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IRVINE

Diversifying Capitalism: Race, Value, and the Making of the Corporate Workplace After Affirmative Action

DISSERTATION

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DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

in Anthropology

by

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DEDICATION

To

My mom, Maria Isabel Arciniega,

My four sisters

and

Sean Daniel Graham

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2017 The Disastrous End for DACA Students and Workers. *Anthropology News* website, September 25.

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2017 Racial Projects: Classifying Racial Ambiguity for Equal Employment. *Anthropology News* website, June 26.

2017 Managing Hope after Affirmative Action. *Anthropology News* website, May 30.

2017 Notes on the Political Divide: Disentangling Antiracism from Capitalism. *Anthropology News* website, April 28.

2017 Six Ways Anthropologists Can Challenge White Supremacy. *Anthropology News* website, March 27.

2017 Diversity and Inclusion and the Rise of the Alt-Right. *Anthropology News* website, Feb 1.

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ABSTRACT

Diversifying Capitalism:

Race, Value, and the Making of the Corporate Workplace After Affirmative Action

By

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Doctor of Philosophy in Anthropology

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Professor Bill Maurer Irvine, Chair

This dissertation examines how diversity professionals create business value in and of diversity after the systemic dismantlement of corporate affirmative action policies. It traces the work of diversity professionals who produce business knowledge and organizational techniques, including management, economist, and psychology scholars, management consultants, corporate executives and board members, human resource professionals, middle managers, and newly minted diversity officers and Chief Diversity Officers. It draws on ethnographic research conducted from 2014 to 2016: on participant observation data acquired at a national diversity management firm and at over 50 knowledge-sharing events, on discourse analysis of business white papers and industry reports, and on interviews conducted with leading diversity-scholar experts, corporate managers, and diversity event coordinators. It finds that through scientific, economic, and racial reasoning practices, diversity professionals operationalize race and challenge racism within capitalist bureaucratic corporations. They do so, in effect, by aligning the production of antiracist ideologies and practices to the pursuit of profit.

INTRODUCTION

I spent lunch at the registration table with Victoria[1] while the volunteers ate lunch at a diversity awards ceremony in the summer of 2016. This ceremony was similar to many others others. Like others, it gathered corporate executives from the region to recognize diversity and inclusion efforts being conducted at small and large firms, the organizers gave awards to individual executives, such as Vice Presidents of large corporations, and senior managers for being advocates for diversity in the workplace. Usually organizers of these events invited celebrities, politicians, or well-known public figures as keynote speakers to bring in large crowds, likely spending over a hundred thousand dollars to secure their attendance.

This ceremony, in particular, took place at a large hotel and multinational corporation off the Fisherman's Wharf in San Francisco, California. The air outside was cold and crispy in June. We were all too happy to enjoy the warm glow of the sun that poured in from the glass roof in the event hall lobby. American D&I,[2] where I had volunteered from November 2014 to July 2017, both on-site and remotely, had reserved the large multi-room event hall on the bottom floor of the hotel. Aside from all the diversity coordinators and professionals speaking about taking time off for tourism, we would not have immediately known that we were in California. Inside, the hotel made differences in locations melt away: as in every other hotel event room, there was the same weird brown carpet, banquet tables with metal serving trays resting on top of heaters, metal chairs with same weird upholstery that matches the carpet, and round tables with that white drape and circular white plates (sometimes they are square plates, but not very often). This kind of hotel/fieldwork site remained consistent within and beyond events hosted by

[1] All actors, institutions, organizations, and places have been made anonymous to protect the confidentiality of research participants, in accordance with the Institutional Review Board's classification for Exempt Research.
[2] This is a pseudonym for the diversity firm where I conducted about half of my fieldwork research.

American D&I, the national diversity non-profit organization where I conducted half of my ethnographic research. Aside from corporate event halls, hotels make the perfect place for inter-organizational conferences, professional get-togethers, workshops, and trainings.

Awards ceremonies were also similar in format. People would have breakfast or lunch as speakers would lecture on the importance of diversity and offer their thoughts on contemporary politics. In between presentations attendees would flock to discussion panels or workshops. Rather than attend the programmed events, I sat with Victoria at the registration table mostly talking about office politics. That is when a thin Indian woman came running down the marble steps. The more she stared at us as she ran, the slower time passed by. She was beautifully dressed in a large one-piece weightless white dress, and it was also very obvious that she had been rushing for quite some time. She had sweat dripping from her face, large wet spots on her underarms, and she also looked worried. Once she was at the table she said in a recognizable Indian accent, "I'm here for the diversity conference. I'm the wife of an awardee. Where is the event?" I asked if she was already registered, and she said she did not know. I told her, "No problem, just write your name on this blank card." As she was writing her name down on the sticker to use as a name badge, I turned behind me to grab a pamphlet. By the time I faced the front she was already running towards the door. I said, "Excuse me, ma'am, here's the conference program," immediately regretting it. She turned back apologized, and said she just did not want to miss her husband receiving the award. I said, "OK, of course," and she disappeared through the double doors.

Minutes later Phyllis came outside to check up on the registration. She asked if we saw the wife of an awardee come running in. We nodded with no question about who she might be referring to. Victoria said that she thought she was "so cute," noting that she was really rushed to

make sure she didn't miss her husband receiving the award. Phyllis responded, "Oh no! She missed him by two people!!" Victoria and I echoed an "oh no" in disappointment. Then we realized we had not actually checked her in. We did not cross-reference her name with the list of registered attendees. Phyllis said that the she knew who the awardee was, because he had e-mailed her asking if he could bring his wife, and, if he could, if he had to pay the $500 for her registration. Since it was usually the case that the awardees' company pays for registrations, not the employees themselves, Phyllis told him not to worry about it, and that she could attend free of charge. He asked her, "Are you sure she can make it? She's traveling from far away." Phyllis recounted their answer: "She can try!"

After Phyllis was done telling us their story, I said, "That's really sad." Then, Phyllis re-assured me, "It's OK. I went up to them after and asked them if they wanted a picture together—They did." I sat there feeling moved by the wife's affection for her husband and the pride in her eyes. I recognized the emotional pull of receiving an award in the contexts of one's work. What I did not understand at the time was the purpose of the awards. I was also completely unaware of the metrics the coordinators and professionals were using in awarding the "top diversity leaders." However, then I recalled that one month earlier, I had heard a group of diversity coordinators discuss the promotion and logistics of an upcoming awards event. Eight coordinators and the supervisor, named Logan, discussed how they should determine the nominees:

Susan: Can we have "multicultural roundtable" [discussion panel] as nominees?

Logan: Yeah, as long as they haven't gotten an award in 2 years and meet the criteria.

Jackie: What's the criteria for nominations?

Logan: You have to be VP [Vice President] and higher, and have to directly impact the bottom line, increase profit for a company, and be a [stutters]—change agent.

[laughs all around]

Logan: Yeah.

Susan: Be a decision maker.

[laughs all around]

The conversation was coded. Logan had used the term "change agent," knowing that others would understand that meant "not a white male." Susan had said, "Be a decision maker," to more directly communicate that they needed to be in positions of authority, such as Vice President positions, Chief Executive Officers, and board members. Coordinators did not openly explain the meaning of these codes, yet it was common knowledge that if you were seen to "be diverse," as many characterized People of Color and white women, you qualified for an award. Despite this seeming superficiality, these awards were meaningful to those on the receiving end.

Beyond event planning, diversity management professionals are also consultants for middle-sized companies and multinational corporations. They are in most cases experts in business and auditors to everyday work processes. Yet, distinctly from other kinds of experts, in order to reproduce their work, income, and livelihood they need to make their case for their value. This entails creating a business case: the employment of economic reasoning and business logics to argue that a company needs to invest in any a product. In other words, diversity management scholars and professionals are always arguing, diversity is not just about "doing the right thing;" rather, it is about making money. Through a point-by-point analysis, they convince clients and audiences that read their publications of how organizational development techniques,

including mentorship programs, unconscious bias trainings, and employee engagement audits, are in the long-term economically beneficial.

In April of 2016, for instance, I spent two days with the Chief Diversity Officer, Jacqueline, for American D&I. She invited me to a regular monthly meeting she held with Chief Diversity Officers and human resource professionals. Similar to the ones American D&I held across the country, this one was scheduled during the week and at the lunch hour. She wanted me to take notes for her, and help her organize, and eventually a summary for a report that American D&I could use in sales meetings with Hollywood leaders. American D&I was looking to expand their markets in California. American D&I planned to advocate for the need for diversity events, workshops, trainings, and also their consulting services. Jacqueline and the other American D&I executives had singled out Hollywood, more specifically the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences, due to their recent negative publicity. Over lunch, Jacqueline and I discussed how celebrities, including Will and Jada Smith and Spike Lee, had and Twitter users helped promote a boycott of the Oscars, naming them "so white." In 2016 there was not one black actor nominated for leading or supportive roles in motion pictures. We also talked through the reasons why California needs diversity services. She identified key industries that also had problems of racial representation: film, technology, and healthcare. To wrap up the report, she said, "Add my quote, what I always say, 'Diversity plus Inclusion equals Innovation."

***

This dissertation examines the work of diversity professionals in corporate America in the 21st century, more specifically after the gradual and systemic dismantlement of federal and corporate affirmative action policies. Since the 1980s, corporate diversity professionals have claimed that diversity is not about federal compliance, but is a source of business value for the

multinational corporation. I show how concerns for upward mobility are given meaning through historical of racial segregation and the Civil Rights Movements, and how efforts to increase the rate of promotion for People of Color[3] and Women generally are complicated in the face of a globalized and virtual workforce. Thus, in examining how, at the intersections of economic, scientific, and racial reasoning (West 1994), on the one hand, and bureaucratic materiality, on the other, diversity management— and antiracism— is made valuable.

The kind of antiracism diversity professionals speak of is not concurrent with systemic racism or inequities (Gordon 1995). Rather, I have found that their definitions of antiracism operate exclusively through interpersonal frameworks. For instance, diversity professionals draw on psychologists' theories of unconscious bias, which presumes to explain that humans evolved to be afraid of the social differences they perceive. They also explain how humans innately and unintentionally create association-based categories, and that to overcome bias employees need education and workplace structure. For this reason, they draw on behavioral economists theories of "choice architecture" that explain how employees make economically irrational choices as a consequence of how their options are built into their environments (Thaler and Sunstein 2008). These ideas of bias and irrationality are critical for engineering of corporate cultures, and help operationalize workplace discrimination. Hence, diversity management abstracts and materializes race across space and time by aligning economic, scientific, and racial logics, as well as hopes for social and economic inclusion.

I employ the term diversity professionals in order to distinguish these corporate actors from Sara Ahmed's (2012) work on "diversity workers." That is, I focus particularly on how diversity professionals— which include business scholars, consultants, executives, event

[3] I use the term "People of Color" as a term "found" in fieldwork. It is a term, as I will later explain, that helps diversity professionals identify discrimination as a question of visibility, and that challenges the term "minority" as language that reinforces understandings of non-white persons as insignificant, not mattering, and powerless.

coordinators and planners, as well as diversity management firm directors— advocate for and create business value of diversity for the corporation. These are new corporate professionals, who work at the intersections of business and academia to produce what Nigel Thrift (2005) has termed "soft capitalism." More specifically, they are at the forefront of engineering a kind of antiracism that is valuable for capitalism. Since the late 1990s, management experts and non-expert business professionals have worked to incorporate diversity into corporate business strategy — in contrast with affirmative action policies, which were previously the domain of human resource departments. Increasingly, they do this by aligning concerns with racial representation among corporate leadership with profit maximization.

The goal of this dissertation is not to condemn or praise management. Certainly much has been written in anthropology about how corporations are capable of governing and producing new subjectivities, and particularly within management studies of how new managerial techniques offer employees new scales of choice. Rather, with an attention for agency, materiality, and temporality, I aim to: (1) demonstrate that diversity management has reconfigured antiracist organizational practices after affirmative action; (2) reframe scholarly and public theories that racialization is a consequence of American projects of exclusion; and (3) advance a relational analysis of racial projects that extends our understanding of business cultures and capitalism, within and beyond the corporation.

Diversity of Thought, A Business Strategy

Over twenty years after the passage of the Civil Rights Act, the Hudson Institute, in collaboration with the United States Department of Labor and the RAND Corporation, published a 1987 report titled, *Workforce 2000: Work and Workers for the 21st Century*. Hudson researchers predicted that by the year 2000, 61% of all women would be in the workforce— a

historically high number— and that women would be entering "traditionally male occupations," such as those requiring degrees in higher education. These demographic trends, the researchers argued, indicate that benefits offered by employees would begin to change according to market demands posed by a new "kind" of employee. They argued that single mothers would have different employee-benefit needs compared to married men from single-earning households. Hudson researchers also showed that, in the late 1980s, Black and Hispanics populations were overrepresented in occupations projected to decline over the years, such as manufacturing, and that employees in these demographics would need workplace education and training in order to participate in the economy of the future.

As I learned from numerous interviews, many diversity consultants attribute the emergence of the contemporary diversity management field to this report. I term those that remember the influence of the Hudson report as pioneering diversity experts. Many of them that I interviewed in 2016 have had decades of experience publishing in peer-reviewed organization journals and have written books on the topic of diversity. One consultant, James, characterized the Hudson Report as, "A book that just got everybody's attention." He said, "[It] was pretty compelling about the facts that they were projecting. [It had a lot of] applications for the workforce and a lot of business executives… were talking about this. It was timely [because] that force of change was [already] happening." James also referred to the fact that the federal report coincided with corporate professionals' own lived experiences about the changing demographics of the workforce, the rise of media portrayals of multiculturalism in the 1990s, and the already prevalent sexual harassment and discrimination trainings in the corporate workplace.

Macy, another pioneer scholar-practitioner, said,

> "It was like a threat, it was definitely like a threat. It was sort of: you are going to have to use these people, so you're going to have to figure out what to do with them. The labor force was going to be more diverse; the labor market was available to… women and minorities. I think it did come out as a threat. You could see that interest start rising and looking for ways to address that diversity."

Diversity professionals recalled how they could use such as document to persuade employers to adopt new policies and practices to integrate women and minorities into the workplace. In light of the Hudson report's predictions, pioneers of diversity management reasoned that organizations needed training in cultural sensitivity and sexual harassment, new human resource programs, and mentoring and sponsorship initiatives through which women and minorities could learn institutional knowledge, be advocated for, and ultimately climb "the corporate ladder."

The Title VII of the Civil Rights Act outlawed the end discrimination on the basis of race, sex, religion, color, and national origin, and through Executive Orders 10925 and 11246 Presidents Kennedy and Johnson Presidents mandated federal contractors to take affirmative action to do so. This meant funding hiring, retention, and training programs from historically marginalized groups. Yet, neither Executive Orders defined affirmative action or the term discrimination, making these mandates difficult to interpret and uphold. Additionally, through the 1980s and into the 1990s, federal efforts at administrating racial integration had begun to be dismantled. For instance, Presidents Reagan, Bush, and then Clinton cut staffing and funding at the EEOC, reducing the capacity for administrative enforcement of the affirmative action mandate and equal opportunity laws. This gradual dismantlement coincided with the rise scholarly and administrative arguments that affirmative action increases workplace efficiency

(see Kelly and Dobbin 1998). Since the 1980s, diversity management has drawn on the logics of business and economics, while maintaining a concern for racial and systemic discrimination.

From 2001 to 2018, the literatures on how diversity impacts capitalist profits have burgeoned. The findings have ranged from suggesting that knowing how to manage employee diversity in results less organizational conflict and more productive organizations, because employees benefit from learning about others' perspectives (Ely and Thomas 2001), to studies that correlate representation of racial minorities and women to financial outcomes (Richard, Murthi, and Ismail 2007). Regardless, corporate practitioners increasingly agree on one thing: attempts to address racial discrimination need to be integrated into the business strategy. Otherwise, Rohini Anand and Mary-Frances Winters (2008) argued, history shows that diversity programs can fail both economically and socially, creating bad employee morale and loss in resources.

The financial and bottom-line perspective on diversity has taken the shape of arguments for "diversity of thought" and "diversity of perspectives," alongside a public discourse that claims to address all differences equally through "inclusion." For instance, the argument for diversity that diversity of thought creates creativity and innovation, often builds on Scott Page's (2007) influential work, which demonstrated through mathematical models how teams with different intellectual trainings outperform expert, but similarly trained, teams. To illustrate his findings, Page posed and answered a question: What happens when you run out of ketchup? If an American needed ketchup, they would attempt to substitute it with something liquid and likely refrigerated. A European would likely look for substitutes in the pantry first. Page argued that diversity helps people innovate, because given their personal backgrounds and upbringings, people strategize problem solving differently. Hence, when engineering new ketchup substitutes,

the logical conclusion, Page argued, was that Americans would envision a product with mostly liquid ingredients, whereas Europeans would be more likely to incorporate powders and solids. Thus, diversity management does not only produce more efficient processes, it creates the conditions for innovation. Page's metaphor about diversity and ketchup eventually became popularized in podcasts, business magazines, and in trainings.

Expanding on Page, in 2016 Mohamed El-Erian, an accomplished economist, became a New York Times best-selling author with the book, *The Only Game in Town: Central Banks, Instability, and Avoiding the Next Collapse.* In it, he argued that diversity enables businesses to anticipate organizational and economic crises and to grow despite and through political and economic uncertainty. This is because, he argued, having a diversity of perspectives based on diverse life experiences brings more and new forms of expertise to the table. Within diversity management, much of the business and economic scholarship, as well as the consultant practice, entails constructing a "business case" that defines the value in diversity and operationalizes social difference within corporate bureaucratic institutions. In effect, this is how management consultancies create and reproduce their markets as experts of business.

Racial Capitalism, Multiculturalism, and Managing Difference

From studies of settler-colonialism and slavery to contemporary multiculturalism, the value of labor is at the core of debates on capitalism and racial capitalism. I build on scholarly debates with concerns for how capitalist value is produced through the management of labor. Much of this scholarship extends the work of Marx's theory of surplus labor, which reveals an essential truth to capitalist means of production. This is that capitalists "must so replace [wages] that, as a rule, there remains to him a surplus above the cost of production expended by him, that is, he must get a profit" (Marx 1902, 45). Capitalist value is derivative from the total amount of

labor required to manufacture and deliver commodities and services. Yet, in order to produce capitalist value, or more specifically capital accumulation, labor must be necessarily exploited.

Where scholars of racial capitalism depart from Marx is on the topic of whether capitalism has been the great equalizer of the working class and whether it has a capacity to "abstract labor." On this question, Cedric Robinson (1983) has proven that both race and labor have been mutually constituted, since before the transatlantic slave trade. In defining the term racial capitalism, Robinson showed that "racism and nationalism both anticipated capitalism and formed a piece with those events that contributed directly to its organization of production and exchange" (1983, 9). Slavery in the Americas— as one of the most egregious and violent forms of racialized order and management of labor— did not signal a new phase of capitalism. As Robin D. Kelley later phrased it, "slavery was common sense"[4] as it had already existed in other forms and been proven to work in Europe through the segregation, enclosure, and management of cultural and linguistic differences, nationalities, and ethnic differences. Thus, capitalism has only ever benefited from and reproduced regimes of inequality, including race, gender, and class inequity.

This debate is critical to the study of race and business management as it reframes the debate from how management capitalism learned to exploit race to how capitalism and race have always been mutually constituted. In other words, within those studies that examine labor and production, many have examined how management has exploited differences across racial groups to increase efficiency and productivity. Most notably, this has included the work of David R. Roediger and Elizabeth D. Esch (2012), wherein these scholars showed that since American colonial slavery, management professionals were experts of value production. In order to

[4] Robin D. Kelley, 2017. "What is Racial Capitalism and Why Does it Matter?"

maximize capital, managers imagined and re-configured "race" in numerous and often-contradictory ways: as a form of biology, skin color, dress, accent, residences, and other ways of creating difference (2012, 9). Racial groups, they argued, were turned against each other, ranked, and slotted into particular job categories according to their presumed racial abilities. This was also the case throughout the scientific management revolution in the organization of labor, which purportedly standardized managerial practices across the workforce.

The idea that race is characteristic of capitalism in and of itself, rather than emergent from capitalist expansion in colonial America, is critical for examining how diversity management gains value and is reproduced as business discourse. That is to say that what is at stake in this dissertation is not how capitalism has learned to use race, but how both racial and economic reasoning intersect to produce new organizational knowledges, practices, and ways of working and living. In this case, diversity both addresses managerial concerns over workplace efficiency and productivity, and enables speculative opportunities for economic growth and corporate bureaucratic planning. As Jodi Melamed (2015) posed, diversity and multiculturalism is one of the most recent configurations of racial capitalism, and as such, necessitates our attention. However, I am less concerned with what diversity management succeeds or fails to do, than with how it operates and is productively circulated and reproduced, and what we might learn from these organizational ideas and practices to create anti-racist and anti-capitalist ways of working and living.

Scholars of multiculturalism and diversity make distinctions between "grassroots" movements and diversity management as a corporate project (Gordon and Newfield 1996). Corporate diversity as multiculturalism, Avery Gordon and Christopher Newfield (1996) argued, "often avoid race. It designated cultures. It didn't talk up racism. It didn't seem very antiracist,

and often led the impression that any discussion of cultural diversity would render racism insignificant" (1996, 3). As such, multiculturalism challenged colorblindness by claiming that all differences mattered, while neglecting to discuss racism. Diversity has been seen, as Chandra Mohanty wrote, as "benign variation" that "rather than conflict, struggle, or the threat of disruption, bypasses power as well as history to suggest a harmonious, empty pluralism" (Mohanty 2003, 193). Diversity management, as such, while it purports to address institutional problems with discrimination, they also perpetuate systemic exploitation across race, gender, and class (Ahmed 2012; Alexander 2005; Mohanty 2003; Davis 1996; Gordon 1995).

In the corporation, scholars have largely emphasized how diversity is tied to regulation. Many of these studies have worked on the assumption that differences are managed generally, without regards to the specificity or historicity of race and gender. Diversity management "dishistoricized culture, race, and gender in order to offer *management* itself as the instrument for organizing differences." (Gordon and Newfield 1996, 6). Diversity management, Gordon (1995) argued, is the "major modality by which [corporate] culture becomes a mode of governance" (1995, 3). This power was evident in the production of cultural values, meanings, rules of behavior, and ways of being in the corporation. Further, anthropologists of diversity have shown that these knowledge practices aimed to enhance the capacity of workers for working in order to increase human capital (Urciouli 2016). Outside of the workplace, diversity logics have also been employed for the production of new commodities (Ahmed 2012; Shankar 2015). Moreover, as part of national discourse, concerns over diversity as racial representation in corporate and federal governance positions has enabled the reproduction of U.S. power abroad and legitimized war, deportation, incarceration, sexual harassment as these issues go largely uncontested when people of color are in power (West 1994; Rosa and Bonilla 2017).

This dissertation both confirms findings posed by feminist critiques of diversity management, and challenges some assumptions. Distinctly, I show the conditions for the operationalization and productivity of diversity management as a field of business expertise, and how these knowledge practices are changing in an information-driven economy. I examine how diversity professionals enact their work, how they imagine their role in the corporation and in society at large, and how they reproduce their field. In doing so, I examine how people "work through the institutions of money and machines, not against them," reproducing diversity management as capitalist discourse (Hart 2005, 13). I show how a large part of diversity professionals' decisions in pursuing diversity work is reasoned and how concerns with racial discrimination are linked to business imperatives, primarily as a way to create sustainable antiracist practice. This is driven, I show, by a felt commitment to change structures that have historically remained "white," specifically because these professionals have a commitment to antiracism that shapes how they view social differences in the corporation. My work shows how the logics of antiracism employed in the corporation is not about liberal colorblindness (Gordon 1995), but that race and racism is both named as such and that diversity professionals and white-collar workers regularly connect with a historical racially segregated past and present, narrating stories of Jim Crow, as well as their own personal experiences with discrimination.

In particular, in this study of diversity management, I examine how the last thirty years have been characterized by collaborations between corporations, non-profit organizations, and the government to socially engineer a workforce that is accepting of difference. Their collaborative projects have become formalized in academic journals, business magazines, podcasts, and commercials circulated through old and newly created knowledge-sharing venues, such as in *Forbes, BusinessWeek, Harvard Business Review, and Deloitte University Press,* and

national conferences, such as those planned and executed by the *Forum for Workplace Inclusion*, *Catalyst, Inc., National Diversity Council* and *Diversity Inc*. These collaborations are opportunities for re-imagining the relationship between business, race, and antiracism. More specifically, I suggest that an analytic of negotiation enables us to examine how racial capitalism is generated through inclusion practices created and implemented by management professionals. This is both a methodological and analytical framing, that asks not only how through projects of inclusion, individuals are excluded, but how through the inclusions of differences, bureaucratic processes are audited, differences are made material and abstract, and as Ferguson wrote (2012) the possibilities and limitations for political actions are radically transformed.

Capitalism, as Robinson argued, is not "natural," but its appearance as natural is part of the ways in which it is reproduced through "development, organization, and expansion" of a bourgeois practice and social ideology along racial directions. Thus, this dissertation draws inspiration from anti-capitalist feminist anthropology's "gens approach" as a "concerted strategy to reveal the constructedness— the messiness and hard work involved in making, translating, suturing, converting, and linking diverse capitalist projects—that enable capitalism to appear totalizing and coherent" (Bear et al. 2015).

Business, Economic Sociology, Feminist Substantivism

In examining new developments in contemporary capitalism, Thrift highlights the role of the "cultural circuit of capitalism" to produce capitalist discourse, in the Foucauldian sense of the term (2005, 5). This circuit, Nigel Thrift (2005) argued, is evident in the intersection between business and academia, which create productive organizational knowledge and techniques through business schools, management consultants, management "gurus" and the media. More specifically, the kind of business discourse they create is one that critiques capitalism in order to

improve it. This "reflexive" capitalism, hence, has created new forms of worker engagement that prioritizes emotion, personalization, and connection.

This dissertation examines this current managerial landscape where corporate executives, middle managers, management consultants are engaged in collaboration to create better business practices. This means that across organizations these corporate actors are constantly traveling, attending meetings, conferences, and workshops. Building on science and technology scholarship and a concern for examining the production of epistemic practices, I examine the tensions and productivity of diversity professionals' collaborations and how these produce "emergent 'evolutionary' or 'learning' strateg[ies] that [are] 'necessarily incremental and adaptive" (Thrift 2005, 43). This has critical implications for how capitalism is generated through corporate epistemic practices, and for an anthropological examination of networks, value production, and inter-organizational discourse production.

Anthropologists working within a tradition of economic embeddedness have long been interested in exploring how actors' social relations, obligations, and perceptions impact their economic actions. Within this empirical approach scholars have studied household economic decisions in production and consumption (e.g. Yanagisako 1979; Zelizer 1994) and resource allocation and exchange practices (e.g. Bohannan 1955; Guyer 2004). These studies have prioritized analyzing how economic actors reason in social and moral ways.

In the last twenty years, anthropological studies of capitalism have tended to examine capitalism as a condition, rather than examine how it is continuously generated (Maurer 2013; Bear et al. 2015; Peterson 2014). Of those concerned with its generation, anthropologists have drawn productively from scholarship at the intersection of economic sociology and science and technology studies. Bruno Latour, in particular, has been influential in building a theoretical

framework for examining how markets are performed. Michel Callon (1998) has built on his work in proposing that we should investigate how "economics, in the broad sense of the term, performs, shape and formats the economy, rather than observing how it functions" (2). Performative notions of the market suggest that actors abstract, frame, and calculate and that these are ways of achieving value (Muniesa 2014; Beunza and Stark 2004; Peterson 2014). As such, this body of scholarship points to *agencements* or market devices that organizes human and non-human action around shared understandings and projects, whereby materiality influences what decisions actors can and cannot make (MacKenzie et al. 2007; Callon and Law 2005).

This understanding of economic markets as "performed," rather than performativity à la Butler, refers to "operational knowledge, reflexive modernization, performative utterances, effects of science, theatricality of practice" (Muniesa 2014, 7). Since the early 2000s, and particularly after the Great Economic Recession of 2008 in the United States, anthropologists have sought to examine how financial actors do not merely work within cultural contexts or operate according to cultural logics (Maurer 2013). Instead, anthropologists of finance have interrogated how the economic actions of actors, such as financial brokers and hedge fund investors, are entangled with values and politics and shaped by the technologies they engage with, as well as questioned how these practices are productive for the reproduction of financial capitalism itself (see for instance, Zaloom 2006; Ho 2009; Riles 2004; Stout 2016).

Yet, anthropologists working in the tradition of feminist substantivism have critiqued the aforementioned social scientists of the economy that assume the economy is made through logical and rational actors (Bear et al. 2015). Rather, feminist substantivists highlight the abundant scholarship produced by feminist anthropologists who have since the 1980s inquired into how capitalist values are learned, negotiated, and enacted. From Silvia Yanagisako's (2002)

study of Italian firms, which showed that families employed and played on desires and emotions to enroll in productions of capital, to Karen's Ho (2009) Wall Street ethnography, feminist substantivists within anthropology have demonstrated that corporate cultures have been critical for the reproduction of capitalist values and practices. Following this line of concern, my dissertation examines how diversity professionals make diversity valuable to business. They do so, I suggest, by negotiating scientific and economic reasons with histories of American racial exclusion and civil rights struggles for racial integration. More than producing corporate efficiency, diversity professionals point to the production of new capitalist values, which are redefining possibilities and limitations for social justice in a post-Affirmative Action Era.

Semiotics of Race

American anthropological concerns with racial representations are traced as far back as colonial expedition journals and Enlightenment classification systems, and arguably to the emergence of the discipline of anthropology itself (Goodman et al. 2012; Goldberg 1993; Haraway 1997). Currently, anthropology continues to be at odds over how to best study race and racism. At the end of the 1990s, the reasons for the split seemed evident: the political implications over race as a social construction. Steven Gregory and Roger Sanjek (1994) have suggested that the positions that anthropologists have taken towards race— that it is "not-real" and socially constructed— have limited our ability to study how race is operationalized. As Mukhopadhyay and Moses have noted, while this has resulted in a robust scholarship in identity and ethnicity, maintaining a "no-race policy [that] has really been a policy of no discussion of race by either physical or cultural anthropologists" (1997, 520-521).

Following Kamala Visweswaran (1998), who observed that despite race not being "real" is nevertheless operative and productive, I point to how race is used, interpreted, and

circulated— because of its observable signification— in ways that enable business management to restructure employment, and the corporation itself. Thus, extending a recent interest in anthropology to take into account the relationship between agency and materiality, I suggest that a semiotics of race is productive for the examination of how the body mediates human and non-human action and how these practices reproduce value and histories. This, I suggest, grounds linguistic and cultural anthropological concerns over how race operates in the social world.

More contemporarily, race has been examined under concerns for the politics of representation, wherein individuals are represented alongside specific kinds of social and cultural meanings and values, which in turn result in the marginalization of entire communities (e.g. Chavez 2008; Dávila 2001). Here, my focus is on representation, but I am less concerned with how representation is inscribed onto material objects and given meaning, and more concerned with how the body as a material presence is taken as already representative of racial, ethnic, and gender categories. More specifically, I am concerned with the semiotics of race, beyond symbolic meaning of racial bodies, I ask: how do bodies channel certain shared meanings and understandings, and how does this process of signification influence corporate actors' actions?

