingrained and insidious part of American history built into the fabric of the criminal justice system. Henning tells a vivid story heartbreakingly centered on the needs of Black children and how we fail them.

The Rage of Innocence ends with hope and a call to action that should echo throughout institutions of public administration and criminal justice. In any forthcoming effort to achieve social equity and repair the racist foundations of the American criminal justice system, we would be wise to consider Kristin Henning's words and guidance. *The Rage of Innocence* ought to be required reading for law enforcement and criminal justice professionals, as well as educators and other public administrators who interact with children. Henning's words deserve attention among all public administration scholars who value social equity. Its scope and span offer merit to students of public administration seeking to understand the interconnectedness, depth, and breadth of public systems and institutions, as well. The thesis of this book and its recommendations are no less than essential for healing the harm done and building a community that is safe, supportive, and celebrative of Black youth.

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Race and Social Equity: A Nervous Area of Government

By Susan Gooden. New York: Routledge, 2015.
224 pages, paperback.

Reviewed by Theodore W. Johnson, University of Nebraska Omaha

Race and Social Equity: A Nervous Area of Government provides a compelling encapsulation of a construct that has haunted government and public administrators for decades. This construct is race, which is an integral facet of social equity. With the core theme focusing on social equity, the book's author Susan T. Gooden (2015), Dean and Professor of the L. Douglas Wilder School of Government and Public Affairs at Virginia Commonwealth University, asserts racial equity is a nervous area of government that has stymied individual and organizational efforts to rectify equity issues within government organizations. This nervous area pertains to how an organization "considers, examines, promotes, distributes, and evaluates the provision of public justice in areas such as race, ethnicity, gender, religion, sexual orientation, class, and ability status" (Gooden 2015, 25). Racial equity is a nervous area because of the associated emotional, historical, and societal contexts (Gooden 2015). The emotional burden and humiliation stemming from being placed into social purgatory must have been inexplicable considering Black Americans were emancipated at the time. This notion has unfortunately withstood the test of time, posing a contemporary and contentious issue for Black Americans in the 21st century. This text is filled with nuanced concepts and themes that are salient in public affairs, public management, social policy, and administration contexts, bolstering its utility and applicability across many areas within the public and nonprofit sectors. Given the regression of race relations within the United States due to the innumerable racial inequities and injustices minorities have experienced, Gooden's work is more relevant now than ever.

Book Summary

The core theme of this book is equity—social and racial—which has received lackluster attention within government for far too long. The reason for this lack

of attention, Gooden contends, is due to the nervousness public administrators possess surrounding issues of race and racism. This nervousness is undergirded by the immense emotional charge and turmoil that stems from the long-standing history of inequities and racism toward minorities by the U.S. government, specifically Black Americans. Gooden shows how social equity has been and will continue to be a nervous area of government until uncomfortable conversations are normalized within public sector entities and the underpinned emotions of the historic events (e.g., slavery) are recognized and respected by public administrators identifying as nonminority. Simply stated, since government has an adverse equity track-record that is well-documented throughout history, administrators who serve as "street-level bureaucrats" are nervous to make decisions that will cause further inequity and upset citizens. Equity is a nervous area of government when it should not be. Administrators that are value-neutral, willfully blind, fearful of repercussions, or leverage their administrative discretion for unethical purposes are contributors to this nervousness problem.

A commitment to social equity requires fluidity and change, characteristics ill-suited for a stoic government. The contemporary state of social equity in the public sector, specifically government entities, is still very much perceived as a "zero-sum game" between administrative efficiency and political responsiveness (Frederickson 1971; Gooden 2015). This connotes the dichotomy that exists between efficiency and responsiveness, and increases in efficiency result in decreases in responsiveness, and vice versa. Further, this also perpetuates the idea that to obtain social equity in public sector programs, policies, and services, economy and effectiveness must be sacrificed, which is not the case. With social and racial inequity being a prevalent issue within government, Gooden (2015) propounds that performance evaluation and addi-