As Sara Ahmed (2012) has written, diversity is not a shared object and as such it is difficult to understand what anyone means by the term. Yet, diversity is coherent, because it is semiotic. Rather than a concern with signs and their meaning, I ask how race is made and operated as a sign that is bundled with social and economic values. One of the few studies of race and racialization that challenges the Saussurean semiotic framework is Elizabeth Wissinger's (2015) study of black models in New York City. In her work she showed how casting directors employed black models, finding that certain racial bodies were classified as "types" of modeling professional conventions: "exotic," "London beat," "brown-skinned

Bollywood," "black-black-black," and "All-American preppy." These casting types were determined according to qualities in appearances, including skin color, age, gender, ethnicity, and even hairstyle. Hence, she argued, in order to obtain work as a model, prospective models need to have "aesthetic knowledge about the semiotics of [their] skin" (2015, 230). Doing so would enable these individuals to perform their "type."

Rather than a Saussurean framework of sign/signified, which correlates roughly to an object being ascribed a meaning, Charles S. Peirce examined signs as part of a triadic system that allows for objects and meanings to be studied in relation to actions. Peirce's semiotic relationship has been represented as a triangle that links all three parts of the sign system. For example, if one wanted to understand race and racism as part of Peircean semiotics, one could take the materiality of the body as a sign, which is bundled with meanings and expectations, and as such compels one to respond with action. In drawing on Peirce, Elizabeth Wissinger (2015, 2012), for example, showed how race enables the reproduction of specific kinds of aesthetic labor that is racial, semiotic, and performative.

This dissertation examines how race is operated through moral and economic values as a sign. To do so I draw on Peirce's framing of qualisigns, as "A quality which is a sign… [and which] cannot actually act as a sign until it is embodied" (1985, 7), and on the anthropological interest in examining qualisigns within a system of value-making (Munn 1985; Keane 2003; Shankar 2015). As "a quality is a mere logical possibility" (Peirce 1985, 19), it only gains meaning when it is "bundled" with other qualities and meanings. Qualisigns, hence, only exist in their material reality in relation to other things. For example, Webb Keane (2003) presents the idea that a little girl likes the color "red," yet the color red does not exist in the world by itself, except when it is embodied on other things like an apple, a toy car, a dress, etc. Each one of these

items are similar, but they are different: they each, for instance, have their own textures, memories, and emotions.

We can understand race as a qualisign. Shalini Shankar (2015), for example, argued in a study of advertisement firms that "diversity is bundled with other qualisigns of race, ethnicity, or simply non-whiteness, as well as with certain uses of language varieties, accents, and other signs, to make meaning in specific ways" (2015, 18). She continued, "What constitutes diversity in corporate America, who embodies it, and what work it is imagined to do among ad executives and in advertisements draw attention to the complexity of this concept as well as how this complexity can be reduced to better fit corporate ideals and norms" (18). In her study, conceptualizations and meanings of race, ethnicity, and diversity were interpreted by specific representations, such as in education, home decorations, and accents. These shared-understandings of racial and ethnic representations were then employed in creating new representations, that is, advertisements, to sell commodities. In this dissertation, I am less interested in how representations of any particular race or ethnicity are made, than in how certain bodies in corporate workplace are seen as indexes of historical discrimination, and how these influence how diversity actors engage with bureaucratic materiality, form relationships, and provide meaning and significance to their work. In reference to the everyday bodies we see, particularly in institutions long coded as "white" and "male," racial representations are bundled up with ideas of social justice, fairness, and equity.

A study of the semiotics of race must take into account, I suggest, not only non-whiteness as visible, but whiteness as well. Analytical binaries of white/black reproduce the notion that whereas black is visible, whiteness is invisible. Although much has been

written with regards to appearing white as a form of passing,[5] I draw inspiration from critical studies of whiteness to challenge this dichotomy and to propose that whiteness is also a qualisign. Richard Dyer (1997), for instance, has argued that to take whiteness as unmarked is a counterproductive intellectual framing. He said, "As long as race is something only applied to non-white peoples, as long as white people are not racially seen and named, they/we function as a human norm. Other people are raced, we are just people" (1997, 1).

Certainly, whiteness is visible in diversity management, suggesting a need to revisit not only how and if white people are represented semiotically, but how their visibility is operated and why. These semiotic processes, I suggest, reveal what Cedric Robinson (2007) has termed "racial regimes." He wrote,

> "Racial regimes are commonly masqueraded as natural orderings, inevitable creations of collective anxieties prompted by threatening encounters with difference. Yet they are actually contrivances, designed and delegated by interested cultural and social powers with the wherewithal sufficient to commission their imaginings, manufacture, and maintenance. This latter industry is of some singular importance, since racial regimes tend to wear thin over time" (Robinson 2007, xiii).

Thus, I ask, how are racial regimes actively managed and challenged in the everyday work of reproducing capitalism through business and management?

[5] Scholars of racial passing have emphasized how when non-white persons are able to appear or "pass" as white, they are awarded certain societal privileges, including being less likely to experience interpersonal and systemic discrimination. Origins of "passing" are traced back to the ability of certain black slaves to escape by dressing and appearing to assimilate into white culture (Hobbs 2014; Pease 1996; Star and Bowker 2001).

The Politics of Knowledge Production

Diversity professionals debate and agree on how to produce value of diversity. As such, one cannot ignore the politics implicit in these processes of discourse production, expert-non-expert engagement, and the role of materiality for producing coherences. First, we need to account for the institutionalization of "diversity of perspectives," which I suggest is evidence of the at least partial success of standpoint theorist feminism. Despite its controversies, standpoint theory has become institutionalized into the methodologies of various industries, particularly as experts have vouched for the value in perspectives derived from different ways of having lived in the world (Harding 2009). In the study of organizations, scholars have explicitly claimed that standpoint theory helps management scholars and practitioners understand how the organization is not race or gender neutral, rather they argue that these institutions privilege whiteness, masculinity, and heteronormativity (e.g. Harris 2017; see also Acker 2006; Nkomo 1992). The study of diversity management, hence, cannot be examined without taking into account the intersections of academia and business.

Within studies of expertise, anthropologists largely agree that experts have the power to produce knowledge and with it value (Haraway 1997; Latour 1987; Silverstein 2006). Yet this body of literature has approached these social and political concerns differently, and can largely be distinguished between cultural and linguistic approaches. For instance, cultural anthropologists have drawn inspiration from Foucault (1976) to examine the relationship between power and knowledge, and the production of discourse driven by institutions of power, including science and the state. Linguistic anthropology, on the other hand, has examined how expertise is authoritatively enacted (Carr 2010). Studies of enactments of expertise examine how

interpretive frames are constructed to create authoritative knowledge over "less-than scientific" objects like aesthetics, beauty, and taste.

Therefore, I build on ethnomethodological scholarship to examine how materiality and scientific and economic reasoning intersect productively. This approach has long advocated for the situational and contextual specificity of truth claims and fact making (Garfinkel 1967; Lynch 1991; Latour 1987; Goodwin 1994). For instance, in coining the term "ethnomethodology," Harold Garfinkel (1967) referred to the investigation of the rational properties of indexical expressions and other practical actions as "contingent ongoing accomplishments of organized artful practices of everyday life" (1967, 11). Garfinkel explored how expert and routine activities were organized, including legal knowledge, psychiatric clinics, and organizational records in the workplace. The point was, he argued, to examine those practices and rationales by which competence is accomplished. They "obstinately depend upon, recognize, use, and take for granted," these competences in work and expertise, he said, and "*that* they take their competence for granted itself furnishes parties with a setting's distinguishing and particular features, and of course it furnishes them as well as resources, troubles, projects, and the rest (1967, 1, emphasis original). In other words, competency is telling of the conditions by which expertise is produced, and this is not exclusively measured by technical skills. Ethnomethodological approaches allow us to examine how intangible things like discrimination and experience become relevant and productive for more tangible and measurable projects, such as profit.

As a form of expertise, diversity work has evolved into a field of business management geared towards the restructuring of everyday processes in the corporate workplace. The politics of knowledge production are perhaps best illustrated by the work of management consultants. More specifically, corporate employers regard business management consultants, such as

diversity experts, to be objective and to have externalized standpoints (Ho 2014). Corporations employ consultants to provide unbiased assessments of cultural and accountability practices, as well as bureaucratic procedures, even if they already have a diversity professional on staff. They employ them as auditors to evaluate, standardize, classify, and circulate knowledge practices of "inclusion." Through claims for more transparency and more efficiency, corporations employ these experts and their practices, creating new routines for the workplace (Strathern 2000a; Bowker and Star 2000).

More recently, Actor Network Theory (ANT), as an approach, has made order an object of analysis. As Annemarie Mol (2010) has written, ANT "plays" with terms such as "coordination," "order," "actor," "network," and "theory." ANT scholarship avoids the essentialization of objects by drawing from materiality, sensorial, and discursive dimensions of signification (Keane 2003), as well as on pragmatic approaches. Yet, ANT emphasizes translation, which feminist scholars have critiqued in favor of "conversion." Rather than limiting the scope to analysis to how margins of objects and concepts are negotiated, feminist scholars argued that things take meaning, become actualized, and collectively mobilized to generate new social conditions (Bear et al. 2015). By drawing on ANT and practice theory scholars, this project asks, how are diversity management practices enacted, reinforced, and challenged, and mobilized? How does this process produce social categories of deservingness and attention? In a post-Affirmative Action economy, I contend that diversity management as exemplary of scientific-economic practices within business cultures take as critical for its reproduction the evidence of experience (Scott 1991). These knowledge production processes abstract race through experience and re-materialize it in narratives of discrimination, bringing the history into the present through their own and others' memories of racial segregation.

Research Methodology

In the Spring of 2014 for a research methodology course, I drew on my personal experiences with diversity programs in the academy, first as an underrepresented student in a Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) major at the University of California, Berkeley and later as an underrepresented graduate student in the Social Sciences at the University of California, Irvine. I recalled workshops and trainings that I attended as part of professional development geared for women and Persons of Color to conduct a literature review on diversity management. Soon, through reading white papers and industry reports, I encountered that a business school and organizational development discourse had developed around difference: racial, gender, and ethnic differences were discussed as a business value. The literature was debating whether organizational diversity correlated with financial returns. I also encountered a plethora of scholarship, including the most recent literature review on diversity management titled, *Diversity at Work: The Practice of Inclusion*, by Bernardo Ferdman and Barbara Deane, which argued that the historical limitation to diversity was a failure to take into account the value of inclusion. In other words, more diversity leads to economic benefits in terms of employee engagement and innovation. Yet, diversity practices have to address the biases and behaviors that create feelings of exclusion at work.

In August 2014, I had attended the Academy of Management meeting in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania to survey the discussions on diversity. I obtained a student membership to AOM, and enrolled in the Gender and Diversity in Organizations section. I began to do preliminary interviews with diversity scholars who were being awarded for their contributions to business management, organizational development, and human relations. As I acquired more of a theoretical grounding in the scholarship, I also began to attend diversity events near my

hometown of Los Angeles, California. These events were varied in form: they were multicultural roundtables, career fairs, workshops, and conferences. Almost always participation entailed being an audience member or sitting in a small group and having conversations about why we were interested in diversity work and how we have felt at various times included or excluded. The times that we were not having these conversations, we were strategizing on how to share institutional knowledge with women and Persons of Color interested in a corporate career: how to dress the part, how to negotiate a contract, and how to gain mentors and allies. I decided to keep my data collection anonymous— despite the wishes of some of my research subjects who would have liked being named— in order to avoid being inadvertently affiliated with political factions, to gain permission from corporate organizations to observe their consultants, and to avoid showing preferential treatment in my research. I am sure that at least some of my interlocutors will one day read this manuscript.

Then in the fall of 2015, I met the founder of American D&I— a diversity management firm that hosted workshops and events across most states— at a regional conference on diversity in San Francisco. I had already attended several of the events this organization organized, and had met diversity workers from various companies and educational institutes who had given me insight to design this research project. I saw him sitting in the lobby working on the computer and I approached him hoping to gain access to his organization. I introduced myself as a graduate student in anthropology who was researching diversity management and who was fully funded by a University of California fellowship (at the time, before I received Wenner-Gren Foundation funding, I had the Eugene Cota-Robles dissertation fellowship). I asked if I could volunteer at American D&I in exchange for conducting fieldwork research, and he agreed without hesitation. We signed a Memorandum of Understanding stating as such.

Generally, diversity management professionals and scholars were excited to engage with me. Some approached me with suspicion. Those in the latter group let me know that they did not trust that I would represent them accurately or that I would air the dirty laundry. While on the phone with one business school faculty member, whose work entailed researching the financial effects of having a more racially diverse Board of Directors, he made it clear that engaging with diversity management was about finding solutions to problems. It was not— he said explicitly referring to feminist scholars— "merely about critiquing." Yet, despite of my insistence that I was there conducting ethnographic research for my dissertation, some were eager to engage with me hoping that I would learn how to become a diversity management professional. They pointed to the large number of retiring persons that had been influential in shaping the field and to the small number of young people entering it. That is all to say that in the process of conducting this work I had to carefully negotiate myself as an anthropological researcher and a diversity management professional "in the making." My research interlocutors certainly did not hesitate to point out my lack of management knowledge, shortcomings in case-solving, and my faux-pas in assuming that corporate clients outwardly cared about anything other than the bottom line. I conducted ethnographic research in diversity management from the summer of 2014 to the summer of 2017.

In February of 2016, I moved to the city where American D&I was headquartered, and was onsite for slightly less than six months. During this time, I was gaining more exposure to consultant projects and began to travel extensively; hence, I relocated to pursue archival research at the Harvard Business Library and continued to participate in consultant projects and to interview diversity professionals for the rest of the year. At American D&I, I shared a cubicle in an open-concept office from nine in the morning to five in the afternoon Mondays to Thursdays.

I compiled reports and white papers on diversity created by non-profit organizations, multinational corporations, and independent research groups. Executives at American D&I, in particular, were interested in documenting "best practices," that is, standards for diversity shared in the field. I also collaborated on a report on racial and gender demographics, and provided feedback on questionnaires American D&I researchers had developed. Every so often companies would call asking about consulting services and I would ask to shadow employees on these assignments. Often this meant listening to conference calls as consultants and researchers collaborated on designing trainings and I assisted consultants with proof-editing materials, printing, and the day of, with carrying materials and co-facilitating presentations. While consulting work did not always entail client visits for trainings, in 2016 one did and I signed a Non Disclosure Agreement, but was still allowed to conduct ethnographic research for my own dissertation work. My interviews were conducted in three phases: preliminary data interviews conducted in 2014, at the end of my stay at the headquarters of American D&I with American D&I specific employees, coordinators, and consultants, and after an extensive time spent with various consultants from Summer 2016 to March 2017.

As a complement to my fieldwork, I conducted extensive archival research. This was divided into two areas. The first was a contemporary archive that I built. This showcased diversity management industry reports, white papers, and scholarship. I kept updated evidence of the business benefits of diversity, as well as case studies of good diversity practices, benchmarks and other standards for achieving diversity progress. At times I offered this research to American D&I as the organization also kept their own archive for their members, albeit theirs was limited to the last five years. The second was a historical archive I visited in the fall of 2016 at the Harvard Business School's Baker Archives. There I gathered information on the historical

changes in diversity management and the management of race in corporate organizations. I worked in the organizational collections of Lehman Brothers for their 1990s diversity management trainings, Polaroid Corporation's for their 1960s and 1970s Affirmative Action processes and reports, and the Western Electric Company Hawthorne for their 1940s interracial conflict management processes. I also researched the personal collections of Elton Mayo, Fritz Roethlisberger, and Chester Barnard as pioneers of the fields in administration and human relations.

Organization of the Dissertation

The following dissertation chapters are divided into three parts and are organized around the negotiations, mediations, and operations of diversity management. Chapter 1 and two examine the role of bureaucratic materiality in reproducing knowledge over diversity across corporate and organizational settings. Chapter 1 focuses, in particular, on the Employer Information Report, (EEO-1, where EEO stands for Equal Employment Opportunity), as a way to track racial integration progress year to year, and on its meaning to contemporary diversity work. It finds that outside of any one organization, diversity researchers employ the racial categories of the EEO-1 and channel its historical meaning in classifying and categorizing business executives and board of directors according to race. Chapter 2 focuses on the statistical representation of these racial classifications for public and scholarly consumption. I show how diversity professionals employ these representations to highlight to the lack of non-white diversity in corporate leadership positions, and how they effectively bring in concerns with historical racial exclusion and channel their own affective dispositions towards creating better and more inclusive futures.

Chapter 3 examines the tension between competition and collaboration frameworks in diversity management by analyzing the ways in which diversity professionals measure progress according to rankings or scorecards. I draw parallels in the study of corporations within corporate anthropology between ranking and scorecards. Whereas through the former the corporation is imagined as bounded and as subject to market demands, the making and operationalization of scorecards by diversity professionals suggests that the corporation is also an unbounded entity, wherein middle managers collaborate with consultants, stakeholders, partners, and clients. Chapters 4 and 5 examine the racial economy of diversity management. In chapter 4 I analyze the finding that overwhelmingly diversity professionals explain their commitment to their work as a means to "pay it forward," attributing such affective dispositions to their personal experiences with racial and gender discrimination. In chapter 5 I analyze how white individuals gain credibility as diversity professionals and experts by performing antiracist sincerity.

As suggested by the title, this dissertation is a study of capitalism as always in the process of being generated, particularly within the world of business management. It is through managerial practices that include the classification of employees, the ordering of documents, the creation of metrics and benchmarks, the redistribution of corporate resources, and the reorientation of collective interests that corporate bureaucracies are made and performed. This, I show, entails the coordination of a wide range of actors, including diversity consultants, human resource professionals, middle managers, and executives. Critical to understanding how and why diversity management has grown as a field of expertise is an ethnographic acknowledgement for how these "diversity professionals" imagine their work in relation to their personal subjectivities. In other words, I find that through diversity management work, diversity professionals negotiation their personal commitments to creating class mobility and social and economic

inclusion for historically marginalized communities with the scientific and economic logics necessary to reproduce everyday business. This, in effect, reveals how antiracism as ideology and practice, which operates on definitions and frameworks of interpersonal bias, is made safe and productive for capitalism.

CHAPTER 1

Documenting Equal Opportunity:

Racial Classification and the Pragmatics of Race

Introduction

On a walk through the rows of old brick homes and towards the newly developed white-facade shopping center, I complained to Mary Jane[6] about the many Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO-1) forms that I had to sift through at work. She laughed and said that those forms that ask for race or ethnicity are suspicious. She asked me, "Why do they want to know that? What are they going to do with it?" Rather than wait for me to respond, she said, "Nothing, except they'll probably discriminate against me." Then with a laugh she said that she selects "All of the above" on the EEO form. As I began to doubt the truth-value behind the EEO-1 data I was compiling, I asked her why. That's when she said that she was not lying: "[I'm] probably factually correct. My background is from everywhere." I nodded, and revealed that I fill out the "Latino" or "Hispanic" category in case I qualify for diversity fellowships or scholarships. She laughed again, saying, "Now that's true! When I was in school I did fill out that! I am Black, Black, Black."

Racial categories are fluid, contested, and always changing (Dávila 2001; Rodriguez 2000; Shankar 2015). In the last ten years, The American Anthropology Association has sponsored and promoted a United States national public education project that highlights race as a social construction that derives from a pseudoscientific system of classification and that has real consequences (e.g. Goodman et al. 2007; Sanjek and Gregory 1997). In effect, race is both

[6] All names of persons and locations are pseudonyms.

an object of modernity as well as consequence of the historical ordering of labor (Goldberg 1993; Haraway 1997; Robinson 1983; Ho 2014; Brodkin 1998; Reich 1981). Despite their instability, racial categories are critical for the reproduction of diversity work. Rather than examine race as a formation subject to politics, economics, and social ("macro") forces (Omi and Winant 1994), I aim to understand how race as a social classification category is always in the process of making at the intersection of human and non-human action, emphasizing in particular the bureaucratic materialities that shape what is possible and impossible (Riles 2006).

This chapter is about the pragmatics of racial classification and the instability and operationalization of racial categories within labor bureaucracies, including within the corporation. First I provide a background into the Employer Information Report (EEO-1), which in 1967 became a federally-mandated means by which to assess racial integration across the United States workforce, in relation to a theoretical framework that draws on science and technology studies and actor-network-theory to examine bureaucratic materiality's role in shaping understandings of race. Second, I provide a history of racial classification in the documentation of labor after the transatlantic slave trade in the colonial and post-colonial Americas. I draw attention to the Spanish *castas* and its influence in the development of the United States Census. In the second section of this chapter, I turn to ethnographic data and interviews to examine the role of these documents in the representational work of diversity professionals, that is, in organizing events and writing reports.

Since the Hudson Institute's 1987 report "Workforce 2000," research on racial and gender demographics is commonplace, especially within organization and management studies (e.g. Mizruchi 2013; Lau and Murnighan 1998; S. K. Horwitz and Horwitz 2007). Racial demographics consistently highlight five major racial and ethnic categories in the United States:

White, African-American, Hispanic/Latino, Asian-American, and Native American. These racial categories are critical for the organization and execution of diversity events. I define as diversity events as social gatherings wherein the participants share a common concern for increasing the organizational value of diversity. I examine how in planning for an event or writing reports, event coordinators and employment researchers create representations of diversity. They do so by assigning corporate employees to one of the five racial categories found in the U.S. Census or EEO-1 document. Through an analysis of the making and presentation of diversity, I find that diversity professionals understand race and racism in corporate America by "seeing" difference, which reinforces a definition of racism as a matter of interpersonal discrimination. While these practices, I argue, hold diversity professionals accountable to the materiality of race and spirit of affirmative action, it is also this appeal to the visibility of race that operationalizes race within capitalist bureaucratic procedures.

Donna Haraway (1992) wrote of race as a "material-semiotic" construct, highlighting "the object of knowledge as an active part of the apparatus of bodily production" (1992, 299). Here, I follow in the scholarly tradition of examining the agency of materiality— of the body and those objects wherein the body is represented— and how these representations operationalize race in corporate bureaucracies. Bureaucratic documents, I show, operate as intellectual pivots that generate diversity expertise and operationalize collective imaginaries, holding them in tension with the past. This argument speaks to an anthropological concern with the dismantling of race and racism; an understanding that race is socially constructed is insufficient to eliminate legacies of racism. Perhaps this is because, as Annemarie Mol (2014) has written, we have given the "'maker' too much credit."

The EEO-1 and Bureaucratic Materiality

In 1967, The Office of Federal Contract Compliance Programs OFCCP) created the Employer Information Report EEO-1) as a means to implement the 1964 Civil Rights Act. The OFCCP intended that the EEO-1 would enable the government to examine demographic trends on race and gender on a yearly basis across the United States. Such trends would then be analyzed by experts, including statisticians and economists, and used for legislative and policy change. The original EEO-1 document faced public scrutiny, because at first it only reflected Black and white populations. Hence, within a few years the EEO-1 used the racial categories developed by the U.S. Census Bureau Prewitt 2013). Over the next twenty years, it became common practice for human resource personnel to observe and racially classify employees to comply with federal policy. Before the use of surveys, the U.S. government encouraged employers to use their own sight and previous knowledge (or assumptions) they had of their employees to racially classify them. Then, through the 1990s employers began to use surveys to solicit employees to identify themselves. Since then, racial classification responses have been documented in the EEO-1 form, according to a list in occupations presented hierarchically from service workers to executive managers.

Affirmative action policies and federal mandates, Pamela Laird (2006) noted, were drafted with the goal of creating fair workplace processes by institutionalizing standardized and formalized bureaucratic procedures. This included the creation of job ads, succession plans, and a plethora of new measurement and tracking systems in relation to employee retention and promotion. As with other affirmative action measurements, the EEO-1 has enabled an understanding of employment demographics, and hence, has been used to determine the allocation of corporate resources, assess— according to race— employee engagement,

participation, and promotion statistics. They are also employed in making and challenging of legislative and political claims of discrimination.

Scholars of the American Census have characterized the 1960s as fraught with scholarly and public debates on population enumeration and classification. After a series of accusations by demographers, suggesting an undercount of Black populations, in the 1950s and 1960s the Census Bureau conducted evaluation surveys following the Census count (Anderson and Fienberg 1999). Demographers correlated the numbers acquired through Census methods with birth records to compare for numerical completeness. In a series of 1969 lectures, Naomi Rothwell, a researcher with the U.S. Census Bureau's Statistical Research Division, revealed that minority populations "were either unreported in enumerated units or were not reported in any place they stayed" (Rothwell 1969, 314). While Rothwell said that Census Takers— those who visit personal homes to collect population data— would receive additional training, she underscored the possibility that minority groups did not want to be counted, citing non-white population mistrust of the government, avoidance of landlords, and cultural disinterest.

Margo J. Anderson (1988) wrote that from the 1970s to 1990s, the Census was re-tooled as a "high-tech" instrument with the collaboration of statisticians, demographers, political scientists, and Hispanic and African-American lobbying groups. These collaborations occurred as the U.S. Census Bureau faced over fifty lawsuits charging the Bureau with "improper and unconstitutional methods of counting," (Anderson 1988, 191). The alleged unlawful methods outlined in these lawsuits were numerous, and problematized the categories employed by the Bureau, as well as how the Census Taker determined race. For instance, to complete the question of "race or color" in the 1970 Census form, the Census Takers were instructed to "fill in blanks by observation," and to change subject's responses of "Chicano, LaRaza, Mexican American,

Moslem, or Brown…to White, while Brown (Negro) would be considered as Negro or Black" (Gauthier 2002, 77).

Racial and ethnic categories on the Census changed almost every decade between 1970 and 2010. For example, by 2010 the Census prompted individuals to fill out the Hispanic/Latino category in a separate question from other racial categories, asking instead a question about "origins" that listed as options, Not of Hispanic/Latino origin, Mexican/Mexican-American/Chicano, Puerto Rican, and Cuban. Cristina Mora (2014) has shown how these ethnic and racial categories have been the product of collaborations between government bureaucrats, the media, and activists. She argued that at different historical periods, these actors have employed the ambiguity of the Hispanic category to achieve political and economic gains. This included fervent educational campaigns to increase the number of Mexican Americans, Cuban Americans, and Puerto Ricans who consider themselves as "Hispanic" for speaking a common language, simultaneously excluding Haitians who spoke Spanish, but were black. In studies of how Hispanic and Latino populations interpret such Census options, Rodriguez (2000), showed how individuals negotiate their racial meaning and enact a fluid identity in everyday life.

In order to achieve accurate representation and responding to public and political criticism, the Census Bureau convened experts and public opinion to create racial and ethnic categories. In 1993 the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) conducted workshops with the National Academy of Sciences, convened public hearings, and appointed a committee for the review of racial and ethnic standards (Snipp 2003; Prewitt 2005). While the end result was presented as a "two-question format" that asks for Hispanic/Latino identification before asking individuals about race, the racial categories continue to derive from the 18th century "five" races (Lee 1993). Advocates of these revisions argued that these changes in the format and content of

the racial/ethnicity questions more adequately reflect the population of the United States and facilitate a process of completing the Census form by self-identification. On the other hand, critics, including former Director of the U.S. Census Bureau and political scientist Kenneth Prewitt (2013), question whether these changes have resulted the Bureau's deviation from the original purpose of employing racial data, which is to document and eliminate discrimination. Critics like Prewitt have argued that bias is largely a result of observation, not self-identification, and as such, asking individuals to self-identify with a racial and ethnic category may not yield accurate data on the state of discrimination in the United States. While Bureau's method of documenting race is increasingly complicated, Prewitt argued, it is also less effective; the Census accounts not for discrimination, but for "statistical races" based on ancestry, identity groups, and Hispanics/Latinos as— a soon to be— racial category (Prewitt 2013, 202).

Mandated by the federal government, in corporate America, employers use the EEO-1 document to document and enumerate employees according to race and ethnicity. Since the 1960s, employers in the United States have depended on the labor of human resource professionals and management consultants to use these forms in everyday work. These management professionals complete, analyze, and interpret the EEO-1 to various ends, including in the preparation for litigation and in the creation and management of employment processes. For instance, administrators, executives, and management experts use them to monitor mentorship and sponsorship programs, develop succession plans, and facilitate the allocation of resources and employment benefits. The EEO-1 plays a critical role in the restructuring of white-collar work. Thus, I draw on the anthropology of bureaucratic materiality, which is attentive to how mundane, routine—and often boring—bureaucratic documents structure our lives (Riles 2006; Latour 1986).

Section D-EMPLOYMENT DATA

Employment at this establishment – Report all permanent full- and part-time employees including apprentices and on-the-job trainees unless specifically excluded as set forth in the instructions. Enter the appropriate figures on all lines and in all columns. Blank spaces will be considered as zeros.

Job Categories	Number of Employees (Report employees in only one category)														
	Race/Ethnicity														
	Hispanic or Latino		Not-Hispanic or Latino												Total Col A - N
			Male						Female						
	Male	Female	White	Black or African American	Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	Asian	American Indian or Alaska Native	Two or more races	White	Black or African American	Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	Asian	American Indian or Alaska Native	Two or more races	
	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O
Executive/Senior Level Officials and Managers 1.1															
First/Mid-Level Officials and Managers 1.2															
Professionals 2															
Technicians 3															
Sales Workers 4															
Administrative Support Workers 5															
Craft Workers 6															
Operatives 7															
Laborers and Helpers 8															
Service Workers 9															
TOTAL 10															
PREVIOUS YEAR TOTAL 11															

1. Date(s) of payroll period used: _____ (Omit on the Consolidated Report.)

Section E - ESTABLISHMENT INFORMATION (Omit on the Consolidated Report.)

1. What is the major activity of this establishment? (Be specific, i.e., manufacturing steel castings, retail grocer, wholesale plumbing supplies, title insurance, etc. Include the specific type of product or type of service provided, as well as the principal business or industrial activity.)

Section F - REMARKS

Use this item to give any identification data appearing on the last EEO-1 report which differs from that given above, explain major changes in composition of reporting units and other pertinent information.

Section G - CERTIFICATION

Check one
1 ☐ All reports are accurate and were prepared in accordance with the instructions. (Check on Consolidated Report only.)
2 ☐ This report is accurate and was prepared in accordance with the instructions.

Name of Certifying Official	Title	Signature	Date
Name of person to contact regarding this report	Title	Address (Number and Street)	
City and State	Zip Code	Telephone No. (including Area Code and Extension)	Email Address

All reports and information obtained from individual reports will be kept confidential as required by Section 709(e) of Title VII.
WILLFULLY FALSE STATEMENTS ON THIS REPORT ARE PUNISHABLE BY LAW, U.S. CODE, TITLE 18, SECTION 1001

Figure 1.1: Employer Information Report Sample Page, 2017. *U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission*, website. Accessed June 16, 2017.

EEO-1 documents have a role in influencing the business management practice of diversity. Recent anthropological studies of bureaucratic materiality have examined how documents structure and channel agency and relationships (Hull 2012b; Riles 2006, 2001). Documents, as "intellectual technologies" (Latour 2005, 76) are, as Matthew Hull (2012a) described, "mediators that shape the significance of the signs inscribed on them and their relations with the objects they refer to" (2012b, 253). Bureaucratic forms that require the filling in of racial categories do not determine agency nor are they passive receptacles of culture. Rather, documents that present racial labels are active, often creating conflict for those completing the forms (Lee 1994; Rodriguez 2000). In effect, studies of the Census reveal the fallacy assuming that individuals will self-identify with their visually-perceived or "scientifically determined" ancestry. How an individual chooses to complete a form, rather, is informed by things like what categories are available on the form, how the form is structured, such as, if one can tick off more than one box, and generally, its perceived purpose (Reed 2006). These variables suggest that racial forms, rather than exclusively an apparatus through which the state creates subjects, are objects through which action is channeled and made productive in specific projects, and create intended and unintended consequences.

In particular, as a form of bureaucracy, the EEO-1 motivates and structures action. Much like a summons, which the court issues to compel an individual's presence, engagement with an EEO-1 document unfolds into an enactment of certain kinds of procedural rules (Yablon 1990). With the words "You are hereby summoned," a summons reveals its power to coerce action and their authority, which is displaced. In the 2017 EEO-1, instructions like "Report Employees in Only One Category," followed by a breakdown of race and ethnicity groups, convey that same sense of authorized action, and hail the subject in similar ways. They require employees to be

categorized by one – and only one— category, despite the complicated and multiple ways in which individuals may identify themselves, as Mary Jane showed in the opening vignette. Mandatory forms, such as these, suggest that there is no "outside" to our engagement with bureaucratic and legal documents. Therefore, whether through self-identification or by observation, racial classification is always done through the distribution of agency; it is hardly a question of individuals "choice" (see also Hickman 1997).

Post-Colonial Racial Categorization

Deborah Thomas (2013) has argued that anthropological theorization of race in Latin America and the United States has maintained that race is distinctly constructed, relying on an analytical framework that regards each as a consequence of nation-building projects that were either inclusive or exclusive. These have led to different forms of categorizing race in the Americas. While in Latin American countries, scholars have pointed to the prominence of the racial categories, *blanco, indio, negro, or mestizo,* in the United States racial categories have drawn on knowledge over ancestry, geography, and identity. In this section I highlight the overlap and similarities in the employment of racial and ethnic categories in managing labor in the colonial Americas.

Castas and the Ordering of Colonial Labor

In his influential work, Cedric Robinson (1983) situated the emergence of contemporary racial thinking and formations to the extension of capitalism to the Americas, particularly with the West's attempt to manage and exploit labor in its colonies. Robinson wrote that the racial order of 19th century slavery was not new; instead, "racialism and its permutations persisted, rooted not in a particular era but in the [European] civilization itself" (1983, 28). While

Robinson argued that the transition from feudalism to capitalism was driven by the bourgeoisie's political and social struggles in their transition from an aristocracy to a mercantile class, he contends that this process was already antagonized by racial, linguistic, tribal, and regional differences. Racial thinking and labor segmentation, hence, was critical to the making of Europe. These politics, social and cultural standpoints, and ideologies were also critical for the expansion of markets and exploitation of overseas labor.

Once in the Americas, new colonizers and Spanish royalty developed the *encomienda* system to organize available laborers to extract natural resources present in the Americas. As part of its colonial project, the Spanish Crown gave Spaniards free labor— entire indigenous populations— and were excused from tribute obligations in exchange for their efforts in indoctrinating indigenous people, making them into colonial subjects. They exposed indigenous people to the Spanish language, the Christian faith, and to disease. They also exploited them to such a degree that by 1542, the Spanish Crown made their enslavement illegal, fearing that their labor would be completely depleted. Over the following years, the Spanish replaced enslaved indigenous peoples with African persons, and their numbers eventually exceeded them. Beyond labor scarcity, newly globalized ideas of racial thinking based on geographical origin, a physical capacity for work, and perceived relationships to God came to justify the transatlantic slave trade. Proponents of slavery learned to value African labor differently, including Ferdinand of Aragon who had become convinced that "one black could do the work of four Indians" (Robinson 1983, 129).

Such newly emerging forms of organizing labor necessitated bureaucracies. For instance, in a study of 16th century colonial Peru, Irene Silverblatt (2004) described how the Spanish Inquisition developed and used systems of racial thinking to complement the *encomienda*

system, justifying torture through bureaucratic processes. She identified two models of racial thinking for the classification and categorization of persons, particularly in relation to their perceived defiance of the Spanish Crown. The first was based on the "one drop of blood" rule where race was used "as a whole cloth" suggesting individual membership to a group according to ancestral line (Silverblatt 2004, 124). Through blood purity laws, for instance, this model was employed to exclude Portuguese-Jewish merchants as potential traitors to the Crown as they were ethnic groups that did not share a Spanish religion. The second category of racial thinking created fractions or percentages of "stained blood," drawing on knowledge of indigenous or black ancestry held by individuals. This latter form created differential forms of indebtedness to the Crown, for instance, one with more indigenous or black ancestry would be taxed to greater extent, and have less social privileges than someone with more Spanish blood.

To be recognized by the Spanish Inquisition tribunal, Irene Silverblatt (2004) claimed, individuals defined themselves within the order of "*casta y generación*:" as Indian, Spanish, or African, or a combination of these categories. Yet, these categories in practice were anything but fixed, as the bureaucrats intended. For instance, Guaman Poma de Ayala, an Andean nobleman and well-known writer, argued for the humanity of indigenous people and against racial mixing. In advocating the latter, he argued for the widespread employment of lineage certificates to enforce social and occupational boundaries according to race. Without these documents, he exclaimed, "'how…can we know if someone carries the stain of…Jewish [blood], or Moorish, or Turkish, or English' or 'if he is a peasant…[or] a nobleman'" (Silverblatt 2004, 131-132)? Over the next century Bishops, bureaucrats, and lawyers used royal decrees, religious texts, and writings by other similarly positioned experts to create lineage manuals and *castas*.

Figure 1.2: José de Paéz, "De Español e India Produce Mestizo," *Mexican Castas*, 1780.

By the late 19th century, for example, Mexico had as many as 53 different *Castas de Mestisaje*, which were ordered and enumerated. The larger *casta* categories of *Mulato* (Black and White), *Mestizo* (White and Indian), *Zambo* (Indian and Black) were broken down into various combinations to define the social and occupational standing of their interracial offspring (see **Figure 1.2**). These categories were broken down into sub-categories such as *Puchuela* (White with an Eighth Indian) or *Limpios* (White with White), which had rights to nobility (Loveman 2014, 65; Jaramillo Uribe 1967). And, as I will explore in the next section, these categories – or their functional equivalents— were also used in the 18th and 19th century in the United States.

The enumeration of these populations groups within household or state census in Latin America was necessary for the extraction of resources (Loveman 2014). Citing historian, John Lombardi, she said, "The problem in America in the early years when the basic elements of the reporting system were established was never a lack of natural resources to exploit but the availability of human resources to do it." (Loveman 2014, 50; citing Lombardi 1976). State bureaucracies employed *castas* as technologies to maintain the order of labor. Through these they imagined race as ancestral, but where skin color was not exclusively representative of ancestry. In other words, *castas* were not based on the visibility of skin color alone; rather, dress codes, taxation duties, and legal documents were employed to both understand racial differences and to maintain an ordered society, wherein different racial *castas* were assigned to distinct forms of labor.

Yet, these categories were unstable. Norman E. Whitten (2007) showed that within families these "culturally constructed racialized 'types' (the phenotypes) were so far from genetic make up that each of a couple's six children might be categorized as being in a different *casta*" (Whitten 2007, 359). Silverblatt characterizes what ensued from this bureaucracy as a "typology of looks," wherein the public attempted to make sense of these physical characteristics in reference to their social positioning and "'objective' scale of humanness" (2004, 126). As the *casta* system disappeared from everyday use, racial categories became "fixed" as *indio* and *negro*.

The management of racial labor depended on bureaucratic processes, and on additional technologies, including that of branding and population counts. For instance, records of bills of sale for slaves in sixteenth century Mexico reveal that enslaved African people were individually identified in documents with their tribal origin, sometimes their skin-color, but almost always the

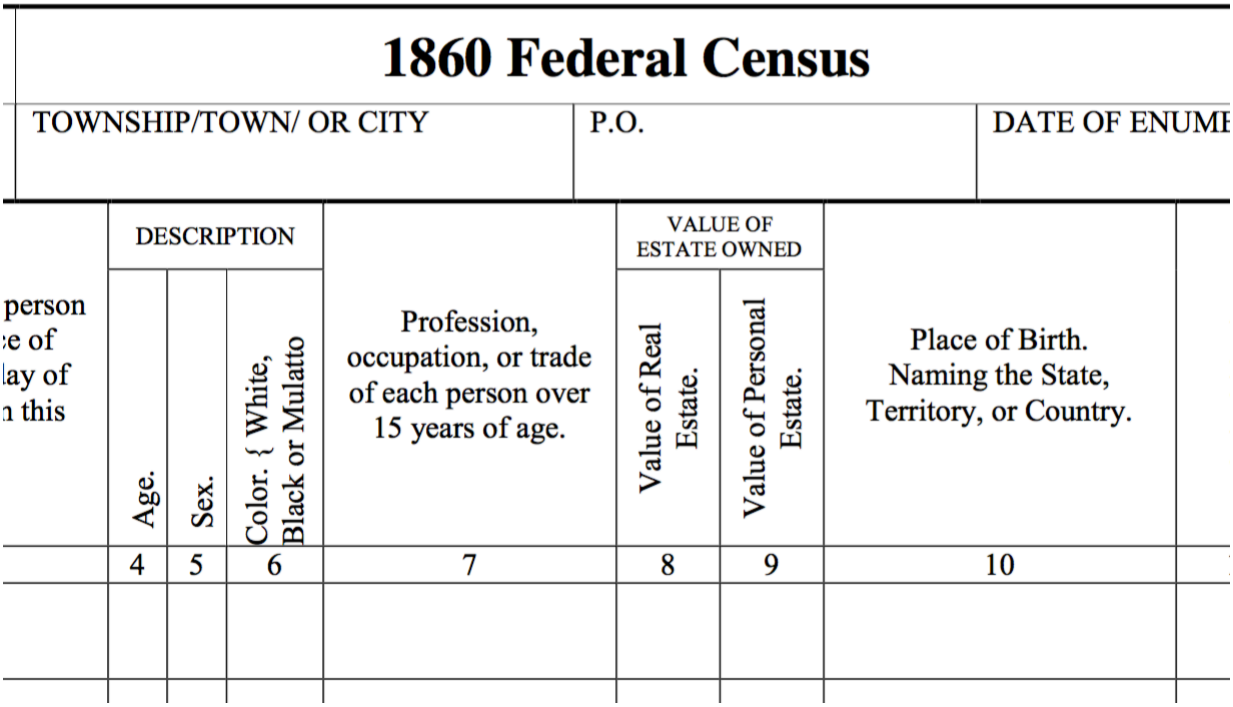
brands on their skin, which denoted them as property to a named Spaniard. These reflected their slave owners' initials, unless they were recaptured slaves who had run away. The latter were "branded with their current owner's surname right on the forehead or neck, to make future escapes more visible" (Boyd-Bowman 1969, 139).

The Census and Labor in the United States

Almost three hundred years after the beginning of the trans-Atlantic slave trade, the United States declared its independence from the Kingdom of Great Britain. Doing so entailed the creation of new laws, and the creation of two Constitutions, the second of which in 1789 granted the government power of taxation and the first President of the United States of America. One year later, the American Census was implemented to address immediate concerns over legislative representation, taxes, and resource distribution. With the Census emerged a national practice of classifying race according to categories of White, Black, or Indian, although the latter was first only acknowledged in the instructions to Census Takers (Gauthier 2002). The history of how racial categorization changed in the Census over time reveals how race was naturalized in ways that were integrated into the expansion of capitalism, that is, through pseudoscientific racial justifications for labor exploitation.

Slavery produced economic benefits to plantation owners, and was also at the heart of the debate about how to pay the post-American Revolution national debt. Before there was the Three-Fifths compromise of 1787, Robin Einhorn (2006) wrote, the United States had been over $42 million dollars in debt. In 1776, as the Continental Congress discussed how to distribute tax burdens across the colonies, Einhorn wrote, the debate with regards to slavery was settled through silence: "Thomas Lynch hit the ceiling on behalf of his South Carolina constituents, 'If it is debated, whether their Slaves are their Property, there is an End of the Confederation'" (2000,

159). In 1777, Congress adopted the Articles of the Confederation, which stated that state taxes would be determined by real estate value. After ten years of this "wildly unworkable approach to taxation" – real estate after the war was far from valuable— the infamous Three-Fifth's compromise, which accorded slaves as three-fifths of a free person when determining representation— resolved the issue over taxes and electoral representation.



1860 Federal Census

TOWNSHIP/TOWN/ OR CITY	P.O.	DATE OF ENUME

person e of ay of this	DESCRIPTION			Profession, occupation, or trade of each person over 15 years of age.	VALUE OF ESTATE OWNED		Place of Birth. Naming the State, Territory, or Country.	
	Age.	Sex.	Color. { White, Black or Mulatto		Value of Real Estate.	Value of Personal Estate.		
	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	

Figure 1.3: 1860 United States Federal Census. *National Archives*, website. Accessed March 21, 2018.

The Three-Fifth's compromise also sedimented the necessity for a national population count and its classification (Cassedy 1969; Wright 1900). For almost two hundred years, those employed to carry out the Census survey completed the form through interviews and by observation. Until the 1860s, the Census documented White persons, and Black persons: enslaved and freed. In the years immediately before the enactment of the 1863 Emancipation

Proclamation, which outlawed slavery, the category of "Mulatto" emerged in Census forms (see **Figure 3**) accompanied by the instructions:

> "It must not be assumed that, where nothing is written in this column [#6. Color], ''White'' is to be understood… Be particularly careful in reporting the class Mulatto. The word is here generic, and includes quadroons, octoroons, and all persons having any perceptible trace of African blood. Important scientific results depend upon the correct determination of this class" (Gauthier 2002, 13).

In a history of racial categorization in the Census, Kenneth Prewitt (2013), former Director of the U.S. Census Bureau and a political scientist, wrote that these "scientific results," were linked to slavery abolition debates. These debates were defined by an era in which the West was fascinated with ocularcentrism, the search for knowledge, and was experiencing colonial anxieties over human difference. Hence, by 1890 the Black population was sub-categorized into Black, Mulatto, Quadroon, and Octoroon, (i.e. full-black, half-black, one-fourth black, and one-eight black), in order to examine the scientific and medical effects of miscegenation. Legislators, medical doctors, and civic members used population demographics alongside cranial measurements to predict the mental stability or instability of Black populations if they were to be freed. They argued that freed Black persons were more likely to be poor, "insane and idiots" (Prewitt 2013, 49-50). Up until the Civil War, pro-slavery arguments posed in Congress aligned with Enlightenment logics and rationales to produce human inferiority in such a way that justified slavery as an economic resource.

By 1900 the sub-categories for Black persons disappeared, which for Sociologist F. James Davis (1991) meant that treating race through the logics of hypodescendence (or the one-drop-rule) had been effectively institutionalized. Many scholars have written (see for example

Omi and Winant 1994), that after the dismantlement of slavery, this "rule" was widely employed in legislative and governmental policies to limit federal resources and civil rights to non-White populations. Those that were visibly white often employed strategies of "passing,"[7] which awarded them the privilege of improving their social and material conditions. For example, in an examination of the classification and documentation of race in apartheid South Africa, Geoffrey Bowker and Susan L. Star (1999) revealed that race is both inscribed in and escapes classification in documents intended to maintain segregation. To obtain better opportunities, including housing and schooling, subjects passed as White, but at a cost as they had to adjust their biographies and relationships, often leaving families behind (Bowker and Star 1999, 223).

The racialization promoted by the Census channeled resources for a specific population group, Whites, and operated through a larger system of hierarchized segregation. This shift to naturalize differences, and by extension their social positioning and order of labor, was in effect, operative of capitalism at the turn of the twentieth century. Capital accumulated through the justification of wage differentials across race, as David Roediger (1991) has argued, as well as by maintaining a racial order within the working class. It also maintained a distinction between working-class and those of the professional class. As I will expand later, diversity professionals and researchers regularly make the case that little has changed. This is despite the impact of the 1960s Civil Rights Movements' political activism and federal government legislation in challenging, as Pamela Laird (2007) highlighted, a "white man's business world" (2007, 211).

Many scholars have noted that nations were built in Latin America to center *mestizaje* as a core identity, particularly as a challenge to the West's racializing projects that characterized them as incapable of modernizing (Loveman 2014). Yet, to understand anti-black racism, contemporary understandings of race in Latin America highlight that while race cannot be

[7] While the scholarship on "passing" is significant, I do not focus on these debates here, see Ginsberg 1996.

understood through American analytics of the one-drop rule (de la Cadena 2001). By examining the productivity of a racialized bureaucratic materiality, I aim to challenge the analytical division between cultural and biological frameworks for understanding race. Instead I propose an examination of how bureaucratic materiality enables the operationalization of race increasingly through claims of racial visibility and racial transparency. That is, racial documents, such as the EEO-1 and post-colonial Censuses, enable race to be "seen" and visions of antiracism to concurrently operate in capitalist bureaucratic processes.

Assigning Race

"If any employee declines to self-identify, employers may consult with employee-provided information when on-boarded or the employer may use visual observation."

U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, 2017 "Fact Sheet for EEO-1 Survey Filers."

Between January and July 2016, I conducted participant observation research at American D&I, a large national firm that hosts diversity events and consults for Fortune 1000 corporations. I also spent over two years shadowing and interviewing consultants, human resource professionals, and event coordinators. I wrote an industry report on diversity demographics in multinational pharmaceutical companies, and edited two more— one on the Oil and Gas industry and another on Fortune 1000 companies— in one of the most populous states in America. Through these reports, we conducted an assessment of the racial and gender demographics per company and compared these statistics to those of their competitors and to the averages in their industry. The idea was that once published, these classifications could compel managers at other companies to incorporate diversity management programs and practices, and that to do so they might consider employing American D&I.

Diversity management consultants are auditors. As Karen Ho (2014) has written, corporations have increasingly employed consultants, valuing their external subjectivity to the corporation and their purported objective expertise (see also Strathern 2000b). In order to effectively intervene in corporate restructuring, auditors of diversity receive EEO-1 forms through public relations departments and surveys. When this data is not available, however, some resort to constructing their own EEO-1 data, classifying specific corporate employees according to race.[8] Others who plan events on diversity also create their own racial classifications in order to represent the diversity they claim to value. For example, while I was conducting participant observation at American D&I, I shared a cubicle with two coordinators. I was able to observe two coordinators, "Susan" and "Stanley" while they organized, planned, and executed hundreds of diversity conferences and workshops across state and country lines, in particular, by classifying and categorizing business executives according to race. More specifically, they planned and raised funds for conferences, symposia, and roundtables across and beyond the United States. One way the coordinators secured funding was by inviting high-ranking executives to be panelist speakers— as these would attract guests that would pay full-price for registration. The process of inviting a business executive entailed conducting meticulous research of their background, which they documented in a spreadsheet by matching their occupation title, such as "Vice President," with a category: Black/African American, Asian American, American Indian, White, Hispanic/Latino.

[8] In a widely circulated study, Professor of Psychology Richard L. Zweigenhaft, revealed that most of the Fortune 500 CEO positions filled by non-White males from 2000 to 2014 were attributed to White women. In describing his methodology, Zweigenhaft stated he used information available online and then corroborated each one of the 4919 racial classifications with his co-researchers, noting, "The interjudge reliability (which is the fancy term for how much the three of us agreed) was quite high—above 99%." For similar methods see Cook and Glass 2014; Singh 2007, or see Richard (2000) for surveying human resource departments, Roberson and Park (2007) for data-mining in mainstream outlets such as Fortune, and Cunningham (2009) for enrolling human subjects into research studies.

One day, I watched how Susan looked up to face Stanley. She took her laptop, turned it to face Stanley as well, and placed it on her shoulder. The photograph showed a woman with short brown hair and a red suit. Susan said, "What do you think this person is?"

Stanley: I don't know—not-white?

Susan: Question mark?

Stanley: [Silence] Hispanic, maybe.

Susan: OK, Hispanic question mark.

Then I heard her thinking aloud, "I have a lot of question marks."

When I asked Susan to explain how she was certain that the classification she assigned was in fact their racial or ethnic identity, she said that she "Usually can tell." She described how, beyond using executives' pictures to assign them a race, she studies their biographies, LinkedIn profiles, whether they received diversity awards, and their racial or ethnic-based associations, "such as an Asian Business Society." Yet, when biographical details were lacking, and the executives' physical appearance was ambiguous, she turned to her workspace colleagues to ask, "*What* is she?"

It is not uncommon for diversity scholars and popular writers to employ racial categories found in the EEO-1 document to conduct their own research on diversity demographics in target companies or across industries. They do as Susan does: they type the five main racial and ethnic categories on a row in spreadsheets. On the left column, they type the name of an individual. Then one by one they research the race, ethnicity, and gender of executives and board members in question. This practice often favors the visibility of race. Insofar as racial visibility is ambiguous— that is, perceivably not white (Shankar 2015)— diversity professionals draw on other resources to confirm a racial category.

These practices of racial classification, which prioritize visible differences, are not taken for granted values; rather, they are contested and negotiated. Racial classification is a strategy. For example, as I was compiling demographic data for one industry report, Keith, the founder of American D&I, asked me to also begin doing preliminary research on multinational corporations in Florida. I scheduled a call with the director of a human resources department for a company in Florida, Francine, who also was one of the directors for the Society of Human Resources Management (SHRM), the largest Human Resources (HR) professional society across the world with members in over 165 countries. I sent her one of the reports I had done so that she might get an idea of what American D&I wanted to do.

Before I had a chance to explain how her support would help American D&I with the report, she had identified a significant problem in acquiring data on corporate executives and board members. "I see [that what] you're trying to do is survey Fortune 1000 and break down personnel, [specifically] what I see is [that you are] looking at personnel of executive members?" I said yes, and she responded, "Okay, what I'm thinking is because we are HR we would be evoked to provide that basic information for the [company] within which we work… if the council says yes maybe [human resource professionals] are more open to us than yourself because they don't know you. So yes I can see how we can parlay our relationship in someway to assist." Drawing on their name recognition and their position as the leading membership-based association for practicing managers, the SHRM could help us significantly in gathering data within the group.

She also warned me that "most people won't want to share the information," but not to categorize employees. She said, "When we do this type of work we don't categorize the employee; we always invite the employee to declare. Like you said, you look at last name and

that doesn't really mean anything, and people with different backgrounds say 'I don't categorize [myself] as Hispanic, I'm Middle Eastern, my parents came from such a country but I don't identify as that." And the law tells us we are not supposed to categorize based on name or appearance, the group should identify as minority… I am of three racial backgrounds, and other people may see me and know how I declare, but that's not how I see it. I definitely would not like my employer picking for me, because I wouldn't pick what they pick."

As a social scientist I sympathized with Francine. After I hung up the phone with her I called Keith. I attempted to explain the conversation I had just had. Yet, he seemed to already know what happened, because he interrupted me in ways that expressed frustration and showed his agitation, but without phrases or sentences. I told him that I had given her a list of 30 companies who are Fortune 1000 and are in Florida. Francine said they could collaborate by going to these companies and asking for their diversity statistics. Keith interrupted me to say, "Nuh uh, they're not going to do that." I agreed and he said, "Did you [tell] her what you have been working on?" I said, "Yes, I [also] told her how the biographical approach was the only way to ensure 100% of the companies were being evaluated." He agreed, and I told him that she essentially found a problem with that approach. He told me to drop Florida completely from the research, that they weren't going to cooperate, and to not respond to her anymore. He said, people don't want to do anything about it, they're scared and they won't do it."

Francine, in contrast to Keith, points to the tensions in racial classification between personal and observer accounts of race. At the heart of this tension is a question— or debate— about the accuracy and truthfulness of a racial classification. These debates continue to sway the American imagination. For instance, in 2006, Silicon-Valley based biologists and entrepreneurs founded company 23andme, named after the number of chromosomes in the human body. In

2007, it became the first company to offer autosomal DNA testing for ancestry, claiming to offer individuals with genetic proof of their ancestry, as well as reconciliation with distant and long-lost family members, and knowledge over major health risks and medical predispositions.

This fascination with ancestry, as a scientific truth, has also become the target of popular American television shows. For example, The Maury Show, a syndicated American tabloid talk show program that often capitalizes on case studies that breach social norms, has promoted a series on ancestry testing through their slogan, "You're not who you think you are." The TV show's producers created sensationalism over the big reveal of a guests' genetic ancestry. These revelations leave the viewer in suspense as they wait for the guest to receive the results of the saliva test. Part of this shock-value draws works on a contrast the producers make between a visibly racial body, whether Black, White, or Hispanic/Latino-ambiguous, and their biological ancestry. This ancestry is broken down in terms of percentages held according to racial category— the latter of which is correlated with geographical origin.

Rather than an enactment in the authority of biological truth, ancestral knowledge works as one of many biographical data points of an individual. This is best illustrated in the racial categorization of persons as white.[9] For example, diversity researchers take a perceivably White person with a non-Hispanic name as evidence of their Whiteness, yet a Hispanic or Latino last name does not entitle them to a non-White category. In one situation, for instance, a coordinator asked me, "Do you think she's Latina?" I responded, "What do you think?" She said, "I am not sure, because she looks like she is, but look at her last name." Her last name was hyphenated. I found myself suggesting to her that she research whether the subject had received any awards for being successful as a Latina in business. The coordinator did not find evidence of awards and

[9] Murphy's (2007) work on environmental politics has employed an analytical framework of visibility and perceptibility; I claim that whiteness is also highly visible and operational.

categorized her as white. In other words, the absence of evidence of supportive data points that would suggest they were non-white, marked them as white for the purposes of creating diversity representation. Thus, while through ancestral testing, whiteness is confirmed through the findings of an exclusively European ancestry, in diversity management, a revelation of any percentage of non-European ancestry did not— such as a last name— did not change the racial category assigned to them.

This is to say that racial categories are operated to specific ends, and each of these categories are already understood to have meaningful histories. To return to the case example of 23andme, through their website, the company explains their methodology: each genetic sample tested is matched against the samples of individuals who have four grandparents that originated from the same country. This is how an ancestry origin is determined, but only "[if] the country isn't a colonial nation like the US, Canada, or Australia."[10] 23andme uses an edited geographical maps with specific boundaries selected for origin, and these resemble those employed in the American Census: the Americas, South Saharan Africa, Europe, East Asia, South Asia and the Middle East. Hence, while racial categories gain coherence through sociopolitical narratives, documents, and ancestral knowledge, racial visibility become critical for the work of diversity management. Rather than distinct phenomena, these racialized documents suggest that contemporary racial projects are historical as much as they are political, scientific, and economic.

Imagining Antiracism and Reproducing Expertise

Racial classification practices have historically been part of broader projects, employed as means to ends. Diversity management classification practices, in particular, prioritize the

[10] 23andme. "Ancestry Composition: 23andMe's State-of-the-Art Geographic Ancestry Analysis," accessed July 27 2017, https://www.23andme.com/ancestry-composition-guide/

visibility of differences, creating both evidence of discrimination and reinforcing shared-understanding over antiracist imaginaries of the future. For instance, when I asked Susan why American D&I placed so much importance on classifying race, she explained how their diversity events depended on it. While her work entailed using spreadsheets to classify invitees, she then identified four to five individuals to serve in speaker panels. She needed to assign everyone a race to ensure that each panel and the events in general would represent diversity. Yet, she said that she couldn't always guarantee that the events will be adequately diverse. Regardless, when diversity is not represented at the events, attendees "would [get] mad."

Susan told me a story, "One time, this woman came at me and [the founder] yelling, 'You call yourselves a diversity [organization], and you *only* had two black women!'—I [said], mmm there were like six." There had been more than 200 persons attending. It is unclear from how Susan described it to me, or whether she knew, if this person had only directly seen two black women, or whether she was lowering the number from a less, but equally low number (like six) as a hyperbole. What was clear, however, is that representation is perceived at the event through visibility, and this is consistent with how race is assigned in the American D&I office during the moment of planning. In other words, both the yelling woman and Susan understood that diversity could be seen; neither bothered to individuals for their racial identification. This imagination of race as visible is consistent with diversity scholars' understanding of discrimination as a consequence of unconscious bias and of evolutionary adaptations to seeing— and fearing— difference. Further, because representation can be seen it can also be vetted. As Susan explained, an organization whose primary mission is to advance the value of diversity needs to represent diversity in their events at the risk of having their motives questioned.

The question of race for diversity professionals is often discussed as a question of white and non-whiteness or white individuals and "Persons of Color," reinscribing visibility as a primary mode for understanding antiracism. In January 2016, for example, I was invited to attend a meeting with the Board of Directors of American D&I. I was to present the demographic research I collected of the top financially performing companies in one particular industry. I had had significant concerns over the methodology I employed, which was similar to that of Susan's and the rest of the staff. As per my instructions, I researched the biographies of each executive and director and assigned them a race. I had confronted one particular problem: what should I do in the event of multinational mergers? For example, what if as a result of a multinational merger, Japanese nationals constituted half of the executives of an American-based corporation? Each time I had asked this question to Keith and other coordinators, I did not receive an answer. Hence, while I sat in the conference room, around a large wooden table with half a dozen well dressed business professionals, I was nervous. That is, until I finally realized why.

In the audience were executives of notable large corporations and lesser-known, but powerful business people. The lead researcher at American D&I and I told them that out of 300 total executives and board members we surveyed, less than 3% were women of color and that over 70% were white men. The board members responded in outrage directed at me, chastising me for the language I used to describe the population groups in the study: minorities. One board member yelled, "Do *not* use the term 'minority;' we are not 'minorities' here… [Minorities] is a word they have always used to keep us down... in legal-speak if you are in the minority opinion, you don't matter." My co-presenter came to my defense asking a clarifying question about what term could represent discrimination at such large scales. Ultimately, they decided that given the

legacy of discrimination against nonwhite persons in the United States, we should use the term "People of Color."

Over the course of the rest of my research, I noticed white papers and demographic reports employing the term People of Color. In a training for a multinational corporation, the consultant, Calvin, pulled up a slide on the projector screen to a classroom of almost seventy middle managers. He pointed to the number of White People in upper-management and to the fact that before the training he had examined the demographics of the company according to who was receiving support for promotions. He said, "The majority of people in the developmental pipeline are white." Then, he showed them presentation slides with statistics. There were "a significant number of Hispanic and African-Americans at most locations," Calvin said. Calvin showed them a disparity between the positions held by white white-collar workers and those held by non-white individuals, such as Hispanic and African-Americans. He pointed to this as a problem, while telling the trainees that those headed for leadership positions (white individuals) were those who had to be convinced to do diversity work. Calvin and others who write on diversity, do not note any differences between the racial categories that are not-Hispanic white, and the "People of Color."[11] Rather, they employ them to suggest visibility and the relationship between visible differences and the occupations held in the corporation.