tional training is a critical solution to redress the issue and shift the racial equity needle. This alludes to the notion that the fields of public affairs, public management, social policy, and administration require better trained professionals in diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives. Improved training along these lines is not a new idea, but one that has been downplayed by leadership within government entities, higher education institutions, and the public sector in totality despite recommendations made by scholars in the field (Gooden and Myers, Jr. 2004; Nabatchi and Carboni 2019). Such training is integral to rectify the nonequity-minded mentalities and practices administrators are subjected to, especially those in public administration doctoral and masters' programs, as they comprise the future administrators who will enter the U.S. workforce to serve a diverse citizenry in all meanings of the word. The recommended training bodes well with the 10 equity principles Gooden suggests public administrators should be aware of, abide by, and advance to rectify social equity issues in government and the sector at large.

The 10 Fundamental Principles: A Chain Only as Strong as Its Weakest Link

This book possesses two key strengths, which aid in its applicability and relevance in public administration regardless of the audience. The first is the provision of 10 equity principles public administrators can arm themselves with to combat inequity. The second is the inclusion of three robust case studies that focalize government entities and illuminate what comfortability with equity looks like from a governmental lens. To aid in the government's ideological shift to become more embrasive of social equity and contentious dialogue, Gooden offers the "10 Fundamental Principles for Conquering Nervousness in Government" that all public administrators should be cognizant of, adhere to, and implement within their respective public sector entities. Gooden's principles consist of the following:

- 1) Public administrators have a responsibility to operate in nervous areas of government
- 2) The legal history of racism and discrimination is an important context that cannot be minimized
- 3) Political, moral, legal, and/or economic triggers

are the initial motivators of nervousness navigation

- 4) Senior leadership is a critically important factor in realizing sustained progress
- 5) At the individual-level, public servants must recognize and eliminate behaviors that impede racial equity progress
- 6) At the organizational level, government agencies should evaluate their socialization boundaries and extend them to accommodate a wider range of racial equity work
- 7) There are no perfect solutions; however, solutions embodying a race-conscious approach most directly facilitate structural equity solutions
- 8) Racial equity needs to operate in the context of accountability
- 9) If legal barriers to racial discrimination have been largely eliminated, agency leadership, policies, and practices form the foundation essential to frontline racial equity work, and
- 10) Significant racial equity progress in government can be achieved (Gooden 2015, 206–211).

These principles are a core strength of the book that are intertwined into each chapter and underscore the valuable lessons conveyed and are encapsulated within the final chapter. By being summarized in the final chapter, the principles serve as a high-level overview of the text's key lessons and takeaways for students, scholars, practitioners, and administrators across a variety of fields, sectors, and industries. This makes said principles easier for individuals to digest regardless of their knowledge or comfort level with social equity. The strength of these fundamental principles resides in the explicitly courageous language that provides clear directives for public administrators to advance social equity within government in places where it may not be prioritized or supported, mitigate nervousness, and avoid ambiguity that may lead to analysis paralysis regarding equity initiatives. The bold and specific expression of ideas comprising these principles enables them to be generalizable beyond government, transcending the public sector. This generalizability is an innate strength of the text as social and racial equity pose challenges in many fields, industries, and in society.

Gooden masterfully incorporates three case studies that provide an analysis of governments operating at the local, state, and federal levels that are actively engaged in social and racial equity work. Collectively, the case

studies demonstrate the way these respective governments are making significant strides in addressing race as a nervous area of government while explicating some of the important work that remains to help equity stay in motion to continue moving the needle in a positive direction. For instance, employees within the City of Seattle became more comfortable discussing concepts of racism and white privilege, which led to the implementation of racial equity impact analyses on the governmental policies, practices, and services provided by the city (Gooden 2015). At their core, these case studies provide excellent, contemporary examples of what focusing social and racial equity looks like for planning, participation, and action within government. Most importantly, these case studies yield insight on what the results of such an equity focus can be for organizations committed to social equity and the benefits citizens may receive when conversations about race are normalized and public administrators are comfortable communicating about race, racism, and equity. This positive change also underscores the benefits case studies may yield on graduate public administration programs and the field from a scholastic and practical perspective (Lopez-Littleton, Blessett, and Burr 2018; McCandless and Larson 2018). Their usage emphasizes the commitment future administrators (i.e., students) must make to the field to assume the mantle of a “change agent” in standing up for good governance and social equity (Blessett et al. 2019).