Here, I return to my call with Keith, wherein we discussed Francine's reaction to the work to the demographic report I was to write on the racial and ethnic composition among executives and board of directors. After he told me to drop Florida from the report, he transitioned abruptly and asked me, "What do you think about Missouri?" He was referring to the series of protests that had been occurring at the University of Missouri in the previous two

[11] There is a large body of scholarship examining the phenomena of racial "passing." These studies show how white-looking persons have been able to escape oppression, especially during slavery and segregation (see for example, Pease 1996, Bowker and Star 2000).

months, since September 2015. This was possibly on his mind since the President of the University of Missouri, Tim Wolfe, had just resigned the day before to meet the demands of student protestors. The protests began after the President of the Missouri Students Association, Payton Head, wrote on a status update via Facebook that students had yelled racial slurs at him and numerous other students began to publicize their experiences with discrimination. Students held a number of "Racism Lives Here" rallies and created a Concerned Students 1950 political group and in conjunction with faculty group and the football team demanded the resignation of Wolfe for his handling of racial tensions on campus.[12]

As I contemplated how to respond to someone who essentially was my boss during fieldwork, he asked me again, "What do you think about Missouri?" I finally said, "I think it's great that people are being held accountable for horrible things like that." Then I turned the question around, "I saw that they recently said they were going to be implementing 'diversity and inclusion' programs and hiring a Chief Diversity Officer, what do you think about that?" He said, "Well, what do you think is happening? You saw what happened, they got heat for what's happening with diversity on their campus. And that is everyone everywhere--the majority of fortune 1000 companies, it's the same thing. So, how can you dethrone *them*? How, when they operate and exclude groups of people and nothing happens? And the thing is, the public is apathetic. They don't care. The thing is why don't we? And, how do we deal with the culture and the systemic? Nobody knows - once you expose these companies nobody wants to be a part of it, they're scared. The thing is [that] we live in a system in which the majority [of] white people control everything and they get upset when someone says something. So, they're going to open

[12] Tayler Kingkade and Travis Waldron, "Embattled University of Missouri President Tim Wolfe Resigns." Huffington Post, November 9 2015. https://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/tim-wolfe-resigns_us_5640be14e4b0411d3071a7e8

up their wallets and hire experts and do a study and pay a lot of money and implement the findings."

Diversity professionals do not always agree on means by which to advance a vision for antiracism. Whereas Francine saw racial categorization as most anthropologists would (certainly I did), as reductionist and violent, Keith saw these practices as an opportunity to challenge racism— regardless of their truth-value in racial identification. In other words, racial classifications did not to be 100% accurate, and one could argue that they never could be as there currently exists no means by which to categorize those that identified as Middle Eastern as non-white within Equal Employment Opportunity Forms. Racial classifications just need to work. He described this in contradiction to Francine's lag in taking action, where she was "afraid," one could interpret Keith's approach as "brave." In short, in challenging racism one needed to be simplistic, reductionist, and employ tools available while maintaining an orientation towards the future to make these practices functional.

Conclusion

Michael Omi and Howard Winant (2015) have written that racial projects are "simultaneously an interpretation, representation, or explanation of racial identities and meanings, and an effort to organize and distribute resources (economic, political, cultural) along particular racial lines" (2015, 125 emphasis removed). In its broadest interpretation, racial projects can point us to how representations of race are linked to economic resources, to politics, and to social histories. Distinctly from Omi and Winant, however, racial representations are not "formed," insomuch as they are inherited, but are always shifting and undergoing transformation.

Three years after the passing of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the United States federal government mandated organizations with over one hundred employees to document the racial

classification of their employees. To do so this federal government institutions created the Employer Information Report or EEO-1 document, listing five racial categories as well as a range of occupational scales within the corporation, ranging from service workers to executive management. Racial classification practices are mundane bureaucratic work, yet they are meaningful and productive within and beyond the corporation. By employing the EEO-1 racial categories, diversity management professionals often find (to no one's surprise) that corporate leadership is mostly white and male. Given the potential for these documents to spur outrage in the American public and create negative publicity, many large corporations maintain their EEO-1 documents private.

Yet, in order to make discrimination visible, diversity researchers find their own means to obtain this racial identification data, racially classifying corporate employees on their own. Diversity professionals accomplish this racial classification by using EEO-1 racial categories, online biographies, Linked In resumes, network associations, and documentation of a subject receiving awards from race or ethnic identity-based associations. In particular for diversity management, however, racial categories also became critical for assessing discrimination and for organizing diversity-specific events. They show a shift in how diversity management professionals discuss race in organizations, from "racial categories," which are unstable, visible, and invisible, to underscoring a concern for "People of Color," which highlights the visibility of discrimination. They also reveal how race is operationalized within bureaucratic structures and how these enable political action after affirmative action policies.

Racial classification practices simultaneously provide both evidence of institutional discrimination as well as create possibilities for antiracism, while reproducing regimes of racial visibility in a post-affirmative action era. By examining racial classification with attention to its

bureaucratic materiality, I show how race and the bureaucratic operations of capitalism have long been intertwined. Particularly, since colonialism, questions over racial visibility have been negotiated with knowledge of ancestry and geographical origin, and how documents have been employed to maintain the coherence of racial categories. Racial categories continued to be influential at the time of the birth of the United States, and well into the 1960s Civil Rights Movements. As such, the Equal Employment Opportunity documents, track older and durable histories of race and classification, purportedly as a means to address systemic discrimination. What diversity management shows is that these documents act as pivots, shaping action by orienting collectivities to shared visions and projects in the making. Through an appeal to visibility and racial transparency, they operationalize race into capitalist corporate bureaucracies.

CHAPTER 2

Institutionalizing Diversity:

The Statistical Correlation of Race and Profit

In November 2015, as part of a two-day conference in Southern California, I attended a workshop titled "Metrics and Analytics" led by a diversity officer of a multinational corporation, which had over 400,000 employees worldwide. The facilitator, Lucas, pointed to a presentation slide that showed arrows with captions: Top Down, Middle Out, and Bottom Up. He pointed to the horizontal arrow. He explained how managers— which constituted most of those attending the workshop— were in this position in their organizations: the middle. Both the bottom and the top pose demands on management, he said. The bottom increasingly wants managers to address their concerns with engagement and workplace culture, he said, giving examples: "[Employees say,] I want to bring my whole self to work, [I want to work] where I am not worried if I'm going to be called by the wrong pronoun." Yet, in order to create cultural change, he argued, managers must gain the support of executive leaders—or their "buy in."

Lucas then asked us if we managed budgets. Three out of twenty-five people raised their hands. As if anticipating this response, he turned to tell us that to obtain a budget, we would need to articulate a "business case" for diversity. In other words, we would need to provide executives with economic justifications for why they should invest in diversity. He urged us to think about this not in terms of fairness, he said, "Between the 1990s and the 2000s, diversity was about doing 'the right thing,' Well, WRONG. I hate to say it, but that's not going to work if you don't do it for profit." Then he proceeded to show us how he did it. He showed us a spreadsheet where he kept track of demographic categories: race, gender, disability, and LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender identities). Then, he told us, by counting the number of employees in

each demographic category, we can make correlations between diversity and the bottom line. He showed us the same spreadsheet with quarterly profit gains. Then, he said proudly referencing the keynote presentation that was delivered earlier that day, "When I saw [the speaker] say that profit goes up by 35.1% with [diversity], I said 'Yup, That's right,' because I was part of that research and I know those were the numbers we got."

While "diversity" has come to signify any and all categories of social difference that are not white (and heterosexual) males (Shankar 2015; Ahmed 2012), in this chapter I show how within business organizational settings the term diversity is deeply and meaningfully rooted in American histories of racial exclusion. I draw attention to how the means by which management professionals and business scholars institutionalize diversity in the corporate workplace have changed. In other words, they argue that diversity work that exclusively focuses on federal compliance to antidiscrimination legislation cannot effectively address the lack of racial representation among the highest-paid positions in the corporation, that is, within executive leadership and board membership. As one board member of American D&I, a diversity management firm wherein I conducted ethnographic fieldwork from 2014 to 2016, said to me:

> "Diversity is not new, but advancing the conversation where it's a strategic choice [is]. [For this] word choice is important, and being able to have statistics is important... so that when you're in the elevator or walking down the street it doesn't ring as a 30 year old conversation, so that it rings as something fresh, new, and critical to the success of organizations."

Over the course of two years I volunteered with American D&I, doing literature reviews of business scholarship and archiving white papers on diversity in the workplace. I also collected demographic data in terms of race and gender for hundreds of companies in the United States.

American D&I executives were interested in publishing the racial compositions of executives and board members of Fortune 1000 companies to show how little has changed since 1967. White men, and increasingly by white women, were still conducting the strategic, organizational, and financial decisions of the corporation. These, they argued, had financial implications.

Since 1967, the United States federal government has required, by means of the Civil Rights Act, American corporations based in U.S. territory to enumerate their workforce with regards to race, ethnicity, and gender. These categories became documented on the Employer Information Report (also called the Equal Employment Opportunity, EEO-1 form) using the five categories: White, African-American, Latino/Hispanic, Asian, and American Indian. Despite the systemic dismantlement of affirmative action practices and policies in the corporate workplace, the counting continues. To assess diversity demographics, diversity professionals download aggregate numbers from the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission's website, and when they are not able to do so, they rely on surveys and source data-collection from company websites and published biographies. Racial classification data become statistics when a categorical part is compared to its whole. Diversity professionals compare the number of white male corporate leaders, that is, executives and board members, to non-white corporate leaders in any given corporation or industry. Non-white demographics tend to be broken down by racial and ethnic category or by aggregate categories of analysis: Women of Color and People of Color.

In this chapter, I analyze the economic, scientific, and racial reasoning practices of diversity professionals as they create and circulate statistics that correlate a relationship between race and profit, creating evidence of its value. Diversity professionals are economists, psychologists, business scholars, managers, executive officers, and they work in diversity management firms. Management scholars and public intellectuals create much of the wealth of

information on diversity in the workplace, circulating their expertise in peer-reviewed academic journals and in business magazines, including *Harvard Business Review* and *Forbes.* Sometimes they make the *New York Times* best selling list. Middle managers, on the other hand, include human resources professionals and do the everyday work of researching and advocating for the latest behavioral techniques and workplace practices to implement in their organizations.

By creating statistical correlations between race and profit, diversity professionals continue to advocate for the upward mobility of historically marginalized American communities. By circulating these correlations in white papers, reports, and internal corporate documents diversity professionals make the case to a presumably unsympathetic white audience that diversity is profitable, and they urge them to invest in diversity. In creating and circulating these statistical representations they attach the value of diversity to the corporate bottom-line. These enactments of expertise (Carr 2010), I argue, show how diversity professionals channel and employ personal affects into scientific and economic practice. In doing so, these consultants and managers reframe the operating mechanisms of equal opportunity within capitalism, creating a racial discourse within business. In this chapter, I draw on participant observation conducted at American D&I, [13]discourse analysis of publications by labor researchers, and interviews conducted with management consultants and working diversity professionals. I ask, how do statistics mediate economic, scientific, and racial logics? What work do statistical correlations do in generating managerial processes and capitalism? What do these knowledge practices say about the production of racial discourse within business in a "post-racial" society?

[13] All names of organizations and events I conducted ethnographic research, as well as persons I interviewed are pseudonyms.

Numbers for Racial Integration

Statistics have long been at the core in debates over affirmative action, racial integration, and social justice. In 1961, John F. Kennedy's Executive Order no. 10925 proclaimed that federal government contractors had to purposefully hire and treat employees "without regard to their race, creed, color, or national origin,"[14] and that they had to take "affirmative action" to do so. While the term "affirmative action" was vague and never actually defined (Kelly and Dobbins 1998), overnight businesses that had labor or supply contracts with the United States government, had to prove that they were being federally compliant. A number of practices were engineered, including the posting of signs detailing federal and organizational antidiscrimination policies and racial sensitivity and harassment trainings. Additionally, the federal government created new institutions to oversee affirmative action practices, including the Equal Employment Opportunity Commision and the Office of Federal Contract Compliance Programs. The latter of which created some of the first bureaucratic forms to assess progress of racial integration in the workplace, namely the Employer Information Report (EEO-1).

After 1961, federal contractors began to employ experts—many of whom were legal and economic consultants— who could determine what was adequate evidence of affirmative action being implemented. Organizations began to institute standardized employment practices. This included processes for hiring, promotion, and successions. For example, documenting the social dynamics that have enabled and constrained minorities from achieving opportunities in business, historian Pamela Laird (2007) explained how affirmative action policies led to the restructuring of bureaucratic processes to more objectively address job qualifications for employment. In other words, hiring and promotion became less about one's social networks and more about objective

[14] Equal Employment Opportunity Commission. 1961. Executive Order 10925. https://www.eeoc.gov/eeoc/history/35th/thelaw/eo-10925.html, Accessed December 13 2017.

measures, such as education, years of experience, and technical competency. Citing African-American men who were interviewed in popular magazines, Laird explained, "ambitious, educated, and capable men entering 'the white man's business world' asked to be judged according to the American ethos of individualism" (2007, 2011). African-American professionals brought to the forefront ideals of hard work and perseverance, which had previously been neglected due to skin color. Laird argued that it affirmative action mandates spurred a rational organization of work, which aimed to create equitable opportunities for people of color and women to be socially and economically included.

In order to create sufficient evidence of compliance to affirmative action, companies also began to employ quotas in efforts to achieve racial integration. Human resource professionals hired with attention to race in order to achieve target numbers in each racial category. The federal government provided these racial categories in the Employer Information Report, wherein human resource professionals could also document the numbers of employees in each racial category according to occupational scales (e.g. executives, managers, technical workers, service workers, etc.). Such bureaucratic attempts, which worked towards guaranteeing workplace representation that was in proportion equal to the U.S. or regional population at large, became controversially known as "numerical equality" practices (Eastland and Bennett 1979).

These affirmative action numerical practices are best illustrated in Polaroid's first annual report on Equal Opportunity Employment presented to its executive leadership in 1970. Using data drawn from six weeks of audits, surveys, and interviews, the Human Relations Division of Polaroid used demographics of their company's location, the city of Boston, to evaluate their hiring, retention, and policies. More specifically, human relations personnel enumerated the racial demographics found in their applicant pool and throughout the hiring process, correlating

these with the racial demographics of Boston. They compiled these numbers (**see Figure 2.1**). To provide evidence that they were increasing the number of Black employees hired at Polaroid, they showed how at every step in the hiring process they were increasing the percentage of Black candidates being considered for hire. In other words, they determined the percentage of total Black applicants, which was 15%. Then, the human relations personnel interviewed more Black applicants than white applicants, to come up with a percentage of 18% of total Black interviewees. Finally, the numbers show, that they hired more Black applicants that interviewed than white applicants. In the report, the human relations personnel said, "These figures clearly show that a significant extra effort is put forth generally to interview and hire black applicants."

	Total Applicants	% of all Applicants	Black applicants	% of black applicants	% black of total
Applicants:	12,000		1,800		15%
Interviews:	6,600	55%	1,200	66%	18%
Hires:	2,383	20%	523	35%	22%

Figure 2.1: Polaroid Corporation, "Equal Employment Opportunity: A Report on the Polaroid Program for 1969." (Boston: Polaroid Corporation, 1970), p. 11.

Through a series of graphs and charts, human relations personnel pointed to Census data of the city of Boston to further reinforce their point. They noted that by 1970, the black families would constitute 20% of the population of Boston, and 10% of that in Cambridge. Thus, according to these human relations personnel, Polaroid's workforce adequately represented the racial demographics found in Boston. They said, "A significant measure of a company's effectiveness in hiring workers from minority communities is based upon how close its percentage of minority workers is to the total in the population… Given the location of Polaroid facilities… the percentage of black employees would seem to be quite reasonable" (1970, 15).

George P. Sape (1975), Former Special Assistant to the General Counsel at the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission argued that these quota practices were the result of years of grappling with the "subtle and complex" ways that discrimination works as a "problem of entrenched employment practices that operate independently of intent" (1975, 482). Everyday employment practices that were once regarded as neutral are already discriminatory by factor of being historical, and in order to provide a means to eliminate discrimination, the government and corporate bureaucrats had deemed quotas as appropriate. Yet, Sape (1975) argued, quotas invoke a tension between attempts to create practices that rectify discrimination and those that aim to create a colorblind society, suggesting that these quotas should be used only if necessary, and only if there were no other viable means by which to achieve integration.

As early as 1982, Polaroid's reports suggested that quota strategies to increase racial representation had created conflict within the company. In a report entitled, "Limitations of Affirmative Action"— the findings of which derived from employee focus groups— Polaroid human resources personnel wrote that employees were dealing with a widespread perception that black persons and women were unqualified to perform their job duties. They also wrote that there was a disconnect between official company practices and the overwhelming lack of affirmative action goals within each Polaroid department, and a increasingly popular opinion among newer circa-1980 hires that "[African Americans] are very competitive and not in need of AA [Affirmative Action]." The company concluded that while most employees were accepting of Equal Employment Opportunity, they did not approve of Affirmative Action,[15] reinforcing Sape's and other labor researchers' findings that affirmative action interfered with American meritocracy ideals.

[15] Baker Archives, at Harvard Business School. Polaroid Corporation.

In the 1978 *Regents of the University of California v. Bakke* case pertaining to college admissions, the U.S. Supreme Court declared quotas impermissible due to "reverse racism." Since then, the Supreme Court has deemed racial quotas as unconstitutional. In 2016, the question of whether schools, corporations and large employers can consider race (without employing quotas) for college admissions and employment policies continues to be debated. Additionally, since large employers still need to fill out the Employer Information Report every year, critics, such as Sara Ahmed (2012) have questioned whether there is any follow up to these enumeration practices. While quotas are no longer commonplace in corporate America, former Affirmative Action and Equal Opportunity specialists have not ceased to advocate for racial integration. Rather, many of them have retooled concerns with discrimination, not in terms of compliance, but in terms of organizational efficacy and profit (Kelly and Dobbins 1998).

Outrage and Resonances of Segregation

"It is the new jobs and the new workers… that are of greatest interest and concern," Johnston and others wrote in the Workforce 2000 report, a collaborative report written by the Hudson Institute and funded by the U.S. Labor Department and the RAND Corporation (Johnston et al. 75). In it they argued that over the course of twenty years, the U.S. workforce would see a large influx of women, minorities, and immigrants. Through the 1990s, economists and labor researchers had concluded that the workplace was already diverse. For example, in 1990, Roosevelt Thomas,[16] an academic, popular business intellectual, and a consultant, which many diversity consultants recognized as one of the pioneers of diversity management, famously

[16] Society for Human Resource Management (2013) Roosevelt Thomas Jr., Pioneer in Workplace Diversity, Dies. https://www.shrm.org/resourcesandtools/hr-topics/behavioral-competencies/global-and-cultural-effectiveness/pages/rooseveltthomas.aspx. Accessed September 1 2017.

wrote, "women and minorities no longer need a boarding pass, they need an upgrade."[17] As such, diversity management became less concerned with hiring and more with retention. Diversity professionals, in other words, continued to raise issues with the lack of upward mobility opportunities for non-white working professionals and the glass ceiling.

Diversity management consultancy firms emerged, which regularly published white papers, which critique the lack of racial and gender representation in middle management and in executive positions in business. Through the "Knowledge Section" on their website, Catalyst Inc., a diversity management firm that promotes the inclusion of women in the corporate workplace, publishes diversity demographic reports at no-cost. In a separate subsection entitled, "By The Numbers," Catalyst Inc. presents hundreds of graphs, charts, and infographics that are downloadable for re-use under a Creative Commons License, meaning without copyright infringement. Among the top 500 large companies listed in the American stock market index (S&P 500), they show, women constitute 5.2% of all CEOs, although they make up 44.7% of total employees. In breaking down these numbers by race and ethnicity Catalyst Inc.researchers reveal an almost equal percentage of white women employed in S&P 500 companies and in mid-level and executive management. Yet for Women of Color, these numbers decrease significantly. For instance, Catalyst Inc. researchers show that Women of Color constitute 18.5% of total employees in S&P 500 companies, but only 4.7% of them are executives and senior level managers (**see Figure 2.2)**. Similar trends are seen when these numbers are broken down by Black and Latina racial categories.

[17] Thomas, Roosevelt R. (1990) "From Affirmative Action to Affirming Diversity." Harvard Business Review, March-April. https://hbr.org/1990/03/from-affirmative-action-to-affirming-diversity. Accessed August 29 2017.

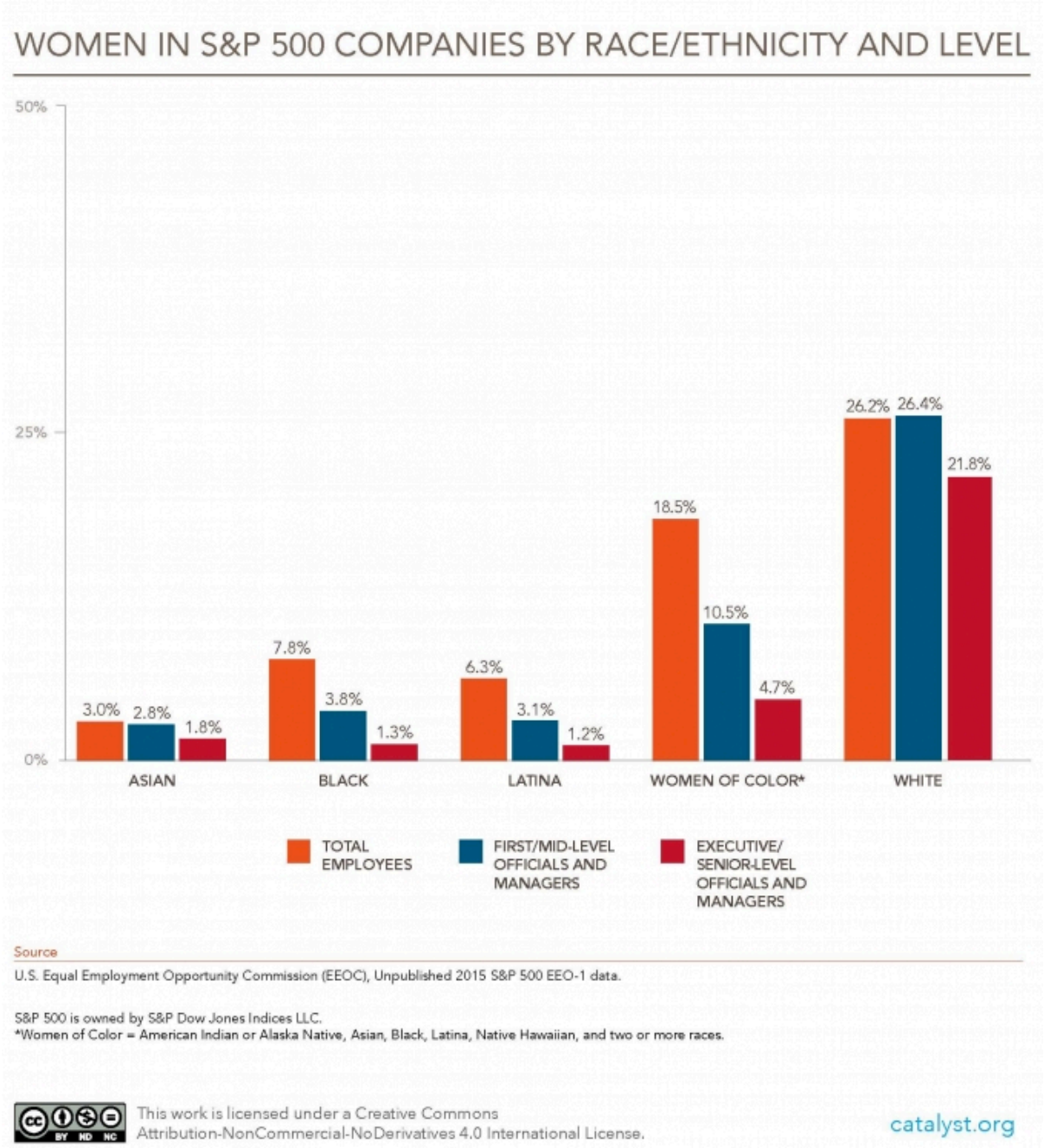


Figure 2.2: Catalyst. *Women in S&P Companies by Race/Ethnicity and Level* (October 12 2017). Catalyst, website. Accessed December 21 2017.

Diversity professionals' publication of these statistical representations suggests that there is a meaningful relationship in creating numerical contrasts between white and categorically "non-white" persons. This is made evident as diversity professionals narrate their pasts and re-imagine their futures as they attempt to intervene in what they recognize as systemic racism. For instance, the night before American D&I's Vice President of Research and I were to present a demographic report, Keith picked me up at the airport and took his partner and myself to a steak dinner. We were to celebrate the publication of the report. On the way there as I sat on the passenger seat of his luxury vehicle, I asked him, "Why do this report?" Why collect so much data on race and ethnicity? After speculating on its profitability and reiterating the mission of the organization, he finally responded as if confessing a secret:

> "Before you and I were born there were Black people jobs, Latino people jobs, White people jobs, and White men jobs. And then they said there would be equal opportunity, but there wasn't…Look at the report you did, most executives and board members are White. And it's going to stay that way, because they as sure won't do anything about it."

The report we discussed the bar graphs and pie charts as the ones below, showing the composition of white executives and board members in a select group of Fortune 1000 companies in comparison to their non-white counterparts. American D&I published on average one report a year on the demographics of corporate leadership. Each one had similar findings: whereas white men composed between 57% and 70% of executive and board member positions, Women of Color only constituted on average 2-3%.

Keith had intended to use the statistics to create outrage. His goal was to engage sympathetic human resource professionals and middle managers to buy his services, showing

them that very little has changed since 1967. He said frustrated, "[President] Obama could have done something about that, but he didn't. He could have instituted a committee to ensure that people would actually have equal opportunity, but he didn't." For Keith and many other diversity professionals, these numerical representations signaled a failure to racially integrate employees vertically across a corporation represented the unfulfilled promise of equal opportunity.

This outrage over the lack of racial representation would emerge time and again among diversity professionals, managers, and executives. At a working lunch, for example, a board member of a major hospital said to me after I introduced my research project and myself, that when it comes to diversity, "They still don't want to hear it [about diversity]." They push back. He said, "I will tell you a story of a committee I am in, but [that] I will not name, there are some up for retirement— two of them, one has left and there will soon be a new chair. Now they [the board members in the committee] are all of the same gender."

The two other individuals at the table laughed, one of them was his mentee and the other one was Keith. Both said at the same time clarifying the story for him, although they had not heard this story before, "White men." He continued to narrate the story,

"Don't you think we should be more conscious about bringing in someone that doesn't look like us, and might have new perspectives… we are in the [healthcare] industry where most of our staff is women, don't you think we should think about bringing a woman on board?" Then he said that the response of the leaders of the committee was, "Well, myself and him [he pointed to where his mentee was seated] will review the candidates and select somebody." The board member concluded, saying that at that moment, "You could see them trying to maintain the locus of power."

“That’s called power,” Keith said, “but most of the time, black people in positions like yourself, never say anything. They don’t speak out about it.”

Those who are concerned with diversity in corporate America find it necessary to abandon the discourse of social justice in favor for of that is perceivably more intelligible to those without personal and social interests in increasing racial representation. That is, diversity professionals claim that advocates of diversity must refrain from making claims to the value of diversity that are based on sentiments driven by ideas of fairness and social justice, and that instead advocates need to frame diversity as an economic imperative. Yet, diversity professionals’ affective dispositions towards fairness and desires for social and economic inclusion have not been eliminated. I asked one pioneer scholar and consultant in diversity management on an interview over video-call, Tom Belcher who has a doctorate in economics, if he agreed with the statement that the decline of Affirmative Action led to the emergence of the diversity management field. He corrected me, stating:

> “Well I'm not sure it's fair to say it had to do with the decline of Affirmative Action, maybe it is an alternative version of Affirmative Action, ‘cause if you go back to traditional Affirmative Action, a lot of it is sort-of the same thing [that] diversity practitioners are doing. It has to do with recruitment, it has to do with access to training programs, all those standard tools. So in some cases what you’re talking about is simply creative re-labeling [of the] same programs. To the extent that there is a difference— some of it had to do with the emergence of— [laughs]. Some people got the bright idea that maybe there was a business case for diversity.”

Mediating Memories

Diversity professionals concerned with challenging systemic discrimination often argue over what is the best strategy to do so: how to enroll newcomers into everyday diversity work and how to make their case in the academic and public discourse of diversity. Before delving into strategy, here I first highlight the role of the past in the employment of statistics. The concern of how the past is remembered has long been a topic of interdisciplinary study, and within anthropology it crosscuts cultural, archaeological, and linguistic inquiry (Shaw 2013; Wertsch 2009; Parmentier 1987; Jones 2007). As Jacob Climo and Maria Cattell (2002) said, "We realize that people everywhere seek meanings in the past, that memories mold, create, and sustain meanings, and that those meanings inform the present and guide the future" (2002, 2). Most of these social and cultural investigations draw on Maurice Halbwachs (1992) who situated memories as a social process, rather than a question of individual introspection and psychology. In other words, collective memory is made and operationalized as relevant through shared knowledge practices and through social associations. Halbwachs (1992), argued:

> "What makes recent memories hang together is not that they are contiguous in time: it is rather that they are part of a totality of thoughts common to a group, the group of people with whom we have a relation at this moment, or with whom we have had a relation on the preceding day or days. To recall them it is hence sufficient that we place ourselves in the perspective of this group, that we adopt its interests and follow the slant of its reflections" (1992, 52).

Memories are recollected for specific agendas. Anthropologists have studied how memories are significant in the construction of identity and in the reproduction of collective subjectivity (Behar

1986; Rosaldo 1990), including through bodily practices and rituals (particularly those following Connerton 1989).

The study of how memory reproduces collectivities has been linked to the way in which anthropology has long made disciplinary boundaries between the West and the Other. Whereas the former has history, the Other has only memories (French 2012; Trouillot 1995). These distinctions are reinforced by definitions that draw on Maurice Halbwachs (1992) and Pierre Nora (1989), both having made similar distinctions between history and memory. Memory is "alive" whereas history is "dead," inscribed into texts, recorded by persons of authority, and creating a formal and official word of the past. Memory, for many following this theoretical lineage, is alive in that it is contested, negotiated, and employed for particular interests. These interests include the employment of memories in contesting official nation-state histories and in consolidating strategies of economic and political struggles (Abercrombie 1998; Rappaport 1998).

Such attempts at distinguishing between history and memory as distinct areas of inquiry have been slippery, particularly in contexts in which the memories invoked form part of the official historical discourse or in which histories are not actually "dead," but contested, re-imagined and re-purposed. Anthropologists have termed similar processes various things, including as Jacob Climo and Maria Cattell (2002) list, "cultural memory, historical memory, local memory, official memory, popular memory, shared memory, social memory, custom, heritage, myth, roots, tradition" (2004, 4) and as James Wertsch (2009) adds, "bodily memory, historical consciousness, and mnemonic battles" (2009, 117).

What is apt here in examining the role of memory is how history is imagined (Bonilla 2011) and how remembering occurs collectively through mediations (Wertsch 2009; French

2012). Anthropologists concerned with materiality have found useful Nora's (1989) contribution that memory is localized in everyday objects. Archaeologists and historians have long examined how objects reproduce memory through an approach that has generally favored symbolism and interpretation (Jones 2007). The objects in question have ranged from photographs of deceased persons to memorials, historic sites, and museums, and the material remnants of historical events, such as wars (e.g. Gillis 1994; Saunders 2004). Advocating for a semiotic approach to the study of collective memory, French (2012), suggests that rather than reside in objects, in Nora's use of the term, memories can also "reside" or emerge in practice.

Within diversity management, representations of diversity—whether presented through computer-mediated technologies or in document and paper form— are critical reminders of the past. This resonates with Wertsch's (2009) critique of the anthropology of memory, and his argument for an analysis of collective remembering, rather than collective memory (see also Golden 2005). Wertsch suggested that an analysis of collective remembering would enable us to inquire into the actions that promote the recalling of the past, while emphasizing that these recollection practices are distributed. In other words, "memory is viewed as being distributed: (a) socially in small group interaction, as well as (b) "instrumentally" in the sense that it involves both active agents and instruments that mediate remembering" (Wertsch 2009, 2002). In addition to reducing, standardizing, and presenting an air of objectivity and truth, statistical representation mediates collective remembering and the historical imagination of past racial relations in ways that bring the past to the present, creating a temporal alignment with political and economic interest.

Shaw has argued that collective memories have an "origin" point, usually a historical one that is continuously re-visited to achieve pragmatic and political ends.[18] To underscore the significance of statistical representation, and more specifically, the small percentage of "people of color" in corporate leadership, diversity professionals often invoke a time in which discrimination was legalized. In fact, this is framed in terms of lack of career options for women and People of Color in business. Through these reasoning practices, the corporation is imagined as the quintessential example of the historical institutional exclusion of nonwhite persons— a space made by and for white Americans. Following David Berliner's (2013) provocation that remembering is productive, I turn to inquire into what kinds of work statistical representation does for reproducing diversity and multinational business. Thus, I take statistical representations to be like "objects" or "things" that mediate actors, both human and non-human, and that are enrolled into projects through processes of mediation and negotiation. Insofar as statistics mediate collective memory, in this case of racial segregation, then their employment in correlation studies produces relationships that are fraught with politics, insecurities, and hopefulness that are contested, rather than taken for granted.

Indices of Discrimination

How is discrimination turned into an indicator so that it may be intervened in? Diversity management professionals, especially consultants, are auditors. Management consultants are the experts at the center of an organizational audit. Due to being outsiders to a corporation, they are seen as objective (Ho 2014; Strathern 2000a). They can maintain a birds-eye (or God's eye) view of the organization and are less likely to be influenced by subjective opinions of how the

[18] Social scientists engaging in this theoretical line of investigation have largely focused on the European Holocaust and on World War II, noting in particular how narrative texts and photography, for example, represent past traumas in ways that mediate and reproduce memory (LaCapra 1994; Hirsch 1994; Wertsch 2004).

organization works (Haraway 1988). In diversity work, management consultants collaborate within and across organizations with human resource professionals, Chief Diversity Officers, other diversity administration personnel, executives, and directors.

Michael Power (1994) has written that in the 1980s, at the height of neoliberal restructuring, auditing activity expanded to unprecedented heights, and has continued to grow since. Starting with assessing financial operations in accounting departments, the role of auditors has become more complicated over time. As Power showed, there are now auditors for medical, technical, as well as human resource audits, correlating with a rise in demands for corporate responsibility and accountability. Audits have become commonplace in almost every organizational setting, claiming to address organizational effectiveness, efficiency, productivity, performance, responsibility, and "good practice" (Strathern 2000b). Marilyn Strathern (2000b), in particular, has shown how in the name of more transparency these audit cultures entangle responsibility and legitimacy.

To these ends, organizations hire experts to assess workplace practices and the efficacy of organizational bureaucratic processes, determining allocation of resources. Auditors employ systems of measurement and use benchmarks to set baseline performance and goals for targeted improvement. Organizational problems are measured, quantified, and to many different extents standardized, as a means to bring awareness to otherwise obscure operational processes. In this way, audits produce truths about work: what it is and how to do it (Star 1995). In diversity management, in particular, auditors assess work "environments," behavioral practices, and interpersonal relationships in relational ways, that is, in relationship to how they impact organizational goals and everyday work. Anthropologists Chris Shore and Susan Wright (2015),

for instance, have argued that "audit cultures" reveal a new kind of governance that is made with or without state intervention (see also Merry 2011).

The work of Sally Merry (2011) has shown how international human rights organizations function like audits, employing indicators, such as statistics, to assess and measure progress in interventions against violence against women. Merry defined indicators as introducing "a form of knowledge production in which numerical measures make visible forms of violation and inequality that are otherwise obscured." (Merry 2011, S84). She argued, "Indicators, particularly those that rely on ranks or numbers, convey an aura of objective truth and facilitate comparisons" (2011, S84). This appeal to objectivity makes indicators important to the measurement of social progress; statistics, for instance, can be employed across local settings, including across countries. However, in their employment Merry argued, they also decontextualize social issues from their local specificity. She wrote, "relying on the 'objective' comparison [leads to a loss of] critical information on the experience and the perspective of the person herself" (Merry 2011, S84; see also Merry and Coutin 2014).

Not all indicators are statistics, but all statistics are indicators. Indicators attach items of measurement (population demographics, for example) to labels and narratives. In examining the history of statistics, for instance, Mary Poovey (1993) argued, "As a form of representation, statistics was (and remains) a mixed genre; it juxtaposed numerical, often tabular, formulations to discursive, sometimes historical or explanatory, narratives" (258). Statistics were "less scientific" than numbers and questionable forms of science production in the 19th century, because they could be used to specific ends. Whereas numbers, as Poovey (1993, 1998) argued, were seen as objective and representative of truths, statistics were numbers that were also tied to "subjective" things like crime, suicide, and social problems (see also Hacking 2002). Thus,

statistics were often dismissed as "political arithmetic" (Poovey 1993, 264, citing Buck 1985), as having an agenda.

The lessons in the history of statistical representation that Poovey (1993) points to are twofold. First, statistical representation could only ever represent an estimate of what is counted. Particularly with population demographics, Census bureaucrats could never assume to count every person in the country. Second, statistical representation produces excesses, that is, stories and narratives that cannot be entirely contained. Yet, statistics become the "raw material" that other experts use and also play a critical role in the production of discourse and transparency. Through statistics of racial representation diversity professionals remember histories with racial segregation; these statistics also invoke and mediate expression of outrage. They create discrimination into an objective and measurable social problem. Yet, in order for executives to address concerns with racial representation, diversity professionals argue that they must make claims that doing so will benefit the corporate bottom-line, that is, profit. To do so, diversity professionals statistically correlate racial representation to profit.

Correlating Race and Profit

In this section, I examine how, through statistical correlational analyses, diversity professionals make claims that increasing racial representation in corporate leadership produces greater profits. Correlations create associations between two things presumably already known, engendering new understandings of their relationship. A correlation points to two things that are simultaneously growing or declining. Distinct from relationships of causations correlations presumably take two variables to be independent. Yet, through studying and employing correlations, diversity professionals often make the claim that the more diversity a company has, the more economically successful the company is likely to be. While diversity professionals

agree that correlation is not causation, they argue that to be more competitive in diversified markets and workplaces, corporations need to increase their demographic representations among executives and board members. I ask, how does diversity management turn correlations into semblances of causation?

In a January 2015 information report, Vivian Hunt, Dennis Layton, and Sara Prince of McKinsey & Company[19] wrote:

> We know intuitively that diversity matters. It's also increasingly clear that it makes sense in purely business terms. Our latest research finds that companies in the top quartile for gender or racial and ethnic diversity are more likely to have financial returns above their national industry medians. Companies in the bottom quartile in these dimensions are statistically less likely to achieve above-average returns. And diversity is probably a competitive differentiator that shifts market share toward more diverse companies over time.

McKinsey & Company researchers studied 366 public companies[20] across the United States, United Kingdom, and Canada, and correlated their financial returns with the diversity composition of their executives. Those companies in the top quartile for better racial and ethnic demographics, they found, were "35 percent more likely to have financial returns above their respective national industry medians," and that "In the United States, there is a linear relationship between racial and ethnic diversity and better financial performance: for every 10 percent

[19] Vivian Hunt, Dennis Layton, Sara Prince (2015). "Why Diversity Matters." McKinsey & Company, February 2 2015. Accessed March 13 2018. https://www.mckinsey.com/business-functions/organization/our-insights/why-diversity-matters

[20] They claimed the sample derived for those companies that had public data available for both of these variables.

increase in racial and ethnic diversity on the senior-executive team, earnings before interest and taxes (EBIT) rise 0.8 percent."[21]

The relationship between diversity demographics and economic success has long been the Achilles heel of diversity management. Between the 1980s and the early 2000s, the debate of whether diversity led to more or less profits was framed in terms of workforce performance. The question largely was whether more diversity in the workplace was beneficial or detrimental to business. Scholars wrote— and managers employed— research about cultural differences, conflict management, and pedagogical paradigms to connect diversity to organizational concerns with productivity (e.g. Cox and Blake 1991; Stahl et. al 2010). Psychological scientists, Elizabeth Mannix and Margaret Ann Neale (2005) argued that this debate polarized managers into optimists and pessimists. Optimists, they posed, state that "diversity will lead to an increase in the variety of perspectives and approaches brought to a problem and to opportunities for knowledge sharing, and hence lead to greater creativity and quality of team performance," whereas pessimists claim "that diversity creates social divisions, which in turn create negative performance outcomes for the group" (2005, 31). In 2013, the acclaimed 500-page book, *Diversity at Work*, edited by Bernardo Ferdman and Barbara Deane (2013) suggested that scholars had wrongly assumed that diversity was exclusively about demographics, rather than about practice. They argued that diversity leads to more conflict at work when people do not feel accepted, engaged, or a sense of belonging.

Whereas debates on workforce efficiency employed workforce demographics, increasingly diversity professionals create and circulate correlation studies that focus exclusively on diversity among corporate leadership. I suggest that this change reflects shifting corporate anxieties over economic uncertainty after the 2008 economic recession, increasing market

[21] Ibid.

demands for innovation, and unstable workforce resulting from corporate fragmentation and dispersal, and which is made evident by the bourgeoning of diversity management literature in the benefits of diversity of thought and perspectives. Studies that focus on executive and board directors' diversity composition highlight that these roles are critical sites of intervention for both diversity and economic growth, because as executives and directors hold significant decision-making power in the corporation. These studies integrate the "knowledge-based view" of diversity, which takes into account how the quantity and heterogeneity of what is known are beneficial resources to the corporation (Richard, Murthi, and Ismail 2007). For instance, Mohamed El-Erian's (2016) wrote that more diversity of thought and perspectives enabled corporations to better manage economic and political uncertainty, and risk, as well as provide new solutions to enduring socio-economic problems. Additionally, since the early 2000s, management professionals and scholars have held that diversity— in terms of ethnic, racial, and gender difference— is positively correlated to financial performance (e.g. Richard 2000; Erhardt et al. 2003; Roberson and Park 2007; Singal and Gerde 2015).

These knowledge-based views of diversity characterized diversity in the workplace as conducive to a learning environment that yielded better work products. Increasingly, diversity is associated with better economic decision-making. In 2010, at the urging of special interest groups and diversity management firms, including Catalyst Inc., the Securities Exchange Commission (SEC)[22] created new requirements for investor disclosures. The SEC stated that publicly traded companies needed to disclose the diversity composition of their board of directors. They said, "Commenters also noted that there appears to be a meaningful relationship between diverse boards and improved corporate financial performance, and that diverse boards can help companies more effectively recruit talent and retain staff." Then noted that such

[22] Securities and Exchange Commission. 2010. 17 CFR PARTS 229, 239, 240, 249 and 274.

knowledge can influence where stakeholders choose to invest. Diversity, according to these sources and to the number of knowledge-based view studies that preceded them, could be defined however the organization would deem fit. In 2016, most publicly traded companies provide biographies and photographs of their executives and board of directors on their websites— often in pages entitled "Investor portfolios."

How is correlation operated as if it was evidence of causation? Ian Hacking (2002) argued that, historically, correlation studies have represented facts of a certain moral order. Hacking traced these practices, which he termed as "comparative statistics," first to concerns with crime and demographics, and more specifically suicide, and their tabulation in Paris and Seine in the early 1800s. He wrote about the work of André-Michel Guerry, a French lawyer and amateur statistician— who after the Parisian ministry of justice began to publish data about suicides, their causes, and their reasons— and who then published these suicide statistics between England and France using detailed cartography between 1827-1830. In 1829, Guerry refuted a popular claim that education countered crime, showing through comparative statistics that wealthier areas had the highest crime. He argued that "Wealth attracts criminals, [and that] wealth creates education" (Hacking 2002, 78). Hacking argued that, although Guerry did not convince many of his logical conclusion— that education attracts criminals— he attained such findings through "positive science, distinguishing fact and value," revealing the beginnings of what would become correlation reasoning (2002, 78). By the time that Francis Galton invented the theory of correlation in 1888, describing the extent by which two variables are connected, the foundations for this scientific reasoning had been set.

Francis Galton founded the field of criminal anthropology, is recognized for discovering the concept of correlation, and coined the term eugenics. As a Victorian intellectual, Galton

wrote on numerous topics, including statistics, anthropology, geography, sociology, and psychology. After his cousin, Charles Darwin, published *Origin of the Species* Galton became preoccupied with the question of whether human ability was inherited. He created criminal "types" by superimposing the portraits of convicts who had been charged with murder, manslaughter, and theft accompanied with violence. His concluded that portrait composites he created "represent[ed], not the criminal, 'but the man who is liable to fall into crime" (Galton 1883, 224). While correlations describe widely distant phenomena that appear to be linked insofar as they follow similar patterns of growth or decline, Galton, "made correlations as real as causes" (Hacking 2002, 188). This was particularly case, because statistical correlations were tied to state projects, political motivations, and social affects and prejudices. As Hacking (2002) argued, correlations became laws, having both explanatory and predictive power.

Diversity professionals employ correlations as if they are causations, using knowledge of economic and workforce concerns to reinforce an idea of causation. As McKinsey & Company wrote,

> "More diverse companies, we believe, are better able to win top talent and improve their customer orientation, employee satisfaction, and decision making, and all that leads to a virtuous cycle of increasing returns."

Through correlation studies, diversity professionals argue that insofar there is more gender and racial diversity in corporate leadership then corporations will see profit. They take corporate leaders as economic actors with significant power to shape organizational strategies. Furthermore, by factor of being diverse corporate leaders have the diversity of thought necessary to make better economic decisions. Statistical correlations have both predictive and explanatory value.

Correlations create associations between two things already determined, often times between two data sets, and they are woven in through a story or a reason for their correlation. Diversity professionals strategize, calculate, and provide retroactive explanations for their relationship as if it was causal. Diversity professionals often claim that the more diversity a company has, the more economically successful they are likely to be. Thus, they argue, corporations need to invest in diversity, that is, on programs and workplace practices that promote the careers of nonwhite corporate professionals. In effect, correlation studies send a message that diversity work is not a risky investment. Hence, statistical correlations are important not for their truth-value, but because they motivate action, which in this case is the institutionalization of diversity.

Institutionalizing Diversity by Working Backwards

Since the 1960s, statistical correlations have been employed to make sense of institutional discrimination, as well as to provide means to rectify it. Within this period diversity professionals have re-worked how they address concerns with workplace racial representation. Until the 1990s, diversity professionals worked to ensure that corporations were compliant with federal policies, yet since then they have produced business scholarship and white papers that create economic justifications for diversity. Insofar as they employ such business knowledge to create organizational techniques, I suggest that this is racial discourse in the making. As Ann Stoler (2002) has argued, racial discourse "accrues its force not because it is a scientifically validated discourse but just the opposite. It is saturated with sentimentalisms that increase its appeal" (2002, 159). To institutionalize diversity within everyday business, however, diversity professionals employ scientific reasoning, affective dispositions, and economic logics. In aligning historic concerns with racial representation with the imperative of business, diversity

professionals produce new bureaucratic processes and organizational techniques, including mentorship programs, training, behavioral expectations, and accountability procedures— all of which need resources and revenue streams. In effect, they ensure that capitalist firms produce racial discourse.

At a panel that took place in Los Angeles, one of four presenters on diversity strategies was a Senior Vice President, named Victoria, work worked in the banking industry. She said very frankly, "If D&I [diversity and inclusion] is not institutionalized, then [when] the people go away, the D&I goes away." Victoria identified a common problem: often diversity work is personal and becomes almost exclusively the work of women and people of color (Ahmed 2017, 2012). Victoria looked at her co-panelist, saying that even though individuals had taken the initiative to do mentorship in her organization, these practices needed to be institutionalized so that when those volunteers leave the company, diversity programs can continue.

In the fall of 2015, I attended a weeklong training in Houston, Texas to obtain my diversity certification. Management consultants, employment researchers, and senior executives facilitated the training. Human resource professionals, diversity officers, Chief Diversity Officers, and other middle managers attended the training. For those individuals who had been recently promoted to a diversity position or moved to a newly created diversity department, this training was particularly invaluable as the facilitators had condensed the most relevant knowledge on practicing diversity management into a 150-pg workbook. In a week we covered the history of affirmative action and antidiscrimination legislation, how to create a business case, how to employ metrics in assessing diversity progress, and how to create accountability for diversity programs, among other things. We learned some academic and popular literature,

watched videos, problem-solved through case studies, some of which had been made famous by the media. We also learned how to distinguish human resource work from diversity work.

We spent the week in the office space of a large commercial mall. In it there were offices set up for the administrators of the workshop, and one room with almost 30 chairs placed around six group of tables surrounded by butcher paper draping the walls. We faced a projector screen when we weren't facing the whiteboard. The day before our last, the facilitators asked us to develop a business case: to prepare a pitch to executives and to devise a plan to integrate diversity initiatives and accountability processes across as many parts of the company as possible. One attendee said, "To get to the C-Suite [corporate executives], I have to get through 2 people. The administrative assistant and the boss... [and] they only care about time and what's in it for [them]. The CEO, CFO [Chief Executive Officer, Chief Financial Officer] is always looking for what's in it for the company." Then, one man, named Will, stood up and said, "I work for a law firm and law firms are hierarchical." He shared with us his strategy, which he characterized as "working backwards." When he needs something to be done, he explained, "I work backwards, first I give them the result and tell them how it's going to be attainable." The results he referenced were those published by other companies who achieved an increase in diversity demographics. He examined white papers for how other companies were able increase diversity and for their profit gains, the latter of which is what truly matters in convincing executives. Then he said, sternly that he partners up with "someone that has a seat at the table that has the same vision… so that they can be my voice at the table." In the context of Will's comments, the "table" is both a metaphorical and literal place where executives make decisions.

Statistics of diversity are indicators of discrimination, and when they are correlated with economic and financial gains, they become evidence of business possibilities. In effect, "working

backwards" characterizes the work Will and many others like him do: they conduct research and compile case studies to report on the financial successes of diversity, and on how—that is, through what organizational changes— this is possible. These documents enable him to advance his interests. To present his "business case" he downloaded case studies from the Internet, white papers, and industry reports that showed both the financial success and diversity progress of well-known companies and competitor legal firms. These documents, which contained evidence, also convinced others on his behalf. In anticipation that he would not be at the "table," for instance, he enrolled other managers to deliver this evidence, and his business case. These documents had the potential to travel where he could not.

When selling the concept of diversity, and the expert-approved organizational practices that go along with it, corporate professionals imagine a white audience who is not only disinterested, but also apathetic to concerns with racial representation. For them, tying these historic and personally felt social issues with profit becomes a means to an end. Diversity professionals are committed to a vision in which business is a primary means of achieving social and economic inclusion. In other words, they regard corporate work as a pathway to class mobility. Thus, their work is affective: they are driven by hopes for a social and morally just future, which is attainable insofar as, in the words of Keith, more black people in those powerful positions would "speak up."

Hence, diversity professionals employ statistical correlations as means to achieve political goals, that is, to achieve complete racial integration, within everyday business. Statistical correlations also abstract complex social processes and therefore are valuable to management professionals who seek means by which to institutionalize diversity. Thus, while on the surface it might seem as if diversity management poses a contrast between the compulsion of

scientific and economic reasoning to abstract race and the personal— and material— understandings of racial differences, I suggest that these two processes are relational, rather than oppositional. In other words, in formulating statistical correlations between racial representation and profit, diversity becomes defined as a matter of racial differences, as well as differences in thought and of perspectives.

Conclusion

While scholarly concern over the production of racial discourse is often discussed in terms of biopower and state governmentality, as Nigel Thrift (2005) has shown, capitalist firms produce their own discourse, generating "soft capitalism" at the intersections of business and academia through the work of management consultants, business scholars and public intellectuals. In this chapter, I traced the scientific, economic, and racial thinking of those I term "diversity professionals," or those corporate actors who work to advance the value of diversity within their organizations and for their corporate clients. One way diversity professionals do this is creating and circulating statistical correlation between racial representation and financial profits. This reveals how organizational work to address "equal opportunity" is re-worked from compliance with antidiscrimination laws to the creation of capitalist value.

After Affirmative Action, diversity professionals claim that to institutionalize diversity programs they must convince executives of the financial benefits to having racial representation among corporate leadership. I show how diversity professionals interpret statistics of racial representation as signs of the unfulfilled promise of equal opportunity. These statistics often reveal that white men constitute 58-70% of Fortune 1000 company executive and board member positions, whereas Women of Color only constitute 2-3%. Despite their outrage, diversity professionals' claim that— white male— corporate executives only care about profit. As one

management consultant regularly informs his trainees, "You have to be ready to answer, [the question] 'What's in it for me?'"

Through statistical correlations, diversity professionals claim that diversity is not risky investment. In explaining how companies with larger-than-average racial representation among executives also saw increases in financial profits, they claim that such companies are better able to make economic decisions, create better (and more informed) partnerships, improve customer satisfaction, and employee engagement. Such scientific and economic logics operate on a definition of diversity as differences in thought and perspectives. Therefore, statistical correlations between racial representation and profit take on an aura of causation, contingent on diversity professionals' retroactive explanations of the values of diversity.

Moreover, insofar as diversity professionals employ statistical correlations to eliminate a sense of economic uncertainty, diversity professionals reason that diversity's return on investment is always in the process of being actualized. As one facilitator, Peter, said to us in a diversity certification program, when people ask you, "When can we see the results in this organization?" He said that we tell them, "Well, in contrast to other things, D&I takes time, building an inclusive organization takes time, to make [profits] consistently it's going to take years, 3-4 years before it builds fruit. [Yet,] the business results are there, here is the data. However, in this [company] culture we need to overcome this gap and that's going to take 3-4 years." Diversity work, for all intents and purposes, is slow to actualize, but promises economic returns. As racial-economic correlations more than suggest: diversity works for capitalism.

CHAPTER 3

Assessments of Diversity:

The Collaborative Firm and Managerial Capitalism

Introduction

It is now a common understanding that the position of an ethnographer as a stranger and friend— to use the words of Hortense Powdermaker (1967)— entails the navigation between distrust and absolute confidence. At times, confidence creates ethical and moral conflicts, particularly when informants share more than what we are prepared to hear. This is particularly the case for anthropologists who work with activist communities, victims of domestic violence, and areas of government interest. Sometimes scholars struggle with protecting confidential information in the fact of legal and state pressure. Within the world of corporations, however, we do not often acknowledge that these internal conflicts are part of everyday work. We imagine that part of working within business entails that we abide and are limited by Non-Disclosure Agreement contracts and Memoranda of Understanding. While it is true that, when "studying up," at times the research interests of anthropologists mirror those of their interlocutors (Holmes and Marcus 2006), there is much social and cultural context that escapes formality norms and corporate guidelines.

In this chapter, I highlight a concern for corporate agency, inquiring into the role of managers, management consultants, and white-collar workers in producing business discourse. The kind of information that I present is both formal and informal. Yet, it is not worthy of codification in corporate or institutional documents. This information floats as gossip shaping the institutional practice of diversity management, and hence, it is a critical starting point for the

examination of metrics and assessments of diversity progress. In client and consultant calls, board member meetings, roundtable discussions, and conference panels, I heard a similar accusation: a popular fortune 500 company had paid a diversity management firm in exchange for that firm to publicly recognize the company for its diversity initiatives and programs. Usually companies take surveys, which is how consultants from diversity management firms determine their the extent to which they conduct diversity work. Consultants analyze these surveys and assign each company with a score (often out of 100), or they place all the companies on a ranked list, whereby those at the topic have exceled in institutionalizing diversity and those at the bottom have failed to do so. Thus, this widely circulated rumor suggested that one particular company, which had gained significant recognition for topping the lists, was not accurately representing their work in diversity.

Regardless of the legitimacy of this claim, diversity professionals often invoked this rumor to set diversity goals and determine methods by which to achieve them. For instance, human resource professionals expressed to consultants that they needed to show their executives evidence of diversity progress— such as in increased employee engagement, lower employee turnover, or increased racial and gender representation— and its impact on their bottom line, that is, profit. Board members told consultants that, to avoid negative publicity, they wanted access to the survey questions one year in advance. They wanted to know what score they would receive before they clicked the "submit" button, and time to make any necessary changes to improve their scores. Executives also told diversity officers and human resource professionals, that they regularly published their progress on diversity work in annual company reports, making sure that the metrics they used to achieve these results were transparent across the organization.

Considering these accounts and the efforts of consultants, board members, executives, and managers to measure and publish diversity progress, I ask: what are corporate diversity metrics? How do these metrics of progress become meaningful and productive for an organization and the reproduction of diversity management as a field of expertise? This chapter examines the work of one diversity firm's attempts to create meaningful and productive metrics to assess progress in diversity. I draw on ethnographic data and interviews acquired through a sustained two-year project with two diversity consultants, American D&I's executives, and volunteer researchers. At the core of management consultants' debates on how to assess and publish corporate progress on diversity, is how a diversity management firm imagines itself in relation to the corporation, and how these imaginations shape possibilities for the managerial expert practices.

In what follows, I will first unpack a debate among diversity consultants, over whether a company's diversity progress should be determined according to ranking or scoring methods, which center on a concern for how to motivate organizations to implement diversity and inclusion initiatives and programs. I show that in creating metrics, management consultants employ assumptions and specific knowledge over institutional "modes" for organizing practices and resources (Adler 2001). More specifically, whereas ranking practices are grounded in understandings that the corporation is subject to a price-dependent market and that it is primarily concerned with inter-organizational competition, scoring strategies exemplify a growing acceptance of resource-based management theories and methodologies in business (Penrose 1957). Diversity consultants argue that scoring fosters inter-organizational collaboration and the possibility to learn from other managers at different companies on what strategies and practices work. While they recognize that collaboration-based diversity practices might lead to less

opportunities to gain consultant projects, they claim that what is important is institutionalizing diversity to become a new norm in corporate America.

In this chapter, I take an actor-centric approach to examining the role of management, in their scientific and affective capacity to create strategies within corporate frameworks for the implementation of diversity management. I argue that like the proponents of ranking practices, anthropologists have long prioritized an understanding of the corporation as bounded, as competitive, and as exclusively profit driven. Hence, anthropologists have underemphasized the study of managerial practices, which operate inter-organizationally, helping the corporation develop, grow, and institutionalize new business discourses. This latter approach, I suggest, requires ethnographic engagement with corporations' management and managerial mechanisms, that is, the places, people, and processes by which consultants interject to restructure organizations. I situate these practices within a body of scholarship concerned with how business discourse is produced, arguing that insofar as metrics help generate literature, trainings, and workshops, diversity consultants create new roles for managerial bureaucrats and the corporation. In doing so, diversity consultants develop new business knowledge and organizational techniques that foreclose and enable possibilities for profit, generating capitalist discourse through the making of diverse workplaces.

Market Illusions

Over the course of the two years that I volunteered as a researcher with American D&I, I was asked on several occasions to help launch a "Diversity Profile[23]" that would assess diversity progress across large companies, defined as those with more than 500 employees. The Diversity

[23] Pseudonym. All non-public names, organizations, and products of organizations have received pseudonyms for protection.

Profile was to be a survey resulting from several years of research into diversity management practices, and comparable to other metrics created by organizations, including the Human Rights Council Corporate Equality Index, Diversity Inc., and from the Global Diversity and Inclusion Benchmark (GDIB). The latter being a free manual created by 95 prominent and pioneering scholar-practitioners in diversity management, detailing specific standards that company set for achieving organizational diversity.[24] A team of consultants developed the Diversity Profile, which constituted a total of 145 questions that human resource professionals and diversity officers were to fill out. American D&I executives, scheduled the first version to be launched in 2016, yet by 2018, the project still had not come to fruition. The research leaders, consultants, and executive leaders of American D&I could not agree on a practical—but theoretically loaded—issue: was this assessment of progress to rank corporations or give them a score? The two options were irreconcilable: the former would only allow for one company to be ranked at first place, while the latter allowed for multiple companies to achieve the same score.

In my naiveté I wondered for months why we could not employ both frameworks for assessing results. For example, in 2016, the Corporate Equality Index employed a one-hundred point system to report on corporations' treatment of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) employees. The Human Rights Council assigned points based on a given company's offer of healthcare benefits to transgender employees and whether the company extends healthcare options to same-sex couples. It also deducted 25 points for negative LGBT publicity. In contrast, diversity management firms like Diversity Inc. used a ranking system to assess companies. Diversity Inc. provided a confidential survey to over one thousand large

[24] The GDIB is published periodically, edited by Julie O'Mara and Alan Richter, and is in its 4th edition. See: http://diversitycollegium.org/

corporations, assessing their workforce demographics, employee resource groups, mentoring and sponsorship practices, and whether companies conducted business with Minority-Owned or Women-Owned Businesses. Then, they published a Top 50 list recognizing the companies with, according to their standards, the best diversity management practices.

In February of 2016 I had not yet relocated to the headquarters of American D&I, and hence, I was conducting most of my volunteer research work over phone-calls, Skype meetings, and e-mail. I split my volunteering work between attending American D&I events and writing reports. In the reports I compiled and documented the racial and gender demographics of specific executives and board members. I was editing one of these reports when Keith, the founder of American D&I, asked me to ranking the companies he had asked me to survey and include them on the report. I had to provide a ranking, like that of Diversity Inc., detailing which company had the most racial and gender diversity and which had the least. Having never done this before, I called another volunteer, Anna, who had also been compiling demographic data. I asked her if we had to develop a protocol for the ranking, or whether there were other consultants at American D&I who had done this already. She suggested we call the consultants working on the Diversity Profile.

We were on the phone with the two consultants who were leading the Diversity Profile, Monica and Peter. After I explained to them that Keith wanted us to develop a ranking for the report, Monica immediately stated that they were committed to doing a scorecard, and that, to the best of her recollection, she did not know who at American D&I might be developing a ranking. She said that understood why we had assumed that there was already a protocol for ranking. Since they had begun developing the Diversity Profile, there was a conflict: Keith wanted her to rank the companies, but she wanted to give them each a score. At one point Keith was going to

develop another metric, but they both wanted to use the name Diversity Profile— so, in effect, when consultants and executives at American D&I used the name Diversity Profile, they sometimes did so referencing two completely different projects.

Peter, the other consultant, elaborated the differences between both approaches, and included that he could understand why Keith wanted a ranking. The ranking creates urgency for consulting projects, he said, because it "dog-eat-dog" situation. Peter explained:

> "If you're #7, and I think this is why Keith [the founder] wants it, because it's a motivator— because apparently something you did caused you to drop from #1 to #7. So [you ask] how to get it higher. You call the rating company Diversity Inc. and they send out special consultants, who offer advice and wisdom: You need to do this and you need to implement programs. This ends up costing companies into the 6 figures, in other words $100,000 plus. So if you have 10 companies who don't like their ratings, you hire the audit firm to give you advice and wisdom. People do this all day, all over the world. So there's potentially money."

Yet, Peter expressed his concern that, since American D&I was not as established as Diversity Inc., perhaps American D&I needed to appeal to the middle-sized companies, such as those who don't have $100,000 to spend on consultants. After all, Peter said, "The questions are the same. Rating is: six companies do the same and their rating is an A, ranking is: these companies do more. And at least that's the illusion in the market place." Despite disagreements over the future of the Diversity Profile, the consultants and Keith agreed that each method— whether ranking or scoring— would compel distinct corporate responses. As Peter said succinctly, the ranking— and I would add the scoring as well— provide "market illusions" of what the companies do for diversity. These illusions are productive for diversity management consultants. Consultants

create the metrics that then they employ in achieving consultant projects and new clients, generating economic opportunities.