Building on the 10 Fundamental Principles

Gooden’s 10 fundamental principles formulate a “quick reference” guide public administrators can rely on when necessary and continue to be relevant today. In their current state, the principles are a strong chain that can be used by staunch public administrators in their quest for equity to mitigate nervousness in governments. However, considering the recent regression in race relations and rising racial tensions in U.S. education systems, including debates around teaching Critical Race Theory in U.S. classrooms, cyclic patterns of inequity, nervous public administrators, and paralyzed government entities still exist. Failing to acknowledge and/or teach about racism or slavery constitutes an inequity as well as a disservice to students because they are only being taught one side of U.S. history. This is problematic because education tends to be a prominent public sector

area that is laden with inequity, but is often overlooked (Gooden 2015; McNair, Bensimon, and Malcolm-Piqueux 2019).

To aid in redressing equity issues endemic to education, one principle, which I will refer to as Principle 11, should be considered as an addition to the extant principles. Principle 11 could read as follows: The onus of racial and social equity education should not be bestowed upon nor expected from racial minorities. Instead, this onus should be placed upon academic institutions, organizational leadership, and nonminority identifying individuals to help offset the immense intangible weight of emotional labor associated with being a minority in the United States.

The purpose of including such a principle could accomplish two things. The first is that it places and shifts the onus of racial equity propagation *on us* as a society, field, and educational medium. This is important because equity is everyone’s responsibility and only through collective, unified efforts can real, palpable, and lasting change regarding racial and social equity be acquired. The second is that it provides a genuine demonstration to racial minorities, who already fight many battles and encounter several obstacles in their everyday lives due to inequity, that there are public servants, government entities, academic institutions, and educators that are cognizant of their inequities, care about change, and are committed to change as much as the minorities on the frontlines are. The inclusion of Principle 11 forces public servants and government entities to be the equity intermediaries they proclaim to be electronically and in print to help shoulder the immense burden of what it means to be a minority in the United States as it relates to safety, mental health, financial well-being, and other dimensions essential to one’s existence.

Conclusion

Social equity is a concept many public and nonprofit sector entities claim to be committed to, but policies, processes, administrators, and budgets demonstrate otherwise. The assertion that racial inequities within the United States are saturated is a sad truth that manifests in public policies that notably impact one’s life in a variety of areas (e.g., housing, education, and environment) (Gooden 2015). This is only compounded by race being a nervous area of government, which cannot be overstated. Through this book, Gooden

provides an excellent examination of the intersection of race and social equity within government as well as the field of public administration while elucidating the implications of nervousness in these two areas. Gooden underscores that organizational nervousness can never be eliminated, rather it must be effectively managed. This management can place government and the field of public administration in an advantageous position to proactively address social inequities that are saturated within the United States, endemic to certain public sector entities such as higher education (McNair et al. 2019), and have proven to be pervasive, especially within communities of color (Gooden 2015). Such a solution is pivotal to redress inequity that is embedded within government and public administration often manifesting through contemporary laws, policies, and practices. These statutes covertly propagate racial disparities, warranting a new moniker of Jim Crow Jr., Esq., due to the chicanery utilized to keep minorities suppressed.

This text serves as a paramount call to action, which has rung silent for far too long, for public administrators, governments at each level, and the public sector at large to arm themselves with the tools and knowledge available and become entrenched in the equity battle. This entrenchment is a necessary step if nervousness is ever to be successfully managed, reduced, or eliminated. For nervousness to be reduced or even eliminated, structural changes would need to occur first, which would help facilitate systemic changes. The use of Gooden's 10 principles by public administrators serve as a prime example of how structural change can facilitate systemic change, lead to long-lasting change with equity at the forefront, and help diminish nervousness many public administrators and governments experience.