Many times while on the way to a meeting with a board member or potential client Keith told me stories of when he first started becoming involved in diversity work. He mentioned that he held thousands of meetings with corporate representatives, of which only ten percent signed up for his services; the other ninety percent laughed at him. He maintained this arguably cynical attitude when dealing with new clients. For instance, in a call with two human resource professionals and potential clients, Keith asked them why they were seeking D&I's help. After the potential clients stated that they could not disclose that kind of information, Keith said that there were only two reasons that corporate leadership wants to invest in diversity: either due to a lawsuit settlement or the fallout of negative publicity.

Months later, I accompanied Keith to a lunch sales meeting at a large chain restaurant. We met with a representative from an audit firm who for years had been trying to get her company to employ American D&I's services. Keith and this client seemed to know each other well. As we discussed what it would take for this company to join, Keith mentioned that he knew of a consultant project where a female employee sued a large corporation for discriminatory pay. Her lawyers found that women there made about 20% less than men. Keith reasoned, "Do you know why? Because white men are doing all the salary increase promotions. They see a man and they think, 'Oh he must be taking care of a family; they see a woman and they see her as a caregiver— as a supplemental income. They don't see her as an equal.'" Companies, he continued, "need to be sued, because they [white men] benefit from discrimination. For centuries they have benefitted from discrimination, [and] they won't change unless they have an incentive." The potential partner nodded as she ate, and said, "That's truth." In this case, Keith

isolated management as the problem for discrimination that resulted in pay disparities and that benefitted white men. Through this, he imagined white male managers as benefitting from systemic exclusion and the status quo, having no incentive to adopt diversity practices. Hence, diversity management is only incorporated by federal intervention or market demands— as if by force. More specifically, he noted, these took the form of lawsuits or negative publicity.

The lead consultants of the Diversity Profile and the chairman of the board, Keith, were often at odds. They had different ideas of the audience and goals of the Diversity Profile. It was clear that they imagined targeting different types of companies— large versus medium-sized (certainly small companies were often neglected because of their perceived lack of funds)—how to encourage these companies to do diversity work, and how to reproduce their jobs as consultants of diversity management. Despite their conundrum of having to choose one approach for the Diversity Profile, both of these models based on ranking and scorecards are proven as viable means to assess corporations for diversity work. The question is, to what ends and for what purposes should these metrics be employed?

In contrast to the ranking, the scorecard, proposes to influence economic behavior intra-organizationally and inter-organizationally, suggesting that diversity is interjected into capitalist discourse at two scales. Diversity management companies that employ scorecards assess the internal workings of the company by asking human resource professionals and diversity officers to answer questions on workforce demographics, available mentorship programs, employee resource groups, and on executive involvement in these diversity initiatives. They draw on behavioral economics scholarship and literature, particularly on scholarship that argues if managers create specific kind of structures in the work environment, then employee decisions can be "nudged" or altered to achieve a desired effect— such was the argument posed by

Richard H. Thaler and Cass R. Sunstein's in their popular book *Nudge*. In 2017 Thaler was awarded the Nobel Prize in Economics for explaining why and how humans do not always make rational economic decisions. This idea that humans make decisions with the information that is immediately available to them, has led to bourgeoning research on "choice architecture," which describes how the information that is presented to consumers and employees matters for the decisions they ultimately choose to make. An implication of this theory is that equality can be achieved through corporate design (Bohnet 2016; Bertrand and Mullainathan 2004).

Second, by inserting itself into the corporation at the level of inter-organizational management, diversity consultants legitimize their work as management experts and produce new organizational techniques. As a scorecard, the Diversity Profile is expected to foster collaboration across companies. This includes learning from other management professionals' experiences with achieving certain benchmarks, sharing literature and handbooks and tools (e.g. spreadsheets, handouts, checklists), and even recommending consultants. This is possible, because diversity management is already connected through network practices whereby Chief Diversity Officers and middle managers at workshops, trainings, and conferences advise and mentor each other.

The Natural Laws of the Corporation and Its Culture

How do management consultants, in this case diversity experts, legitimize their own work in order to reproduce it (Thrift 2005)? How and by which means does diversity management attempt to become normative business practice? In juxtaposing the ranking and scoring models, I aim to examine the reasoning behind diversity management assessment practices. Despite their different approaches to assessing corporate diversity progress, the lead consultants and Keith all had similar extensive background working in corporate worlds. As I was reminded often by the

Chief Executive Officer of American D&I, "You cannot do this work if you don't do business." Yet, they also all drew on different understandings logics of why and how corporate firms exist, and hence, had distinct corresponding ideas on which strategies would be most effective for institutionalizing diversity. By unpacking and disentangling these different discursive tools (Riles 2004), I aim to reveal anthropology's own assumptions of the corporate form.

I begin with analyzing Keith's vision for the Diversity Profile. In sum, Keith pushed forward an understanding of the firm premised on the idea that large corporations seek to employ diversity consultants when they are forced to (as a result of federal intervention or market demand) or that diversity consultants can attract them by creating the conditions of market competition. In other words, through ranking, the Diversity Profile can fabricate inter-organizational competition, circulating claims that those at the top of the ranking are most in successful in implementing diversity.[25] According to Keith, ranking corporations would force them to compete to be number one, and hence, they would be compelled to hire external experts, create new positions in the company, assign managers to read diversity management literature and prepare reports, among other things.

Through the market, companies would be "forced" to employ a diversity management firm, such as American D&I, in a similar way as if they had been mandated by a court order. Even if managers and executives are not immediately convinced to employ diversity practices upon seeing their company's rank, by making the ranking public through American D&I's website, a corporation could be exposed to public scrutiny and negative publicity. According to Keith's understanding, the market has the power to create and foreclose possibilities for the firm. In effect, the firm reacts in such a way, because it is imagined as separate from the market, subject to its influence as if by natural force.

[25] This socio-economic process is examined more at length in the chapter on Correlation versus Causation.

Theories of the firm within economic philosophy are traced back to the early 19th century. By then economists could no longer neglect to account for the firm. In other words, while influential classical economic theorists, including Adam Smith, had made significant progress in explaining market participation in relation to concerns over supply and demand, the question of the firm was left unanswered. For instance, in the introduction to his monumental work, *The Wealth of Nations,* Smith opens with a discussion of the supply, productivity, and division of labor in factories and workhouses. As he sets up his argument on the mass-supply of agricultural products and its eventual effects on prices, he overlooks certain issues critical to production: who, how, and why are workers employed? What is keeping the same employees in the same firm over time? In other words, if markets regulate all economic behavior, why do employers not hire and fire individuals according to specific demands of the market? Why do firms exist?

Keith's way of thinking about the firm is not too dissimilar from popular neoclassical views of the firm. These perspectives on the firm draw on Ronald Coase's (1937) theory of the firm. Coase wrote that the purpose of the firm was to create an efficient process that could reduce the costs of participating in the market. To create efficiency, corporations employed managers to govern, create authority, and produce contracts. He argued that there are transaction costs to participating in the market: bargaining costs, keeping trade secrets, searching and information costs to obtain perfect information, and policing and enforcing transactions made. Firms arise, he argued, when they can avoid these costs by producing the resources and information they need internally. Thus, firms needed authority and discipline to impose order and to maintain contracts, achieving efficiency over time. Coase's theory of the firm has remained widely popular to think with, and since 1937, has been adapted and expanded by economists (e.g. Klein and Leffler 1981; Williamson 1975, 1989).

Early anthropological engagements with Coase's economic model of the firm can be traced to the Hawthorne Experiments of 1927 to 1932. Through these expansive studies of the Western Electric factory in a suburb of Chicago, anthropologists, sociologists, and psychologists created and transformed "cultural" understandings of workplace efficiency (Jacoby 1997; Gillespie 1991; Wright 1994). These social scientists, in collaboration with Harvard Business faculty, observed and interviewed workers, at times also taking their blood pressure. Their goal was to determine which factors in the workplace environment were conducive to higher worker productivity, which they measured in terms of the number of telephone unit parts produced at any given time. Social scientists concluded, "workers' productivity was not necessarily linked to such material incentives as pay or working conditions (e.g. lighting, seating, or lunch breaks) but rather to more intangible factors like work-group dynamics, belongingness, and sense of purpose" (Delton 2009:101, citing Gillespie 1991). Critics of the Hawthorne studies suggested that these social scientists worked on a false assumption that workers would be influenced by workplace conditions alone and not by the research conditions. When questioned for their productivity, research subjects generally perform better when they are being observed, they said, and named this phenomenon the "Hawthorne Effect" (Schwartzmann 1993).

Many scholars have traced contemporary understandings of "corporate culture" to the work of a business strategist, Stanley Davis, who in 1971 defined it as:

> "The pattern of shared beliefs and values that gives the members of an institution meaning, and provides them with the rules for behavior in their organization. Every organization will have its own word or phrase to describe what it means by culture; some of these are: being, core, culture, ethos, identity, ideology, manner,

patterns, philosophy, purpose, roots, spirit, style, vision, and way. To most managers, these mean pretty much the same thing" Davis 1984, 1).

More recently, Gregg Urban and Kyung-Nan Koh (2013) have shown that much of anthropology devoted to studying the firm has drawn on Coase's understandings, whether they do so by imagining corporations as small-scale societies that operate through structures of management or by critiquing its external effects. In studying the corporate form by "studying up" (Nader 1969; Cefkin 2009), anthropologists have drawn on Malinowski's insight that institutions, not cultural traits, are the concrete isolates of culture (Malinowski 1960, 52-66; Brown et al. 1974). Hence, corporate ethnography has often been conducted through an inside/outside analytical binary, which culminates in studies of corporate cultures or corporate effects (Urban and Koh 2013). Scholars, for instance, have examined how familial, social, and corporate values and interests are negotiated and stabilized, and how they generate new identities (e.g. English-Lueck 2002; Freeman 2001; Moeran 2006; Kasmir 2001), as well as how social and familial interests and values intersect with economic ones (Yanagisako 2002).

Through the 1980s and into the 1990s, anthropological interest in how corporate managers, consultants, and experts produce corporate governance mushroomed (Marcus 1998; Linstead 1997; Villaveces-Izquierdo 1998). For example, Gideon Kunda (1992) in an influential study asked: in what ways are cultures in organizations managed? In an examination of how employees struggle with organizational values and goals that differ from their own, Kunda argued that corporate management practices produce "normative control." This has serious implications for personhood. He argued, "among full members, we find an ambivalent, fluctuating, ironic self, at war with itself and with its internalized images of self and other" 221).

These early social scientific studies of corporate management were theoretically concerned with authenticity and selfhood, which assumed subjects as actualized being outside of the corporation.

Anthropological scholarship on emotion and affective labor expanded on questions of authenticity. For instance, Arlie Hochschild's (1985) *The Managed Heart* examined how in service work individuals are expected not only to perform their job well, but also to perform their job with a smile. In other words, insofar "the emotional style of offering the service is part of the service itself" (1983, 5), employees are expected to conduct emotional labor. Hochschild, hence, challenged scholarship that assumed that the public sphere as rational, and the private as emotional were separate. Her work also extended feminist scholarship by demonstrating that unpaid affective labor was largely gendered and critical for the reproduction of capitalism (see for example, Lamphere and Rosaldo 1974; Sacks 1974). Although, later scholars argued that authenticity is a Western cultural construct that essentializes social phenomena (Handler 1986), Hochschild's work continued to be influential in the study of management as processes of top-down corporate control and governance.

Whereas anthropologists have critiqued corporate culture on the grounds that, "A strong culture enables people to feel better about what they do, so they are more likely to work harder" (Deal and Kennedy 1982, 16), in more recent studies, anthropologists have turned to question the production and employment of organizational values. For instance, Krause-Jensen's (2010) ethnography examined how value-based management produced a divisive split between staff, such as Human Resources, and the rest of the company, which included employees of 4,000 franchises. He noted that those at Bang & Olufsen rejected that they shared a common culture, arguing that they insisted on communicating a brand, which was based on the company having values and principles. Hence, rather that culture, which points to practices and ways of doing

things, Krause-Jensen argued that corporations must be studied for the ideologies they produce. Hence, the production and inculcation of values is productive for a corporation that faces organizational chaos, low employee retention rate, and high potential for layoffs due to unpredictability of the market.

Whereas these scholars above studied organizations as "social units" (Krause-Jensen 2007, 268), the lead consultants on the Diversity Profile, imagined that diversity management could be generated through the collaboration of managers and executives across organizations, which, I suggest, demands a study of networked management actors. Monica and Peter advocated for the employment of scorecards arguing that by giving companies a score, whether in the form of a letter-grade or a number, managers and executives would reflect on their current organizational practices and try to improve their work on diversity. Managerial attentions towards the employment of scorecards suggest awareness over how corporations' have, since the 1990s, become increasingly concerned with learning and developing business knowledge and organizational techniques.

In his article entitled, "Is Anthropology Good for the Corporation," Francisco Aguilera (1996) walked us through his work as a business consultant and anthropologist from the 1960s to the 1990s, claiming that he has seen a change in how corporations view organizational culture. For example, he explained that in his early consultant days, businesses had a model by which managers imagined organizational development change, which was developed by Kurt Lewin in the 1940s. In this model for creating organizational culture, he noted, "Systems went from one "frozen" equilibrium to the next" (1996, 736). In a three-step model organizations "unfroze," changed and developed, and re-froze behavior patterns, imagining the corporation as static before and after implementing new bureaucratic processes and workplace practices. Aguilera

reflected on his own understanding of organizational culture informed by anthropological expertise:

> "The metaphor in my mind was that a company is a sort of closed corporate community. It grows by fission and fusion. It has a strong sense of identity and collective representation to the outside world" (1996, 737).

Then, he describes the current business context that placed in questioned anthropological concerns with corporate cultures. These practices, he elaborates, mark a transition in business managers and experts concerns from corporate "equilibrium, stability, and the smooth running of a self-congratulatory system to dynamic relationships within the marketplace, responsiveness to customers, and quick adaptation to changing situations" (738-739).

In 2011, Marina Welker, Damani Partridge, and Rebecca Hardin released a special edition in *Current Anthropology* to advocate for studies of how the corporate form "shapes and is shaped by daily life" (2011, S3). These authors revealed the rich diversity of anthropological approaches to studying corporations beyond the study of "corporate culture," situating such projects in the aftermath of the post-2008 corporate-led economic crises. Welker, Partridge, and Harding recognized that there is no unifying body of literature among those who study the corporation. I suggest that the study of corporate forms often has no academic lineage, since anthropologists have studied corporations as societies, persons, and as made up of actors, and also through the "socio-economic-moral phenomena" they produce (Browne and Milgram 2009). Beyond studies in corporate culture, various anthropological frameworks and metaphors for the study of the corporation exist, including its legal framings (e.g. Kirsch 2014). By tracing the managerial concerns and practices by which everyday business is conducted within the corporation, I propose to draw a genealogy for anthropological studies of the corporate form that

trace its management as socio-economic practices (Bear et al. 2015) and as critical to the enactment of corporations and the production of capitalist discourse.

Towards a Resource-Based Perspective of the Firm

"All the evidence we have indicates that the growth of firms is connected with the attempts of a particular group of human beings to do something."

Edith Penrose, *The Theory of the Growth of the Firm* (2009 [1959], 2).

I re-visit Aguilera's (1996) observations of the corporation, which highlighted the relation between business strategy, organizational management, and development of the corporate form in such a way that demands anthropological inquiry. He noted:

> "Business issues are shifting company focus away from an emphasis on a static, closed view of the inside of the organization ("Us"), its external relations across the boundary to consumers as a group ("Them"), and hostile competitors ("The Enemy"). The new emphasis is on flexible, open production groups ("Us") and an extension of networks across the organization's putative boundaries to embrace customers, suppliers and competitors ("We") in partnerships, alliances, and service delivery." (738).

In other words, Aguilera recognized that corporations increasingly favor collaboration in the form of partnerships and alliance, and that are decreasingly isolated social units that primarily value competition. Thus, if we are to extend an economic understanding of the firm that reflects contemporary corporate means by which to produce capital, we need to examine how mundane and routine operations of the corporation have changed.

In 2016, I assisted a diversity consultant with a training, which was presented twice to a cumulative audience of almost three hundred U.S.-based middle managers of a large

multinational corporation. Each manager was seen as the diversity and inclusion leader for an entire region, which encompassed several stores. The training was one component in the corporation's broader national diversity and inclusion strategy. This corporation was in the process of developing a national framework with "councils" made up of several management professionals on different hierarchical scales, each with assigned roles and responsibilities.

To maintain confidentiality and ensure intellectual property right protections, I cite below a similar model to that which we employed that day taken from The Kaleidoscope Group, a national diversity management firm. The Kaleidoscope Group describes its global strategic approach to diversity management as an intervention in five areas of organizational development:

> "1. Marketplace: Is your business reaching all of its potential customers?
>
> 2. Community: How is your organization viewed in the communities where you do business?
>
> 3. Suppliers: How do you get great service and better pricing from vendors you don't even know exist?
>
> 4. Workforce: Are you attracting and retaining the best talent from the entire available workforce?
>
> 5. Workplace: Do your employees feel empowered to bring their best self to work everyday?"

Rather than take the corporation as an institutional unit wherein "culture" is the dominant framework by which to assess and analyze organizational change, The Kaleidoscope Group identifies a managerial strategy wherein corporate culture— at least in the way in which anthropologists have understood it— is largely confined to one area: the

workplace. A resource-based view of the corporation, on the other hand, would enable understandings for how managerial theories and techniques are implemented this organizational scale and beyond, including but not limited to executive organizational involvement, executive and employee social and public relations, and manager's management of resources through bureaucratic processes.

Thus, I ask us to revisit the 19th century line of inquiry, "What is the firm? Why does it exist? In employing a resource-based management of the firm, it would be difficult to discern where the corporation begins and where it ends; corporate work is not always enacted within institutional walls. Hence, to what extent is the corporation made in the fashion of its employees, partners, suppliers, and the market in everyday work? Further, if the corporation is increasingly concerned with creating environments wherein employees can be their "authentic" selves at work (Yoshino and Smith 2013), where do corporate knowledge practices end and their employees' begin? Could anthropology have a role in investigating these emergent business concerns and corporate forms? I suggest that an resource-based perspective of the firm helps address what Ho (2014) has characterized as an anthropological corporate nostalgia that assumes the corporation as bounded, stable, rational, and enduring.

Building on Richard Sennett's (2007) work, Karen Ho (2014) made the case that we are living in an era of extreme financialization and that the "iron cage" view of the corporation, as an extremely rational and orderly institution, has become dismantled, fragmented, and otherwise completely disappeared. Such changes, she argued, have led to the resurgence of "Old Boy [and white] Networks," which have limited the possibilities for the upward mobility and social and economic inclusion of historically marginalized populations, namely women and people of color. She asked us to reflect on what has been lost and what has become exacerbated under a financial

corporation that prioritizes "shareholder value," rather than its long-term stability. This includes increased economic inequity defined along racial lines and the proliferation of management experts who continue to invent new ways to create value for the corporation.

In examining the corporation through a financial and legal perspective, Ho builds on an understanding that the corporation is made up of a "nexus of contracts." Michael Jensen and William Meckling (1976) coined the term to explain how the firm works as a legal fiction that enables managers to engage in stock and debt contracts that on the surface defy the logics of value-maximization. More specifically, they highlighted the interactions between managers and external "shareholders," showing that these sets of actors might not always have the same interests, and consequently, that firm behavior did not always follow rules of cost-reduction. They argued, "Individual behavior in organizations, including the behavior of managers, will depend upon the nature of these [social and legal] contracts," changing economic and legal understandings in corporate ownership and everyday operation (Jensen and Meckling 1976, 308). Yet, insofar as a study of the corporation is a study of finance, much can be learned of how corporations restructure and shape the lives of their employees through financial actors who exchange debt to create capital. Such a theoretical approach, however, leaves much to be explained with regards to the mundane operations of the corporation, which are not always driven by shared financial—or otherwise— understandings.

In efforts to advance the study of organizations and firms through its internal/external processes, which include ethnographic examinations of how management, executives, and white-collar workers collaborate to achieve specific goals, I draw inspiration from managerial theories of firm behavior. In particular, I focus on resource-based theories that have built on the work of Edith Penrose's (1959) *The Theory of the Growth of the Firm*, wherein the firm is defined not by

its capacity to produce goods and services, but as a "collection of productive resources" that are coordinated with the goal of long-term profit maximization (1959, 21). Penrose argued that abstract economic models of the firm are not reflective of the actual everyday work of organizations; rather question is not whether the firm grows or not, but by how much. She defines resources as both human and non-human, including natural resources, raw material, waste products, unsold stocks, finished goods, office equipment, and clerical, technical, administrative, labor and managerial staff.

Distinctly, in The Theory of the Growth of the Firm Penrose recognized that the firm's production processes are not dependent on the market; rather they are created and achieved through human organization dependent on the firm's administrative structure. She argued,

> "The administrative structure of the firm is the creation of the men who run it; the structure may have developed rather haphazardly in response to immediate needs as they arose in the past, or it may have been shaped largely by conscious attempts to achieve a 'rational' organization; it may consist of no more than one or two men who divide the task of management; or it may be so elaborate that its complete ramifications cannot even be depicted in the most extensive chart. In any event, there need be nothing 'fixed' about it; it can, in principle, always be adapted to the requirements of the firm—expanded, modified, and elaborated as the firm grows and changes" (2009 [1959], 28).

The role of "entrepreneurship" is also critical to Penrose's theory of the firm, which she recognizes as understudied in economics as it often has been dismissed as less rational due to the influence of personal motivations, aptitudes, and desires. What is intriguing for an anthropological read on Penrose's theoretical intervention into the field of economics is the role

of business actors in performing and enacting visions of the firm. This is particularly the case wherein anthropologists, in the study of corporate culture, have often taken the firm as already pre-existing— as if it were a natural phenomenon. Hence, anthropological understandings that a firm is "rational" are accurate insofar as actors within a corporation create such expectations of their workplace behaviors and environments. Keith Hart (2005), for instance, has written at length on how anthropologists examine business as if it has been organized through "depersonalized rules," and yet, business is always personal (2005, 16). Therefore, I advocate for an anthropological examination of the firm that expands through the intentional and unintentional actions of those within the firm who have and enact organizational competency.

If the firm is a collection of administrative resources and human actors aiming to maximize and expand, with all the contradictions this entails in the negotiation of arguably personal and impersonal interests, where does the firm begin and where does it end? Economists have often defined analytical and theoretical boundaries between "the corporation" and the "market." For instance, throughout the course of her career, Penrose maintained that the distinction between the firm and the market is that the former deals with administrative functions, whereas the latter does not— the market continues to follow the natural laws of supply/demand and price. G.B. Richardson (1972) most prominently challenged her position, pointing to how corporations shared production costs, created acquisitions and mergers, and how they collaborated to control supply and demand within the same industry. Such work, for instance, showed that managers and executives sometimes collaborated to set industry prices. Richardson argued, the firm was not an inside, nor the market an outside. He noted, "So complex and ramified are these arrangements, indeed, that the skills of a genealogist rather than an economist might often seem appropriate for their disentanglement" (Richardson 1974, 884).

Penrose (1957) a resource-based view of the firm has grown within organizational studies, particularly due to its potential in extending the knowledge and practice of diversification. A resource-view of a firm, Birger Wernerfelt (1984) argued, allows for the study of how firms benefit from non-financial linkages, including by helping identify which resources should be diversified, what new resources can be developed, the sequence in which diversification should occur and into which markets, and the identification of companies for acquisition. This inquiry into how resources are identified, employed, and deployed has been critical for the discourse in strategic management not only for firm existence, but also for its growth (Mahoney and Pandian 1992). I suggest that this view of the firm, which at the core analyzes managerial actors, can also anthropological inquiries into the corporate form and how corporations in the 21st century generate capitalism.

Scorecards and Managerial Capitalism

Following the observation from corporate anthropologists that the corporation is more than ever socially dispersed (Welker et al. 2011), I argue for the study of the corporation through the work of managerial actors who dedicate their labor to the growth of the firm, despite and through its fragmented and dispersed form. At stake in this approach is a theorization of the firm through an examination of everyday managerial processes. I ask us to examine how management creates subjects, as well as how it imagines and enacts their visions of the corporation, work, society, and capitalism. Key to this is a re-framing in what counts as "situated" within the anthropology of corporations from the study of social units to study of managerial competency.

To make this case, I finish the parallel I have been drawing between diversity management's own visions of and for the corporation and that of anthropologists. I return to the phone call I mentioned at the beginning of this chapter. This is the moment in which the diversity

consultants leading The Diversity Profile project made distinctions regarding what it would mean for diversity progress to be measured according to a ranking or scorecards. This distinction, you'll remember, flagged a difference in managerial approach with respect to the functioning of the corporation internally, as well as in relation to other firms. Diversity professionals see scorecards as enabling collaboration and as necessary to spur intra-organizational changes. Alex, the second consultant on the call, spoke in favor of the scorecard, arguing,

> "The value of the rating, [is that] there's more opportunity for companies to grow and learn best practices from other companies. In the ranking, it's always the ones that are on top. And it's difficult to get to that point to an AT&T kind of company that has D&I [Diversity and Inclusion] kinds of things in place. It takes years to move the diversity profile. Believe me, I've worked for [a corporation] for many years, it doesn't happen from one year to the next that you are going to create a diverse executive team or board of directors. It takes years. We want it to move quickly, but it doesn't happen that way."

Most diversity professional are concerned with inter-organizational collaboration. This makes sense given that management consultants, scholars, and professionals claim that through their work they aim to advance the value of and institutionalization of diversity practices. For example, in an interview with Kathy, a Chief Diversity Officer of one of the largest employers in the world, she mentioned that part of her everyday work entails sharing knowledge, strategies, and her experiences with other Chief Diversity Officers and diversity officers at other institutions. She explained how in the days after the implementation of President Trump's first travel ban on nationals from five Muslim-majority countries (what became popularly known as the "Muslim Ban") her job entailed reassuring all— and especially her Muslim— employees that

the company stood by them. She explained that as a transnational corporation, they have a wide range of employees from the Muslim faith, including some that had been traveling abroad. Her primary concern was that Muslim employees who were abroad on business would be allowed to return safely to the United States. After reaching out to Chief Diversity Officers from other corporations to ask what they were doing in response to the ban they exchanged language to draft in e-mails and shared advice for how to support employees. Then, she drafted and sent a company-wide message of support and reiterated the diversity values of the company. Her networks, according to Kathy, have been invaluable in determining what kind of response from a CDO is appropriate when addressing emergency situations that threaten diversity, such as the travel ban, and generally for understanding what counts as competent diversity practice across the industry.

By using scorecards, experts enable managers to take initiatives in advancing diversity and inclusion in their organizations, without necessarily infringing on diversity consultant expertise. For example, in assessing organizations' diversity progress and assigning each a score, diversity professionals send a message that organizations are not in competition. Hence, management, including Chief Diversity Officers, can collaboratively interpret emergency situations and share resources, including e-mail response templates and rubrics. These knowledge-sharing activities influence a manager at any specific company to implement changes that have already been— for all intents and purposes— vetted. In effect, such networks provide support for Chief Diversity Officers, many of whom are entering entirely new positions (Wade and Golden 2013).

For example, in the no-cost and publicly available Global Diversity and Inclusion Benchmarks (GDIB), over 99 expert consultants have provided several areas for organizational

development to advance diversity and inclusion at work (See **Figure 3.1**). In an eighty-page document (at least this was the case for the 2016 version), the GDIB works as a scorecard. It allows for diversity practitioners to score themselves according to fourteen categories, including on how a diversity organizational strategy is implemented, employees are hired and retained, what kinds of employee benefits exists, how compensation is determined, and to what extent organizations are involved in research, public communications, and supplier diversity.

Scorecards are products of diversity management consultancy, making them artifacts created by experts external to the corporation, namely management consultants and business scholars. Within diversity management, the creation of benchmarks—as standards for business administrative practices— have been critical for the legitimization of diversity management as a field of expertise. They create interventions in organizational processes as audits, which Marilyn Strathern (2000) has argued, purports to be a benevolent project through claims for transparency. Yet such practices, which claim to make the invisible visible, are grounded in Euro-American cultural values and scientific reasoning practices. The habituation of such practices might lead to, she provocatively asserts, the expectation that audit participants produce their own descriptions of their own activities, "to produce these as indeed accounts of society and culture… and thus as accounts of *their own organization*" (2000, 312 emphasis original). She continued, insofar as corporations see themselves as organizations, descriptions of organization become part of the organization's knowledge of itself, notably through audit cultures— revealing the "organization's capacity for growth through self-reflection" (Strathern 2000, 313).

CATEGORY 1: D&I VISION, STRATEGY, AND BUSINESS CASE

LEVEL 5: BEST PRACTICE

☐ **1.1** D&I is embedded in organizational culture and is not seen as an isolated program but rather as a core value, a source of innovation, and a means to growth and success.

☐ **1.2** All the major components of D&I work, including vision, strategy, business case or rationale, goals, policies, principles, and competencies, are regularly reviewed.

☐ **1.3** The D&I strategy contributes to specific accomplishments and the organization's overall success in observable, measurable ways.

☐ **1.4** The organization is known as a leader in D&I and is frequently acknowledged, cited, and benchmarked for its pioneering D&I accomplishments.

LEVEL 4: PROGRESSIVE

☐ **1.5** The organization's D&I vision and goals, as well as the requirement to embed equity, prevent harassment, and reduce discrimination, are fully supported and rewarded.

☐ **1.6** The majority of stakeholders acknowledge that D&I is important for contributing to the success of the organization.

☐ **1.7** D&I competencies that help achieve the D&I strategy are demonstrated by a majority of employees.

☐ **1.8** D&I is well integrated into the organization's strategy.

LEVEL 3: PROACTIVE

☐ **1.9** The organization has examined its systems, practices, requirements, and organizational culture and created strategies to reduce barriers to inclusion.

☐ **1.10** A compelling D&I vision, strategy, and business case has been developed and communicated to all employees. It describes the multiple ways that individuals, teams, and the organization benefit from D&I.

☐ **1.11** D&I is defined broadly to include dimensions beyond gender, age, disability, and other characteristics.

☐ **1.12** D&I qualitative and quantitative goals that include input from a variety of internal and external stakeholders are being developed.

LEVEL 2: REACTIVE

☐ **1.13** If a D&I strategy exists, it is limited only to human resource functions.

☐ **1.14** D&I is narrowly defined, referring only to some underrepresented groups. The focus is primarily on numbers of people from various groups represented at different organizational levels.

☐ **1.15** Equal opportunity, disability access, age discrimination, or other diversity-related policies have been adopted primarily to meet compliance requirements and prevent damaging legal action or publicity.

LEVEL 1: INACTIVE

☐ **1.16** There is no D&I vision, strategy, imperative, business case, goals, policies, principles, or program.

☐ **1.17** There is no linkage of D&I to the vision, mission, and goals of the organization.

Figure 3.1: Global Diversity & Inclusion Benchmarks. "D&I Vision, Strategy, and Business Case." O'Mara and Richter. 2016.

In a critique of institutional diversity, Sara Ahmed (2012) highlighted how diversity work does not actually achieve more diversity. In part, she suggested, this is because diversity is not a "shared object," and often there is no agreement on what diversity is or what it means. I suggest, however, that while diversity as employed by business professionals can mean race, gender, ethnicity, as well as diversity of thought, perspectives, and ideas, diversity management is a field of expertise with shared understandings on what constitutes as competent management practice. Scholars and practitioners of diversity management engage with debates in organizational development and human resources management, drawing on scientific and economic reasoning, as well as on psychological theories of human behavior. Diversity management is not only "ticking off the box," it is a systemic attempt to restructure organizations.

Susan L. Star and James Griesemer (1989) have argued that social scientists have often assumed that scientific and organizational work is achieved by consensus, and this is not the case. They argue, "Consensus is not necessary for cooperation nor for the successful conduct of work" (1989, 388). Rather, Star and Griesemer point to "boundary objects," which allow scientific and non-scientific actors to keep their situational specificity while allowing them to collaborate across specific organizations, interests, and sets of actors. In other words, actors retain their own habits, practices, ways of seeing and understanding their own worlds, while creating a broader community of scientific practice. Thus, the universality of meaning does not exist; scientific practice entails constant work of translation, negotiation, and simplification to achieve coherence. Organizational diversity growth, hence, can be studied not by its capacity to meet certain pre-established criteria of what diversity (arguably) is, but by examining how despite failures to meet anthropological expectations of social justice, the diversity industry has become productive for corporations. This would entail leaving open the possibility that diversity

is not only situationally specific, but that it also produces discourse and new limitations and possibilities for addressing concerns with American racial relations.

To study the corporation through managerial practices, hence, we would examine how scorecards are, in effect, boundary objects. These are "scientific objects which both inhabit several intersecting social worlds… *and* satisfy the informational requirements of each of them…[they are] plastic enough to adapt to local needs… yet robust enough to maintain a common identity across sites" (Star and Griesemer 1989, 393). These objects are employed within organizations to deal with specific diversity and inclusion demands, whether this might mean the creation of mentorship programs or transitioning employee resource groups from social groups into strategic business workshops. For example, according to the GDIB, if "Leaders and board members publicly support internal and external diversity-related initiatives, even if they are perceived to be controversial" (2016, 27), it can be said that this organization is engaging in diversity "Best Practice."

These guiding frameworks and standards are also vague enough— they have a distinguishable form, but do not constrain choice. Organizations can employ them as benchmarks and adapt them to the specificity of local situations. For instance, as the editors of the GDIB, O'Mara and Richter, wrote, it is also "Best Practice" for "Diversity networks [to] serve as partners and advise on recruitment, communications, risk management, product and service development, community engagement, and other organizational issues" (2016, 29). Hence, although human resource professionals may employ such the GDIB working in isolation, diversity experts that created the GDIB built into it collaboration, resource-sharing, and networking. Rather than maintaining a static view of the corporation, hence, diversity experts

have imagined a corporation as always in the process of learning and becoming more competent in diversity.

Scorecards reveal that diversity experts expect organizations and consultants to collaborate, and that through collaboration corporations are always in the process of being made. With a particular attention to management science, Michel Callon has noted, "without tools for collecting, constructing, processing, and calculating information, agents would be unable to plan, decide, or control" (Callon 2002, 191). Management practices are particularly critical in contexts, he continued, in which there is demand for growth, including in the development and adaptation of goods and services and the diversification in economic behaviors. The problem, then becomes that to survive firms have to both increase their complexity, while maintaining simplicity in order to manage and control their operations—and to resolve this paradox, Callon argued, managers' and their tools are essential units of analysis.

Within the scientific, substantive, and sociological study of organizations, Susan L. Star (1992) proposed the study of organizations as social systems that are "situated, distributed, and fluid," by empirically studying work and practice to examine problem solving and knowledge practice. Human resource professionals in addition to management consultants are critical corporate decision-makers; they imagine the corporation and the market and enact their visions, correspondingly shaping managerial practices. Through forms, standards, and scorecards business scholars, and management consultants provide management with the opportunity to create significant organizational changes, including incorporating new employment policies and practices that would protect employees against discrimination, while growing the firm.

Employing data from the study of various professionals at work, namely computer chip designers, nineteenth-century neurophysiologists, and twentieth-century biologists, Star (1995)

also warned us about taking at face value the representations that organizations create. She argued that such formal representations create totalizing narratives, and "can be looked upon formally, as rules, or empirically, as forms of work" (1995, 90). These are made through abstracting as well as "quantifying, making hierarchies, classifying and standardizing, and simplifying" (90). As such, these I extend this concern with creating formalized representation of work to anthropological visions of the corporation, problematizing the notion that they are rationally profit-driven institutions. In creating such totalizing narratives of organizational work we take for granted the social construction of formal representations, such as the presentation of the corporation as rational. While through this view, we can at best we paint a picture of organizations as evil (Kelty 2017), at worst, we risk being empirically out of touch with the everyday work that it takes to reproduce corporations. Management ideas and practices within the organization, I suggest, need to be studied for their own sake, particularly for anthropologists to study how the corporation continues to actually exist. In studying organizational work as made up of contradictions, negotiations, and strategies, anthropology can say much about the production of subjects, work, and race in everyday corporate work.

Yet within Keith's vision of the corporation lies an understanding of the relationship between the firm and market that I have not accounted for. Here I remind us of Peter's characterization of ranking as creating an "illusion in the market place," wherein one would understand that "[certain] companies do more" for diversity work. For Peter, ranking corporations according to diversity progress simplifies the everyday managerial work that must occur to advance the value of diversity and inclusion. Ranking also obscures and limits processes of learning, adapting, and institutionalizing. That is, because these forms of assessing progress

operate through imaginaries of the firm as bounded— as separate— from the market. Yet, Peter's comment shows, this is the creation of formalized representations at its best.

On the other hand, economic sociologists and science and technology scholars have shown how management actors are also economic agents (Callon 1998; Law 1994; Myers 1994). For example, Marshall Myers and Lynne Zucker (1989) argued that organizations exist despite low performance indicators, because organizations are made up of actors with conflicting interests. Employees, managers, owners, the public, and executives of an organization may have similar goals when the organization is performing highly. Yet when it is "under-performing" employees work to keep their jobs, resisting managers and executives attempt to implement changes seen to increase performance.

As artifacts of audits, scorecards work as boundary objects that allow management, such as human resource professionals, to measure the achievement of diversity progress. At stake is how management professionals imagine and enact corporations, and how through business discourse production they reproduce capitalism (Thrift 2005). By examining how expert knowledge production is mundane and routine, and necessitates an engagement with bureaucratic materiality, (Riles 2010, 2006; Latour 1987), I advocate for anthropological analysis of the corporation based on managerial competency. Such an approach requires us to imagine corporations not as social units or bounded institutions, but as networks of knowledge production.

Conclusion

> "The essential point to grasp is that in dealing with capitalism we are dealing with an evolutionary process…[a] competition which commands a decisive cost or quality advantage and which strikes not at the markets of the profits and

outputs of the existing firms but at their foundations and their very lives (Schumpeter 1950, 82-84)."

Through an analytical comparison between ranking and scoring practices of diversity scholars and consultants, I traced in this chapter a lineage in management studies of the corporation, analyzing anthropology and management studies in parallel to theories of the firm. Alongside economic theories of the firm, which take the firm to exist as a means to manage and control efficiency for more productive market participation, exist anthropological theories of the firm that treat the corporation as a small-scale society. In recent years, economic studies of strategic management have set aside this Coasean (1937) view for a theory of the firm drawing on Penrose (1957) that attempts to explain how it grows through the administration of resources. I draw on economic theory, sociology of organizations, and science and technology studies to build a case for the anthropological study of corporations to study process, knowledge practices, resource distribution, and enactments of everyday capitalist work.

Diversity professionals debate how they should assess corporate diversity progress: some advocate for the creation of ranking lists, whereby one corporation would achieve first place in conducting diversity work, while others contend that if corporations were assessed through scores, they could share resources to grow their diversity practice. I show how through ranking diversity professionals aim to fabricate competition, understanding the corporation as exclusively concerned with profit-maximization and resistant to change outside of market demands. On the other hand, through scoring, diversity professionals claim to foster collaboration, enabling managers and Chief Diversity Officers to engage in knowledge-sharing networks, coordinate resources, and share strategies for achieving organizational goals. As a boundary object, I show how the scorecard is a tool for discourse production that both allows for the abstraction of

organizational standards for diversity, as well as for their adaptation to become locally implemented. Collaborative and material practices complicate representations of the firm as rational and bounded, revealing how negotiations, contradictions, and strategies are critical for the everyday existence of corporations, and how these managerial strategies produce new subjectivities and work arrangements, while reproducing capitalist work.

Particularly after the economic crises of 2008, anthropologists have written much about how corporations are not stable workplace environments, how firms exist despite and through their liquidation, as well as how they are the primary owners of capital (Hart 2001; Ho 2009). Empirically, the corporate form has downsized, fractured, and dispersed off-seas, online and across virtual worlds (Appel 2012, Gregg 2011, Malaby 2009; Peterson 2014). Hence, the ethnographic study of corporations as "sites" is unsustainable and as anthropologists we are unprepared to examine such dispersed—yet coherent— corporate operations. On the other hand, as diversity professionals suggest, there is significant potential for analyzing and theorizing the firm by examining how managers produce value for the corporation.

CHAPTER 4

Paying it Forward:

Debt, The Gift, And its Racial Economies

Introduction

In hotel conference suites, university auditoriums, and corporate halls management consultants educate business professionals on administrative techniques for increasing diversity in the workplace. This includes hiring strategies, planning of employees' promotions, and behavioral practices for maintaining "employee engagement." Diversity professionals mark these employment processes important for diversity, especially if there is employee uncertainty over job tenure or advancement opportunities. While these trainings reward corporations to educate their employees and managers, they are also critical sites for the generation of social and economic opportunities for women and People of Color.[26] In particular, I examine how and why diversity professionals show concern for the economic, social, and professional status of those they meet in diversity events, and how they make time outside of their everyday work to help others achieve upward mobility. In this chapter, I highlight the kinds of activities that generate and mobilize "networking" practices by which individuals are offered internships, job opportunities, tools, and advice to advance their careers in their respective organizations.

How do high-ranking business people enable the career advancement of women and people of color in the corporate workplace through these networked and networking sites? Why do these practices work and persist? Why is it important? Most white-collar workers and

[26] I employ this term as a "native" term. As explored in the chapter, Post-Colonial Documents, diversity experts often replace the term "demographic minorities" with "people of color" for historic, scientific, and political reasons.

business professionals characterize their participation in these events as "paying it forward." They claim that they aim to help others achieve social and economic inclusion by sharing knowledge and resources as others once did for them. While most of the literature on networks and economic mobility poses such concerns over resource distribution on discussions of social capital, I argue for an analytic that examines these transactions are "gifts" of economic opportunity (Mauss 2009 [1925]). I suggest that these practices are characteristic of how social and economic opportunity is generated within a post-Affirmative Action corporation— a historically affluent and white male institution (Laird 2006). I ask, how is gift-giving made meaningful and made possible through histories of systemic exclusion? This chapter provides an important corrective to sociological studies of social capital, and re-examines Mauss's theory of "the gift" in relation to race, particularly in a post-Affirmative Action Era.

Within the study of economics and social mobility, scholars have concluded that humans are beings of maximization, whether this entails maximizing capital or prestige. On the other hand, within anthropological scholarship on the gift, much has been said of its relationship to kinship structures, the reproduction of economic systems, and the creation of solidarity (Mauss 1925; Graeber 2014). We have also learned much about how the gift is gendered (Weiner 1992; Strathern 1980). Yet the economic and feminist substantivist approaches have said little about how actions to further social and economic opportunity are marked by racial understandings and antiracist sentiments. In this chapter, I advance this line of inquiry by examining the gift's temporal dimensions, as many other anthropologists have done, by studying its relationship to debt (Guyer 2012; Peebles 2010).

First, I narrate how diversity event participants explain their feelings of obligation to create economic opportunities for others. Second, I show how these desires are operationalized

through semiotic systems that bring indexical icons and qualisigns into a meaningful relation. In other words, those with obligations can often point to one particular experience wherein they became aware that they faced institutional discrimination due to living in a racial and gendered body. These meanings are mapped onto other bodies that are similar, but different from theirs, as they create relationships to gift their economic opportunities. Lastly, I show how these transactions constitute a gift-debt economy that creates racial subjects as indebted subjects.

The Business Card Ritual

Early in my dissertation fieldwork in 2015, when I did not know exactly *what* I was studying, but with the IRB in hand, I began to attend any diversity event that was sponsored by a corporation. In November, I attended a healthcare-related event promoted by a "diversity council" in Southern California, whose e-mail list I had joined earlier that year. I drove an hour to the outskirts of Los Angeles at 7:30 in the morning on a weekday. Exhausted from rush hour traffic, I arrived to the parking lot of a large nationally recognized hospital; the event was to take place in one of their conference rooms. I shared a shuttle to the event with the owner of a consulting company, Brian, who explained that in his job he was primarily concerned with metrics and measurable outcomes in the hiring and retention of minorities, and that "If the [company] didn't meet their goals, [he] would take money away." This practice of withdrawing resources, he found, was an effective approach at increasing the numbers of underrepresented minorities in the workplace.

As we arrived, we sat at one of the ten large, round, and white eight-person tables, typical of a conference room setting where we would later be served breakfast and lunch. Brian left as he noticed someone across the room that he recognized. As I sat there, anxiously trying to figure out how to begin what I considered the rest of my field research, I watched as half the room

filled up, but very few attendees actually sat down. I grew impressed at the ease with which people approached strangers while getting coffee and bagels. They placed their bags and blazers on their chairs— and very intentionally— they made eye contact and gravitated towards others. It seemed as if making eye contact was an invitation for a conversation. I began to notice my own limitations in networking. So, I sat there, contemplating my next move, and thinking about how to join in this shared activity of which I was very evidently an amateur. I went back and forth over whether to approach someone or whether to wait for them to approach me. Then, as I continued in my indecision, people approached me and I began to collect business cards.

Over the course of the next two-years, I collected hundreds of cards. It was not unusual for me to walk away from an event with at least twenty in hand. While each interaction was certainly worthwhile, in the aggregate of interactions—at least as a researcher—each became significantly less memorable (so, I rely heavily on my field notes). I would imagine, however, that for someone who attends significantly fewer meetings, each interaction is a memorable possibility. For example, late in December 2015, I met a young woman in the bathroom of the 24th floor of a "big-four" multinational audit firms, Deloitte. She told me that she was attending a "diversity of thought" workshop, because she was in between jobs. In the next month, I saw her several times at different events, always moving swiftly through conference rooms collecting cards.

During much of the time I spent conducting this research, I imagined these sites as useful for networking, meaning that I came to see how those unemployed or those seeking to advance their careers attempted to secure future employment opportunities. I also saw how more senior persons took an active interest in engaging with others, including myself by aiding me with data collection. For example, at the aforementioned diversity healthcare event, an older Black woman

sat next to me. As we made small talk over breakfast, she asked me if I had ever considered a career in healthcare, despite me already having explained that I was attending these events as an anthropologist and researcher. In a soft-spoken and generous-sounding voice, she explained that she was the Director for a research unit in that hospital, and she was always taking applications for associates that she could mentor. I politely turned down her offer. After I went home, I searched for her biography and Curriculum Vitae online, and saw her record of accomplishments in addition to her title in this world-renown hospital. I asked myself, what could she possibly gain by mentoring me?

The Limits of Social Capital

The concern for how humans manage and distribute resources for specific ends has been central to the study of economics and economic anthropology. By the 1960s, these two fields had been caught in a debate as these scholars contended whether a neoclassical, and hence Western, model of economics could be applied to the study of "primitive" societies (Polanyi 1944; Dalton 1961). On the one hand, formalists argued that all humans use scarce resources for alternate ends, therefore maximizing interests. On the other, substantivists, and economic anthropologists in particular, argued that this idea of maximization relied on Western models that all persons were driven by the profit motive, and that this was inaccurate. Frank Cancian (1966) eventually revealed that "maximization" had taken on three different meanings: norm, strategy, and theory. He argued that all individuals maximized as part of their roles in institutional norms, whether this referred to goods or intangible social values, such as prestige. Among scholars in this debate, he added, different understandings of maximization had been conflated: one as scientific strategy to study economic transactions, which assume an analytic of maximization for the purposes of model building to explain some aspect of human behavior. On the other, scholars have

understood maximization to be human nature, and attempted to engineer a theory for general human behavior.

The study of maximization as an institutional norm has extended our understanding of how and why organizational resources are distributed, although investigations of these kinds of economic transactions have remained largely a concern of sociologists, not anthropologists. Critical for these studies was sociologist Mark Granovetter who in 1970 interviewed white-collar workers to understand how they found employment opportunities. He reflected, "Often when I asked respondents whether a friend had told them about their current job, they said, 'Not a friend, an acquaintance'" (Granovetter 1973, 1372). Thus, he argued, "Weak ties are more likely to link members of different small groups than are strong ones, which tend to be concentrated within particular groups" (1376). Weak ties lead individuals to discover and take up opportunities beyond their immediate workplaces. Granovetter's work was among the first that tied employment statistics, which provided macro-level understandings of how the market worked, to everyday interactions among employees who were searching for employment.

Granovetter (1985) later became known for developing the economic concept of "embeddedness"[27] by rejecting neoclassical economic theories that presupposed that individuals, since they were under-socialized and atomized, maximized their self—and largely a-social—interests. He also rejected the approach that assumed that over-socialized individuals were entirely dependent on the approval of others for belonging and community building. In his concept of embeddedness, he argued for an in-between approach where economic action could be studied as embedded in on-going—arguably "non-economic"—social relationships.[28] This

[27] This is distinct but similar to Polanyi's concept of embeddedness.
[28] Anthropological studies have critiqued this approach as assuming distinct spheres between economic and non-economic relations (Ho 2009; Maurer 2008).

analytic led to studies in how actors make economic decisions with others employing social understandings, including another person's trust-worthiness (Kramer and Cook 2004).

Subsequent scholarly concern with organizational resource distribution has coalesced around studies of social capital. In particular, many have interrogated the motivations of donors, "who are requested to [provide] these assets," including information or knowledge, and make them "available without any immediate return" (Portes 1998, 6). At the core of social capital is a means to explain the benefit of individuals' participation in groups and networks. As sociologist Nan Lin (2001) explained, "the premise behind the notion of social capital is rather simple and straightforward: investment in social relations with expected returns in the marketplace" (2001, 19). Extending capital theory, she explains that the purpose of engaging in networking is to maximize, since it creates obligations, a group of individuals ready to come to your aid, and an accumulation of resources across a set of networked relationships.

These scholarly and popular understandings commonly draw from Pierre Bourdieu's (2002[1986]) reading of Marx, which understands that capital is accumulated labor over history and that it takes many forms. In other words, social capital is "made up of social obligations ('connections'), which is convertible, in certain conditions, into economic capital and may be institutionalized in the forms of a title of nobility" (Bourdieu 2002, 281). Social capital is productive for investigating and explaining why certain individuals or classes of persons have access to information and resources, particularly as a consequence of their economic standing. It also suggests that through these transactions, economic actors reproduce social classes.

Numerous studies reveal the social and economic significance of social capital (see Portes 1998). A small and growing body of anthropological scholarship has employed the sociological concept of social capital. These scholars have examined how under extreme

environments resources are distributed to guarantee survival and alleviate impoverishment (Adger 2003). For example, Vásquez-León (2009) argued that farmworkers, who are subjected to poverty, migration instability, and drought, manage their risk by accessing resources through informal networks. Vásquez-León argued that in conditions that require survival skills, the exchange of social capital creates community and ensures reciprocity. In advocating for the necessity to account for these transactions, she argued that government research often underestimates the extent to which certain communities are impoverished.

What sociologists have made clear is that participation in organizational networks is quintessentially economic behavior, because in short, such participation creates creditor-debtor relationships. I extend an anthropological concern for understanding the composition and impact of social networks for political and economic organization (Barnes 1954; Leach 1967). Particularly, I do so by examining how individuals choose to make or break social relationships for economic ends (Cattelino 2009). This entails taking white-collar workers and their managers at their word when they state that their decision to participate in networks is a question of commitment—a means to pay forward a debt they have accrued as embodied racial and gendered white-collar workers. It also means recognizing the framings and possibilities of networks (Riles 2001). Few anthropological studies economic resource distribution explicitly address race. Thus, I ask, what are the implications for our understandings of resource distribution as a means to maximize when we take into account that these practices have been shaped by historical exclusion?

Obligations and Paying it Forward

Keith took a vested interest in my professional development as a diversity consultant. He had become convinced that since I continued to ask for access to corporate clients that I must be

interested in practicing, and he situated himself in a position to help me develop this professional aptitude. Over time, I saw him as a mentor and supporter of my research. He intervened on my behalf to explain to his network of clients and business partners my role as an ethnographer, my purpose in meetings and calls, and my intentions to write my dissertation on the diversity and inclusion industry. By March 2016, I had been attending events in California for half a year, and we had begun to collaborate from a distance through phone-calls and e-mail exchanges.

I was still in my home in Los Angeles, prior to my relocation to American D&I headquarters, halfway across the country. I often communicated with Keith over text or phone calls. One of those days, I received a text from him asking me I wanted to participate in a client discovery call, that is, an initial call during which a potential client presents their needs and consultants propose a course of action. Having never been part of one, I answered eagerly, "Yes!" He then sent an e-mail to three consultants and myself, explaining that there were two discovery calls that day, their respective times, and that I would be on the call to listen and to learn. During the call, the topic of experience and expertise was broached, in terms of how the consultants managed unexpected problems. Keith shared,

> "Many of the problems are [a] lack of commitment from leadership… We [often] get a call from an organization that something came down the pipeline [meaning, from the corporate leadership]. So the driving force for addressing the issues are the potential legal challenges ahead, but [they] do not really address the culture of the organization that created that issue."

Keith interpreted executives' and human resource professionals' emphasis on legal concerns as a lack of commitment to diversity and inclusion. Sally, a consultant, built on Keith's contribution,

explaining how in the past a team of consultants was able to convince executive leadership that organizational culture change was needed. Sally said,

> "Recently I had a client that was… just totally against anything having to do with LGBT [lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender issues]… So that caused a little bit of heartache for them. We had to help them. Meaning senior management and senior HR [Human Resources] people [needed to] understand that part of their marketing— their big marketing segment was LGBT… We asked [them if they] were they willing to forego that market. So once they understood that they turned it around."

Sally then explained that the client at hand was a conservative banking institution that struggled keeping their values, which they characterized as driven by a Christian faith that frowns on same-sex relationships, while attempting to expand and grow their markets.

As I explored in previous chapters, through scientific and economic reasoning, diversity is tied to capitalist profits. This is critical for the expansion and circulation of diversity management. What I highlight here, however, is a tension in affective dispositions between those that understand the necessity of diversity management— and see their work as a means to pay it forward— and those need to be convinced. This, I suggest is a two-step process. First, management consultants and business professionals whose work is to increase diversity in the corporation recognize that this work has historically been done outside of the confines of everyday work. Second, that given this, it is their job to make diversity sustainable by bringing it into the corporation as paid labor.

Diversity professionals attend diversity events as part of professional development workshops and trainings, but they also decide to make specific time for and to create

relationships with strangers they meet in conference rooms. They do this "work" outside of work, which is a decision with economic consequences driven by morality and affective dispositions. This is perhaps best exemplified by business professional explanations that while they are paid to participate in these knowledge-sharing events and practices, they characterize their occupation and resultant activities as "more than a job." Many senior professionals characterize their diversity work as a continuation of their activism in the Civil Rights Movements and after, with Pay Equity lobbying, and Affirmative Action policy implementation in government and the workplace. It is common, such as in the case of American D&I consultants, for them to have held corporate Affirmative Action Officer positions during the 1990s. Most consultants and white-collar workers— both senior and junior— describe their motivations for becoming involved in diversity work as deriving from a personal or social awareness to discrimination and having or wanting to overcome it.

For example, in an interview, I asked Martin, a Chief Diversity Officer from a Fortune 500 multinational corporation, how he became interested in diversity work. He responded,

> "You are looking at someone that… is probably a bit of a statistical aberration to the fact that I have been able to be successful in this profession— given the numbers. It is just so rare of people [to be] at my level here, so some of this is going back to what I said earlier about paying it forward. I am at the 7th, 8th, 9th, inning of my career. I want to make sure that [I pay it forward]."

Two years later, in an interview, a consultant, Calvin, similarly described his interest in the diversity and inclusion profession. He stated that his goal is to share lessons he personally learned from his unique positioning in organizations with others who could benefit from these, namely People of Color. Calvin said,

> "The U.S. Army, Dell Computer, Nike, BlueCross BlueShield, Glasgow McKlein— all of these organizations were either number one or number two in their industry, and I was often the only one or the first African American male doing HR work in my department or even in that organization. So there were challenges in that space for me…Then, [I saw] solutions, ideas, and new perspectives and insights when I worked with OD [Organizational Development] people and diversity consultant people. [I wanted to understand my] lived experiences…while I was still in a corporate arena. And wanted to find tools and methods, and approaches to being more effective regarding to some of those challenges.
>
> Once I learned that and experienced that, then it became a personal passion to give that to others, and teach others, and share those insights with organizations, that just you know—it's not just how much money I make, and what my bonus is, and whomever dies with the most toys wins at the end, but it's more about how can we treat each other as humans."

Martin and Calvin both interpret institutional challenges through an awareness of themselves as persons who have been historically excluded from corporate work. For instance, both characterized themselves as being the first American-American men in their profession or within a particular organization. Both also related this experience directly to their desire to contribute to others' career and social advancement opportunities. For Calvin, this entailed learning techniques by which to create more "human" social relations by means of applying organizational development strategies and theories. Whereas Martin explained that his experiences informed his decision to create leadership development programs for his employees.

His program "Paying it Forward" would enable People of Color mentor each other across occupations and vertically through the corporation. Reflections on personal experiences connect dreams and actions and shape their understandings of themselves as racialized. It is this form of racial thinking that factor into their decisions to partake in economic transactions. As I will further elaborate, these gifting practices operate through sign systems. In other words, obligations are part of semiotic systems that tie histories of discrimination and systemic exclusion to the present and future.

Representational Economies

To say that a choice in profession is a result of personal experiences may seem unremarkable, yet, as I will show, specific kinds of understandings of experienced discrimination are a critical starting point for examining how consultants, managers, and executives engage in networks to distribute economic resources. As I explained, diversity professionals say that their desire for sharing resources and knowledge derives from experiences with institutional discrimination. Thus, I analyze this finding as a relationship between embodied selves, their indexicality, and their decisions to economic action. In effect, two distinct but related semiotic processes are at paly, which highlight the materiality of bodies. The first is that race/gender function as *indexical icons*, which both point to particular histories and to its representations, and the second is that diversity is also *qualisigns*, which can be broken down into the qualisigns of race and gender. Shalini Shankar (2015) explored this approach to the study of representational economies in *Advertising Diversity*. She characterized, diversity qualisigns as that which "draw attention to specific visual and linguistic elements intended to convey diversity" (2015, 93). I suggest that through indexical icons race and gender are associated with historical

discrimination, and with this relationship in mind, diversity qualisigns enable repayment of economic obligations.

Indexes of Discrimination

Diversity professionals recognize a relationship between their physical bodies as racial and gendered and their experiences with institutional discrimination. Such associations are mapped onto the bodies of others, revealing how race and gender work as indexical icons.

This is Calvin's story: When I asked Calvin, the aforementioned consultant, to expand on the particular challenges he faced as one of the first persons of color in his organization, he responded with a story of himself as a college student cadet in the Army preparing to become an officer. First, he told me of his struggles in attempting to pass his cadet exams. Regardless of his attempts, he said, he continued to fail each assessment. Feeling exasperated and hopeless after a series of disappointments, he compared his performance with those of his peers, who "were mostly white." Eventually, he reached the conclusion that he was performing at an equivalent, and thus, competent level. Regardless, he became increasingly insecure about his chances in becoming an officer for the armed forces.

For Calvin, his series of failures finally made sense when he found himself in a fight with an enlisted person that was Hispanic and of a lower rank. For reasons that were not clear to him this person verbally and physically attacked Calvin, leaving him stunned. Reflecting on this moment, he said, "As I thought more about it, I was asking myself, 'Wow. Could he also be having the same experience, where he's thinking, here is this Black cadet who I am going to have to salute one day. Not only will he be an officer with a degree, but [he] will also have a ranger tab… So I started putting two and two together: this guy was saying he has a problem

with me and I'm not passing these patrols. Could it be that people don't like me because I'm Black?"

This is Susan's story: An event planner and coordinator, Susan explained that she became interested in diversity work from learning and becoming aware about discrimination faced by others. She reflected on growing up in the "super old South" near "one of the corporate headquarters of the KKK [Ku Klux Klan]," saying, "[When] my mom found out that that town was so close by, she went to bed for a week every single day and cried, saying 'I want to move.' She was so ashamed." She explained how her mother continued to shape her commitment to diversity work by enabling her to become aware of discrimination. Her mother, she described, is someone that "is in tech" and is also "the oldest person there." To discredit her mother's expertise, Susan said that her mother's colleagues "make fun of her, poke fun of her about her age. [Saying things] like, 'Oh *you* wouldn't know.'" Such practices are gendered, Susan concluded, "to get a job in a lot of tech industries as a female you have to have your masters, but as a male you [only] have to have a bachelors [degree]."

Calvin and Sally represent very different life stories. They have experienced American inequality in different ways and based on different sets of experiences. In practice, however, they align their experiences (personal and familial) with discrimination to their commitment to diversity work. These experiences are different with regards to race and gender, but how might we understand them also as being the same? In other words, it may seem surprising that Calvin's awareness of discrimination emerged not from a relationship between his superior ranking officers who were white, but from his interactions with a lower-ranking Hispanic cadet. Yet, as many others in his situation have explained, at this time in history, these institutions were mostly white, or at least this was the case across high-ranking positions. Awareness of discrimination for

him, hence, emerged from specific kinds of relational associations, wherein certain things (white and non-white dynamics) stayed the same, and other things (specific kinds of racial difference) changed. Further, in describing their commitment to diversity work, diversity consultants, professionals, and executives have all expressed awareness of a kind of discrimination that is associated with bodily differences across persons.

To make sense of how these experiences might be similar enough to lead to affective dispositions towards "paying it forward," I first draw on Charles S. Peirce's understanding of indexical signs. According to Peirce, an index is a sign that refers to an object, not because it is similar in kind or by resemblance, but due to its associations that include spatial connections as well as "senses of the memory of the person for whom it serves as a sign" (Peirce 1985, 13). Insofar as these signs travel, they reveal they are learned associations that often emerge from shared cultural and embodied experiences.

For diversity professionals, racial and gender difference in institutional spaces index discrimination. These are learned associations. For example, as a diversity coordinator, Phyllis, described what she learned by attending diversity events where most of those in attendance are regularly women and People of Color. She said, "Before working here [diversity] wasn't necessarily one of my interests. But, being here [at American D&I], opened my eyes to discrimination that I just wasn't aware of. You know, women in the workplace, things like that. I knew basics, but not that much. Or I just didn't put that much importance to it…But now, like I said, when I go to these events and I hear other people talking about their stories—I like the work that they are doing to try and advance us [as] people, and… to advance other people that maybe don't have it as well-off, or as equal."

Phyllis and diversity professionals often describe their understanding that employees who are visibly different in terms of race and gender often experience discrimination at work. Summarizing Peirce, Shankar writes, "Indexical icons…rely on spatially contingent elements that still bear likeness to the broader whole that they represent and contain a representation of the totality of which they are part" (Shankar 2015, 93). In effect, indexical signs point to social and cultural understandings that are made meaningful through visible difference. Visible difference is understood to point to, or to index, personal, institutional, and national histories of discrimination. There are shared experiences within and across racial and gender categories. Hence, individual and racially marked bodies are icons of "race" (or bodies gendered female are, hence, icons of "gender"). Race and gender index discrimination in such a way that diversity professionals are driven to action. As I will show this occurs when indexical icons become part of an "unending process of signification," such as in the valuation of diversity (Keane 2003, 413).