Gooden's scholastic and practical experiences as well as her expertise provide a compelling backdrop about the state of equity within government surrounding issues of race and how this poses a unique challenge for bureaucratic extensions of government. This is especially problematic in public administration programs that exist to train individuals to combat societal ills because they do not adequately cover social or racial equity within their curricula. These implications are accentuated through Gooden's many illustrative examples, which are supported by the rich background of how fleeting social equity endeavors have been within government and why. It is these historical accounts that provide significant

guidance regarding how government entities should prioritize their racial equity efforts. Effectively leveraging this history should place social and racial equity scholars, organizational leadership, and industry professionals in an advantageous position to prevent history from repeating itself. This is important to redress past, present, and future racial equity issues while preventing equity from being framed as a compromiser and supplanted by the traditional pillars of public administration: economics, effectiveness, and efficiency (Frederickson 1971; Gooden 2015). The fight for equity has proven to be a slow race, one that bears semblance to the old narrative of the tortoise and the hare; however, this book and its call to action give me hope that in spite of a slow race, public administrators will, ultimately, be victorious in the quest for equity.

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The Color of Law: A Forgotten History of How Our Government Segregated America

By Richard Rothstein. New York: Liveright Publishing Corporation, W. W. Norton & Company, 2017. 346 pages, hardcover.

Reviewed by Maren B. Trochmann, U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development

In 2020, amid a reckoning with the racial disparities of the COVID-19 pandemic and state-sponsored anti-Black violence, the Trump Administration terminated the Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing (AFFH) Final Rule (80 Fed. Reg. 42290, 2015). Then-Secretary of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Ben Carson asserted that “Washington has no business dictating what is best to meet your local community’s unique needs” (HUD 2020). In the new regulation (85 Fed. Reg. 47899, 2020), Carson’s HUD described the evolution of the AFFH obligation, outlined but undefined in the Fair Housing Act of 1968, noting the “aggressive” and “burdensome and costly” nature of the 2015 rule. They included a quote from a Congressional amendment to block the AFFH regulation which states, “Every American should be free to choose where to live, and every community should be free to zone its neighborhoods and compete for new residents according to its distinct values” (Lee 2015).

This seemingly uncontroversial and principled position for individual liberty in the face of government overreach belies a history of explicit *de jure* discrimination and racist government policy. Legal scholar Richard Rothstein outlines this history in his modern classic *The Color of Law: A Forgotten History of How Our Government Segregated America*. In this book, he demonstrates how housing policy has structured and proscribed communities’ and individuals’ choices, produced a lasting racial wealth gap, and created inequities in neighborhood resources. Rothstein (2017) asserts:

Today’s residential segregation[...] is not the unintended consequence of individual choices and of otherwise well-meaning law or regulation but of unhidden public policy that explicitly segregated every metropolitan area in the United

States. The policy was so systematic and forceful that its effects endure to the present time. Without our government’s purposeful imposition of racial segregation, the other causes—private prejudice, white flight, real estate steering, bank redlining, income differences, and self-segregation—still would have existed but with far less opportunity for expression. (vii–viii)

The book’s strength is its detailed descriptions of the multiple policy venues and tools that intersect with neighborhood segregation: government-subsidized public housing, local zoning ordinances, racially restrictive covenants, racially-motivated homeownership incentives, and tax policies.

Rothstein also uses powerful personal narratives, beginning with an account of Frank Stevenson, a Black man born in Louisiana in 1924 who migrated to the California Bay Area to work at a Ford Motor plant in Richmond in the 1940s. This story sets the tone for how, even in progressive enclaves, segregationist government policies—alongside the discriminatory attitudes of private citizens and companies—shaped long-term inequities for Black Americans.

The Color of Law begins not with the New Deal but starts from the “violent suppression of reconstruction after 1877” (75), drawing parallels through American history to the recent predatory lending of the 21st century, in which “excessive marketing of exploitative loans in African American communities [...led to the subprime mortgage crisis], an important cause of the 2008 financial collapse” (109). Rothstein traces this throughline in the intervening decades: from the propaganda campaign for single-family homes of the 1920s—directed at white, middle-class, male-headed households; the redlining maps to provide government-backed mort-

gage insurance and financial support only in segregated, white neighborhoods; to the local zoning ordinances, blockbusting, and “slum clearance” in which middle- and upper-class Black communities were destroyed.

While Rothstein does not use the explicit language of Critical Race Theory, his analysis centers an explicit racial justice framework necessary for equitable public administration (Blessett and Gaynor 2021; Riccucci 2022). Beyond the text of the law, policy guidance, or court decisions, Rothstein demonstrates how governments ardently strove to circumvent constitutional imperatives of the Civil Rights Amendments and judicial oversight to uphold their decisions rooted in anti-Blackness and racial animus. He demands that public administrators confront how government policy has been “culpable in creating and maintaining racist, white supremacist policies and institutions through which Black, Indigenous, and other communities of color disproportionately experience prejudice and discrimination and, therefore, inequities and injustices” (McCandless and Blessett 2022, 91).

One striking example, echoing Lee’s (2015) argument for community-led zoning reflecting distinct local values, was the federal policy guidance which sought to remain in line with the Supreme Court’s prohibition on racial zoning ordinances in 1917 (*Buchanan v. Warley*). The 1921 Advisory Committee on Zoning under the Commerce Department developed a manual to promote the adoption of local zoning laws that avoided *explicit* mention of their goal—“racially homogenous neighborhoods” (51)—while upholding segregation through “neutral” or color-blind tools of single-family zoning alongside a prohibition on more affordable multiunit developments anywhere within a community except adjacent to commercial or industrial zones. As Rothstein notes, “The advisory committee was composed of outspoken segregationists whose speeches and writings demonstrated that race was one basis of their zoning advocacy” (51). Rothstein’s legal examination and precise historical accounting reveal the public administrators involved in policy design and implementation. While he scrutinizes how the interplay of many stakeholders led to segregation and lasting inequality, the book’s strength is its focus on the role of the government in supporting, promoting, and upholding inequitable and unconstitutional policies both explicitly and tacitly.

Rothstein (2017) ultimately argues that “as cit-

izens in this [American] democracy, we—all of us, white, Black, Hispanic, Asian, Native American and others—bear a collective responsibility to enforce our Constitution and to rectify past violations whose effects endure” (xv). A potential critique is that, due to Rothstein’s focus on the systemic issues and federal policy failures, blame is so diffuse as to make individual action and choices seem inconsequential—or, at the very least, insufficient in the face of decades and centuries of government policy. His assertion that we must all “enforce our Constitution” feels amorphous and overwhelming without tangible individual actions that would, when taken together, accomplish such a feat.

Additionally, while Rothstein illustrates the multilayered complexity of housing policy, his focus on federal policy failures could be twisted in the service of arguments to *curtail* government action in the service of equity. Urban historian Destin Jenkins (2021) adds to Rothstein’s recounting of federal failures by demonstrating how private market forces—bondholders, bankers, and private equity experts—also shaped the urban landscape and manipulated local government officials in unjust ways. Jenkins underscores a weakness of this book, in asserting that a metanarrative of urban policy, which centers on federal public policy failures, is often twisted to pernicious ends. He notes that such an emphasis:

might prove a “gift” to the political right. Showing that public policies fueled the growth of the ghetto or the racial wealth gap between cities and suburbs could [lead to a...] project of austerity and privatization [which] has proven successful in part because the master narrative of urban history makes it difficult to demand the use of federal financial power to circumvent the local inflections of racism. (6)

Opponents have argued that new government interventions, such as AFFH, are “costly and burdensome” at best, and ineffective or even counterproductive, at worst.

This book offers public administration scholars, practitioners, and students a deeper understanding of how a history of explicit government-supported racist and unjust housing policy has shaped America’s inequitable, segregated present. In turn, it calls upon all citizens to correct the injustices of past policies. However, to do so, we must confront the counterarguments—including those for “local control” and against fed-

eral action—by applying nuanced lens and a *both / and* approach. Yes, governmental policies supported and created injustice, *and* the “distinct values” of local residents, private businesses, and corporate banking interests upheld prejudice. Both governmental policy *and* individual choices impact patterns of segregation and persistent inequities (Trochmann 2021). Federal policies undeniably contributed to the racial wealth gap and inequities in our communities today as Rothstein shows, and, as Rothstein rightly contends, the government and public administrators now have a constitutional duty to rectify these injustices.

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