Diversity and Its Semiotic-Valuation System

Anthropological theories of credit/debt have argued that whereas credit invokes "liberation," debt implies "constraint" (Peebles 2010). Yet, as Jane Guyer argued through a re-reading of *The Gift* in its original French language, obligation, which means, "to bind," does imply constraint. Insofar an obligation is understood through acts of binding, one should account for how individuals can bind themselves, not just how they are bound against their will. Hence, by studying resource distribution as gifts and obligations, I examine how diversity actors pay their debts "forward" not only because they are obligated and feel constrained to do so. Rather, because in doing so they are able to work towards their visions for a better future. Thus, I suggest

that the fulfillment of debts is a form of political action, but these gift transactions also racialize, as well as create indebted subjects.

Since Bruno Malinowski's (1922) study of the Trobriand Islands, anthropological studies of the production of value have long attempted to explain why certain economic actions take place and their meaning within society at large. Insofar as race and gender are indexical icons associated with specific kinds of histories and future economic transactions, I suggest we examine the relationship between semiotic systems and economic practice. To these ends, I draw on Nancy Munn's (1986) classic study of valuation systems of a Polynesian Island. In this work, Munn draws on Peirce's term qualisign, which is a signs that has a "quality… [and] cannot act as a sign until it is embodied" (Peirce 1985, 7). More specifically, Munn analyzes how value is placed on material objects, such as canoes, people, and shells that are regarded as "light," rather than heavy and dark. Through a semiotic study of lightness, Munn shows how different things are made valuable insofar as they share a qualisign— an object is valued for its quality.

This valuation works, because qualities are "bundled" with shared cultural values. For example, Keane points to the quality "redness" that can be embodied in a number of particular things. Each kind of redness is "bound up with other qualities—redness in an apple comes along with spherical shape, light weight, and so forth" (Keane 2003, 414). Hence, lightness, for Munn, is bundled with the capacity of a canoe to travel through water quickly or with the ability of a negotiator to be successful in economic transactions. With regards to lightness in people, Munn described that a man who eats before preparing himself in economic transactions at the kula makes himself heavy. Since preparation involves adorning oneself for kula, being heavy "is not only likely to fail to persuade his partner to give him the desired shells, but…will also darken the shells themselves, thus destroying their desirable smooth glow." In contrast, lightness is valued:

a fisherman needs to be quick to amass a larger amount of fish, and a negotiator needs to bring back to Gawa beautiful—more valuable—shells.

Drawing on Munn and Keane, I propose to extend our understanding of diversity as qualisign, which was first proposed by Shankar (2015) in a study of three multicultural advertisement agencies in Los Angeles, New York, and San Francisco. Shankar builds on scholars of diversity, which argued that diversity is not a shared object— it has many meanings and definitions depending on context and place (e.g. Ahmed 2012; Urciuoli 2009). Shankar writes, diversity is "a sign that embodies a social or cultural quality," that allows for the use of "specific visual and linguistic elements that are intended to convey diversity" (Shankar 2015, 93). It also is "bundled with other qualisigns of race, ethnicity, or simply nonwhiteness" (2015, 17). In this way, diversity can mean multiple things—and yet be "the same"— as it is embodied in different materialities and in different projects, while invoking a similar value. Additionally, individuals can be diversity qualisigns. For multicultural advertisement agencies, qualisigns enable Asian Americans to be represented, rather than stereotyped—a profitable business for capitalist practice that is critical and reflexive.[29]

While diversity management consultants and professionals are not in the field of advertising and marketing, representations of race and gender factor into their decisions to make economic relationships within knowledge-sharing networks. As indexical signs, these representations inform economic transactions. As qualisigns, however, they produce value through an affective and pragmatic orientation towards the future. In other words, in choosing to provide knowledge, opportunities, and connections, diversity professionals have specific goals in

[29] Shankar's (2015) ethnography situates the work of advertising agents within Olds and Thrift's (2005) conceptualization of "soft capitalism" as the cultural mechanisms by which capitalism is reproduced and improved through its own reflexivity.

mind: to facilitate the institutional and class mobility of strangers whom they recognize as different, but the same as themselves. Hence, economic redistribution cannot be exclusively understood through theories and frameworks of social capital. Rather, diversity professionals donate resources and institutional information to increase diversity in organizations as a value in and of itself.

Beyond a business discourse that claims diversity enables better decision-making in planning for uncertain economic futures, diversity work is valuable for diversity professionals, because it is bundled with ideas and sentiments of fairness and equity that are very much personal. For instance, Susan explained, in an interview that she saw, "different things…that it affected people in my personal life and…my community. I wanted to do something to resolve that, and make any kind of impact that I could for what I believed to be right." For Susan, diversity is itself a value, because it connects her familial experiences with social ideas of morality and fairness in economic action. Moreover, for those that see themselves as different, but the same as others, and these representations enable them to pay what they owe forward in time and along the network.

The Debts of Racial Exclusion

"We have already seen that markets are constituted by acts of sale and purchase that economists collapse into a single timeless moment when the two sides achieve equivalence. But if we look more closely, the moment is always embedded in social processes that both precede and succeed it."

Keith Hart, *Money in an Unequal World* (2001, 199).

At some point, diversity professionals, in their awareness as racialized selves within the corporation, felt that they had accrued a social debt. While we know much about how credit/debt

connect to the future, we know little of how the repayment of debts has been informed by the historical past (Peebles 2010; e.g. Guyer 2004; Munn 1986). How are economic histories linked to the present, and more specifically how are present economic transactions shaped by the systemic exclusions of ethnic and racial groups?

Racialized exclusion from economic markets has historically enabled the West to maintain power over trade. Keith Hart (2001), for instance, reminds us that money achieved the title "the great equalizer," because it has been a means by which racial minorities have historically been able to achieve equal social standing— and hence the achievement of money has been subject to stat regulation. For example, to maintain the inferiority of racialized groups, such as Jews in medieval Europe and Indians under British colonial rule, through laws and regulation, states excluded these groups from mercantile activities (Hart 2001, 203). In more recent history, in the United States it was only after the 1960s that non-white groups were— by force of law— allowed into occupations wherein class mobility was possible, such as corporations. Thus, I examine how diversity consultants and white-collar workers imagine and challenge racial subjugation and economic exclusion by and through the repayment of their social debts. In doing so, I show that economic behavior is historical and that gift-giving reveals that diversity professionals engage in economic transactions interests beyond accumulation; rather they aim to achieve equality— a maximization practice in and of itself.

As I have noted earlier, diversity professionals that participate in social networks are aware of themselves as racialized selves and as subject to discrimination and systemic exclusion. For instance, to continue Martin's story, the Chief Diversity Officer told me that he was a "statistical aberration"—an African American male in a position of high authority in a multinational corporation. To this he said, "I know that I represent something that is rare and also

special you know, I'm a role model for people whether I think so or not." As I sat there in his office made of glass, where the only thing separating us was a white desk, he cut into his lunch hour to give me more details. He said that after almost a decade spent with the Marine Corps, he decided to resign his commission in order to pursue civilian work. He would never forget his exit interview. This is Martin's story:

> "A senior officer at Kelly Air Force Base, my last station, brought me in and sat me down and said 'Captain, I'm sorry to hear that you're leaving the Corps. Can you tell me why?' I told him, 'Hey listen, I just want to follow a commercial career. It's time. My priorities in life have changed after having recently been married. I want to dedicate more of my life to my wife and soon to be family'… [In response] he said, 'Well I really wish you would really consider…you are such a role model to our Dark Green Marines'—Dark Green being African-American or Black. And I immediately jumped at that statement…which quite frankly in my view he should know better than to say that… I said 'Well sir, with all due respect, I have spent the last nine years of my career trying to be a role model for all Marines, not just the Dark Green ones.' The last thing he said to me is, 'Captain, you don't get it.' And I was shocked."

The story did not end there. Five years later when he was looking at a promotion to manager of a multinational corporation, Martin re-visited this interaction. Martin said to me, "I was here in Washington D.C. and I was noticing a phenomena where many of the African-Americans were seeking me out for career counsel[ing], mentoring, advis[ing], etc. etc., and I noticed the pattern. And then all of a sudden it hit me, and I went back to that conversation with the senior officer when he said 'You don't get it,' and I thought he was wrong. All of a sudden I

realized he was right. It doesn't matter what I think. It matters what *they* [those seeking resources from him] think."

Martin's story illustrates two points: the role of memory and the capacity of qualisigns to create sameness across materialities, including bodies, in the reproduction of economies. In other words, obligations that are narrated as desires to "pay it forward" are contingent on the ability of diversity professionals to remember their own stories and histories. More specifically, Martin explained that mentors and sponsors influenced his success as a corporate leader; it made his "statistical aberration" possible. Memory, hence, plays an important role in resource distribution, with the effect of expanding these obligations across space and time by influencing diversity professionals' ability to continue creating economic relationships. In particular, Munn describes (1986) that memory "projects the recipient's mind toward the future… and in this way extending the transaction (the past) and the particular media involved beyond themselves and holding them, as it were, in the form of an ongoing potentiality that is not finished" (1986, 66). This is possible, she continues, because economic transactions invoke memories of donors. Recipients— who become donors— remember the donor of their gifts.

For diversity actors, their memories are critical to paying felt debts, and this is evident in how they recall people that were critical for them to overcome institutional challenges. This memory enables transactions to continue into the future, long after any semblance of "original" creditors pass away. This is the case in Julie Chu's (2010) work in China, which reveals that credit-debt relations are shaped by belief systems that are cosmological, rather than transactional. She shows that through death rituals, people routinely give away "fake" and real United States Dollar money to death spirits. The former currencies are given to ghosts, who are "'like beggars' *(xiang qigai)* in the spirit world, they [are] the common recipients of such small change" (2010,

184). People do this to ensure that the dead loved ones receive USD money, ensuring their safe passage into the afterlife. These after-death honoring practices guarantee that the dead will become ancestors, rather than ghosts. In effect, memory ensures that histories are bound into present economic practices.

Martin's story also reveals that diversity professionals see themselves reflected in others, and the possibility to pay their debts forward. In effect, diversity qualisigns create sameness between different bodies, even if these are regarded as distinct according to racial, gendered, and other boundaries of difference. This enables obligations to be transmitted through networks of qualisigns. As Webb Keane (2003) argues, "Abstracting 'qualisigns' from objects offers a way of bringing discrete moments of experience into an overarching value system on the basis of habits and intuitions rather than rules and cognitions." In more specific terms, diversity qualisigns are embodied differently, yet diversity professionals' narratives and stories of obligations and self-awareness suggest the effective abstraction of qualisigns. In other words, obligations derive from very personal, yet impersonal experiences. The abstraction of personal experiences enable economic transactions to be conducted across space and time.

Qualisigns enable the expansion of debt-relationships as they are bundled with "relative value, utility, and relevance across contexts" (Keane 2003, 414). While each quality in its particular embodiment is associated with specific ideas and associated actions, through bundling, qualisigns share a relatively similar value across contexts. Diversity professionals' felt debt, more specifically, is bundled with other qualities that include fairness, equity, and social justice. These are learned value systems. Furthermore, through gift-giving diversity professionals' coalesce the past and future into the present, revealing diversity to be an aspirational and affective qualisign.

The Gift's Temporality and Indebtedness

While diversity professionals who distribute resources along diversity networks often do not expect anything in return for themselves, this does not mean that their practices are non-economic. In effect, diversity professionals donate economic things, including money, knowledge, access and other resources to strangers. Many diversity professionals interpret their sense of obligation and a direct consequence of their historical positioning: they achieved class mobility with the aid of others who provided mentorship and support. Thus, I suggest that the gift's return is temporally oriented towards the future, and hence, as diversity professionals extend their economic transactions, I argue, they racialized and indebted other subjects.

The "gift" is foundational to the making of anthropology as a discipline as well as to our understandings of economic systems across the world. Despite its influence and the vast wealth of literature on the gift, David Graeber (2014) has noted that very little theorizing on the gift has been done. Perhaps, he speculates, "Because everyone assumes that there is something called 'the gift,' [they must also assume] that all transactions not involving payment or the promise of payment are the same thing" (Graeber 2014, 65). My interest in examining how social and economic opportunities are "gifts" to women and people of color aims to extend our understanding of how gifts channel histories and hopes for a better future into present action, and how they have the capacity to racialize.

The gift can take almost an infinite number of forms, and can be studied in terms of the exchange of goods as well as obligational behavior. The question of whether all gifts are debts or whether some gifts imply giving without return has been largely unresolved by anthropologists (High 2012). When Marcel Mauss wrote *The Gift* (2002 [1925]), perhaps his greatest theoretical contribution was that when exchanging goods, people do not only work towards fulfilling

individual self-interest, but economic actors are also embedded in relationships with others via moral obligations. More specifically, he argued, gift-exchange creates an "economic morality" through "contracts, alliances, the passing on of goods, [and] the bonds created by these goods passing between those giving and receiving" (Mauss 2002 [1925], 77). He continued, "The nature and intentions of the contracting parties, the nature of the thing given, are all indivisible" (2002, 77), meaning that gift-giving is a form of creating solidarity and collective action.

Subsequent anthropological scholarship on the gift, hence, focused much on its payment-repayment transactions, such as in the kula. Although these inter-island exchanges were separated by space, as Nancy Munn (1986) argued, they were also connected by time. She established that "shells…create their own debt and spatiotemporal cycle (each one must eventually be reciprocated)" creating a cycle that never finishes (1986, 58). She argued, this process "transcends the actor and the immediacy of any particular transactional 'moment' to create its own regulatory dynamic" (60). That the transactions by which debt are paid, continued to be paid, and possibly never end, provides insight into how these events are beyond the agency of any individual actor, and how debt and the circulation of value are intertwined. How might "paying forward" problematize notions of the cyclical circulation of value, and as such open new inquiries for how debt might become valuable?

Mary Douglas titled the foreword to the 1990 edition of Marcel Mauss' *The Gift* as "No Free Gifts." Yet, in studying precisely gifts that cannot be repaid, Marilyn Strathern (2012) showed how the inability to return a gift creates a "feel[ing] that something is missing" (2012, 398). For example, in her study of organ donation in the United Kingdom, Strathern pointed to how recipients of organs articulated feelings of guilt— and that something was missing— because they could not provide repayment, monetary or otherwise, to their donors. These

feelings affected them to such an extent that they refused to accept organ donations from family members. When they did, they characterized their choice as having been forced. In effect, this gift-imbalance turns into a burden where patients cannot reciprocate their gifts. Yet, as if echoing diversity's debts, Strathern showed how the gift returns. She said, "Among the living, Many prospective and actual donors view donation as simply 'giving back' for all a parent or other relative has done for them'" (Strathern 2012, 401, citing Kaufman *et al.* 2009: 24).

Felt debt in the form of obligation influences business professionals' decision to continue creating relationships within diversity networks, as many would say, a form of "paying it forward." Thus, I suggest that these gift-giving practices are semiotic and economic practices that create gift-debt relations, and that they also engender new kinds of indebted subjectivities. Obligations to "pay it forward" are characteristic of— and further create— representational economies. Further, while there is shared desire to advance the economic and social mobility of strangers, enactments of resource distribution take different shapes and forms.

Consistent with gift economies, these economic transactions promote solidarity and community across persons understood as subjects of institutional discrimination. Particularly, giving without expecting material and present returns allows for the creation of structures and possibilities for entire semiotic collectives, that is, diversity professionals who are representations of debts-to-be-paid. Yet, it is unclear whether diversity professionals ever achieve complete personal fulfillment, as do organ recipients' family members when they donate an organ. Rather, most diversity professionals describe their work in mentoring, advising, or providing resources— and in developing diversity management as a field— as a life-long commitment. Hence, these actors maximize through collective means, aiming to increase social and economic inclusion through class mobility. Through a networked solidarity oriented towards

the future, and very much informed by the past, diversity professionals' work reimagines and attempts to correct for histories of exclusion and marginalization. The gift returns not to the specific gift-givers but to those in a future and imagined society.

Much like the kula ring, transactions in which diversity professionals' pay it forward create a network of economic transactions that cannot be completed and in which debt cannot be closed. Yet crucially the intersection between race and class creates a ripple effect in gift giving that ensures its perpetuation. In diversity management, this is due to the eventual class mobility of individuals, who are no longer "in need" of economic resources, but who then become effectively and affectively indebted. Thus, a debtor's ability to repay can only go in one direction—away from the original creditor and into the hands of others. In effect, this debt moves along the network, extending it and giving rise to new subjects, revealing a simultaneous economization and a racialization process. In other words, gifts racialize as they create debt, because the mechanisms of racialization—through a kind of signification that channels specific histories of racial exclusion— are deployed in the decisions to create economic transactions.

Gift-giving networks are critical in the absence of structural and even familial mechanisms by which individuals as representational members of historically disenfranchised communities can achieve social and economic inclusion. This is especially the case in institutions and spaces that long excluded non-white individuals, and which are regarded to provide opportunities for class mobility. These economic practices are also acts of solidarity by which marginalized communities can experience inclusion in the United States

Moreover, in a post-Affirmative Action era, however, these gift economies are institutionalized within the domains of everyday corporate work. For instance, Martin explained that his organization had found practices of paying-it-forward effective enough to be

implemented in more formal ways. These were effective in the sense that gifting resources in terms of mentorship and advising created more diverse and successful leaders. Martin knew this by tracking and analyzing human resource data, such as employee engagement surveys. He also described that before retirement he wanted to leave a legacy behind: a leadership development program for minorities and women across the corporation, wherein they can receive coaching, training, and regular evaluations on progress. This included understanding one's personality traits in addition to the clients' in order to become a better leader. He said, "There's plenty of data to prove that [the program] is being very effective," however, "We can't get everybody through the program." He cited office space and funding as two primary obstacles. So, he asked me rhetorically, "What if we take some of the graduates and have them pay it forward. [Tell them,] 'Go back into the ranks…and [use] what you learned, pay it forward, and help other people to learn the same thing that may not have had the privilege to get into that course.'" He concluded, "I think that [this program] is going to be huge."

On the surface— and certainly for me at the time— this seemed like a great organizational strategy to facilitate the success of historically marginalized populations. When placed in the context of a decline in Affirmative Action policies, however, this original sentiment contains contradictions that reveal broader societal problems. In the absence of more formal structures and economic resources, Chief Diversity Officers, such as Martin, are employing these racial debt economies as a means to ameliorate the effects of systemic inequities. The corporation, in effect, is producing racial debtors of diversity. Executive leaders are using their experiences with gift-giving to create formal resource-distributing processes in the corporation. What is more, their work is additionally defined by their ability to provide affective—and largely unpaid—labor to the reproduction of capitalist structures themselves (Weeks 2007; Hart 1999).

This is with no indication that these new responsibilities will replace others, or that, in other words, this is not creating more work— within work— for already racialized and indebted subjects.

Conclusion

This chapter explores the intersection between economic action and systemic inequities, challenging social scientific understandings that explain the distribution of economic resources through a social capital lens. It examines how and why consultants, managers, and white-collar workers characterize their commitment to diversity, through mentoring and providing opportunities and resources to strangers, as a means to "pay it forward." In interviews in which diversity professionals explain that they desire to provide resources for others so that they might achieve class mobility. They characterize this as an obligation that derives from their own experiences with institutional discrimination, and from the guidance and support they received from others to overcome this. To examine the role of these affective dispositions in the production of debt-economies, I examine gift-giving as a semiotic and economic process that extends debt into the future and along professional networks.

Yet, on the surface it may seem that a gift of class mobility is a debt that cannot be repaid. By the time the giver is able to repay their debts, the person that gave them such a gift would not be able to accept it, as in most cases diversity professionals maintain their achieved class. Such is the curse of the gift of opportunity. Yet, gifts are repaid. Diversity professionals' see in others, who function as representations of their former selves, the possibility to pay their debts. Hence, such gifts are historical and futuristic, and it is a means by which diversity professionals challenge institutional discrimination and give value to diversity. In such a way to

pay it forward is to extend the network (Riles 2001), even if this is through racialized obligations to repay class mobility.

With the decline of Affirmative Action policies, which sought to rectify the harms of systemic exclusion of minorities in the corporate workplace, mentorship and sponsorship programs have bourgeoned. In the last part of this essay, I pose a provocation: the incorporation of racial debt economies into corporate workplaces by diversity officers who aim to facilitate the career advancement of historically marginalized populations. This incorporation, I suggest, is generating new forms of affective and semiotic labor for racialized white-collar workers working within capitalist firms. Yet, as I showed, these gift-economies have long been part of everyday informal networks by which individuals have circumvented structural limitations to social and economic inclusion.

CHAPTER 5

Performing Antiracism:

Credit, Credibility, and the Interests of Whiteness

The interests of white and non-white persons are often invoked as contradictory in diversity management. One day at American D&I's office, right before noon, Keith tapped me on the shoulder and asked me if I was free. As I said sure, he said that he wanted me to learn how to do a sales meeting. I agreed. I went back to my desk, turned to Phyllis who shared a cubicle with me and sat on my right. I said that I was going to have to miss our colleague's going away lunch, because I had to work. Soon after we drove to a nearby chain restaurant that had plenty of booths, a quiet-enough ambiance, and mid-scale pricing. On the way there, Keith confided in me that he felt self-conscious and began to panic. He had worn jeans to a business meeting. So, we tried to be the first ones at the restaurant so that he could sit down and— hopefully— would not be noticed.

We arrived and the potential client was already waiting on us at the lobby. Keith whispered to me anxiously to turn around and pretend not to see her. This somewhat comical interaction put me in an awkward place as I tried to figure out how to help him avoid this faux-pas. Soon enough, however, Keith gave up, and we approached her. She was a young Black woman dressed in a full dark gray business suit (pants, not skirt). Keith had told me that she had just made partner at a prestigious law firm, and she certainly looked the part. In her newly obtained position of equity at the firm, she wanted to put in place diversity and inclusion programs. It was evident to me that they had known each other for years. They laughingly made comments on how little and how much they had changed. Then, he showed her a folder, replete

with American D&I's information: organizational mission, vision, locations, resources, and membership packages.

Half an hour later we were sitting at the booth, finishing up our lunch. I had remained quiet most of the time, trying to absorb as much as I could about the form and content of the business sales meeting, while taking as few notes as possible. When I could tell that the meeting was wrapping up, I spoke up: "Can I ask you a question?" Sure, she said, "How did [your] conversation on getting started on diversity and inclusion begin?" Before she could give me an answer, Keith answered it. He said, "They probably got sued." He abruptly stopped himself from going further, then backtracked. It looked like the beginning of his second faux pas of the day. He explained, "In my experience, 90% of the time what begins a conversation is getting sued... White people need a [reason] to change a system that benefits them." I watched Keith's potential client keep her gaze down at her plate, stop eating, and say, "Mmm hmm." Then looking up at me, she said that she actually did not start this process, but was asked to be part of it. She did not know how the "conversation" began or why. Rather, she said, "I was sent an e-mail by someone who said that she received my name as someone that would be good to talk to about these kinds of things."

It is common for diversity professionals to distrust white people in business. In becoming part of everyday mundane conversations at work, I also learned that it was almost equally common for diversity professionals to urge human resource professionals to include their executive leaders in their work. This was often referred to as "buy in from the top." The logic is that programs in which Chief Executive Officers are involved tend to be more successful. As executive leaders, they advocate more effectively for white peoples' involvement as a means to distribute responsibility for diversity work more evenly; eliminating the "burden" on people of

color to be solely responsible for diversity. As a diversity consultant and life coach said at a panel to a 500 person conference, "We need to see men as allies, if it's just a group of women, it's preaching to the choir, we need men as allies to have movement in that area. White men generally hold the power in our society and organizations, and we need to have access to those who have the power, and who have the privilege." Diversity professionals explain that white people need to be part of the work of diversity management, yet concede that most white people are invested in maintaining the status quo.

This chapter focuses on the tension between the interests and credibility of white diversity professionals. Through interviews and in workshops and trainings, I have found that white diversity professionals are acutely aware of how they are perceived by their colleagues and by the people they train. They confirmed that they often are not trusted by their peers or by their clients, and that this impacts perceptions of themselves as competent diversity professionals. To gain credibility, they explain how they make public their interracial relationships and personal experiences with observing racial discrimination. In effect, to calibrate their own credibility with diversity work competency, white diversity professionals must perform antiracist sincerity. Regardless of whether they actually are motivated to end racial discrimination, white diversity professionals are expected to align their personal interests in diversity work with those of the collective group, which is often largely non-white.

In analyzing the tension between the interests and credibility of whiteness, I aim to develop an understanding of how credit and interest have historically been, and continue to be, economic, moral, and racial and how they continue to be propelling forces of capitalism (Pocock 1975; Robinson 1983). I trace a history of colonial American relations and how scholars of whiteness have problematized the perception of symbolic binary: white/black. Through such

analytic binary, scholars have explained how white persons in society are regarded as honorable, good, and pure, and black persons as the opposite, as untrustworthy, bad, and evil. Insofar as white diversity professionals are regarded as untrustworthy, because they are seen as self-interested, I argue for an analysis of how economics, morality, and race are continuously challenged and re-imagined. In other words, in diversity work it is white people who are distrusted, and who must prove their moral worth to be enrolled into capitalist corporate bureaucratic work.

The Interests of Whiteness

While "white" as a racial category would not emerge until the late 17th century and would entail the gradual enrollment of various ethnic identities, including the English, Irish, Scottish, and Jews (Allen 1994; e.g. Brodkin 1998; Ignatiev 1995), the moral and economic values of those that would become "white" became hegemonic alongside capitalism. Rather than part of a natural progression of economic systems, the institutionalization of whiteness and capitalism was contested in the public sphere and in intellectual circles throughout European modernity through debates over morals and values. What survived was a "bourgeois ideology," that was, I will show, mercantilism turned capitalist, turned white. However, as J.G.A. Pocock (1975) wrote, this ideology, "which old-fashioned Marxism depicted as appearing with historic inevitability, had, it seems, to wage a struggle for existence and may never have fully won it" (1975, 461).

To begin, Cedric Robinson (1983) showed that race is characteristic of capitalism. Prior to the transatlantic slave trade, the first slave laborers ranged in ethnicities, from Greek, Armenian, Russian, Slavonic, Chinese, and African descent, and were most commonly found as domestic servants to Catalan and Italian families. Subsequent forms of African slavery in American colonies were recognizable from these older forms. In contrast to Marx, who argued

that slavery was a form of "primitive accumulation," Robinson argued that slavery was characteristic to how capitalism works: through enclosure, domination, and exploitation. African labor was not necessarily exploited for surplus; rather, it was capital in and of itself. Slavery, in other words, was not characteristic of a pre-capitalist mode of production, that is, feudalism. This was in no small part to pay for the large debts accrued by explorers, colonizers, and plantation owners, and hence, "slavery was a critical foundation for capitalism" (Robinson 1983, 116).

This story begins with Christopher Columbus, the first European to successfully cross the Atlantic and return back to report his findings to the monarchy. Columbus, Robinson wrote, "was in many ways a natural if not typical bourgeois creation of Genoese capital, trade, and manufacturing" (1983, 106). That is, the conditions had been set in place for Columbus to be a successful colonizer. The Genoese merchants— in what later became Italy— had, since the 13th century, been cultivating their influence on the Portuguese, Spanish, and English monarchies. Benefiting from centuries of capitalizing on warfare, speculating on the trade of goods, the Genoese also positioned themselves as royal financiers, bankers, and counsels, as well as married into various noble families, and were influential in funding Columbus' expeditions through both his family ties, and later, the Spanish Crown (Robinson 1983).

Christopher Columbus, Robinson wrote, occasionally made voyages around the Mediterranean. After a particularly violent attack by French pirates, he sought refuge in Lisbon— "the great centre of Genoese trade" (Robinson 1983, 103; citing Rau, 713). There he married into Portuguese nobility. After failing to acquire funding from the Portuguese royalty, who had already had their own investments in trade, Christopher Columbus turned to the Spanish Crown who had interests in creating their own trade routes and to acquire their own source of

capital, separate from its aristocracy. He arrived with a loan from a Genoese banker from Seville and the Crown approved his plans (Robinson 1983).

Thus, the first large-scale forms of accruing capital began, not by Spanish colonizers themselves— who were largely indebted— but by those who financed and invested in their expeditions. David Graeber (2011) wrote of Hernán Cortés, who "was reduced to pawning his wife's jewelry to help finance a series of expeditions to California, hoping to restore his fortunes," and who upon returning to Spain was besieged by creditors (2011, 318). Graeber paints a picture of colonial greed that was not motivated by cold and calculated rationale, rather for "a much more complicated mix of shame and righteous indignation, and of the frantic urgency of debts that would only compound and accumulate (these were, almost certainly, interest-bearing loans), and outrage at the idea that, after all [the colonizers] had gone through, they should be held to owe anything to begin with" (2011, 318).

Over the course of two centuries, the American colonies and slave labor became critical sources of economic growth for Britain. This new phase in mercantile or merchant capitalism of acquiring land overseas was systemic. Robinson quoted a lecture given in 1839 by Herman Merivale,

> "What raised Liverpool and Manchester from provincial towns to gigantic cities?... The exchange of their produce with that raised by the American slaves; and their present opulence is as really owing to the toil and suffering of the negro, as if his hands had excavated their docks and fabricated their steam-engines. Every trader who carries on commerce with those countries, from the great house which lends its name and funds to support the credit of the American Bank, down to the Birmingham merchant who makes a shipment of shackles to Cuba or the

> coast of Africa, is in his own way an upholder of slavery: and I do not see how any consumer who drinks coffee or wears cotton can escape from the same sweeping charge" (Robinson 1983, 113).

By the 17th and 18th centuries, the new English merchant class, which gained significant wealth from investing in the American colonies, became one of the first bourgeoisies, and critically the most important one for what would become the United States. They also struggled for economic and political power with the landed elite, and ultimately won. In the words of Robinson, "the wealth of the plantations drew together the commercial bourgeoisie and the state" (1983, 114). That is, that bourgeoisie invested in the state, providing it with loans to continue transatlantic expeditions, and also took on a critical role in shaping it and society at large.

This is perhaps best illustrated by J. G. A. Pocock (1975) in his series of works on the European financial revolution and the advent of the American Revolution. Pocock showed how, through newly formed banks, the bourgeoisie and merchant class gave credit to the state, which became in debt to such an extent that it could ultimately not repay. The state had expanded its armies and ships in order to engage in warfare and in trade, and to consolidate its power and sovereignty. In the public and intellectual spheres, intellectuals debated the relationship between credit, land, and trade, essentially "as sources not merely of public wealth, but of political stability and virtue" (1976, 426). Economic interests, thus, became intertwined with the moral values of society.

Although Pocock did not draw out the race politics of this intertwining, a significant body of scholarship within Caribbean anthropology has inquired into the relationship between race, respectability, and economics. These scholars build on Peter Wilson's (1973) study, which argued that in a post-colonial context, Caribbean societies grapple between two main forms of

value: respectability and reputation. Whereas the former derives from European social norms, which indicates hierarchy, education, and Christian worship, the latter is "a counter-culture to respectability," emphasizing egalitarianism, learning by doing, and wisdom (Wilson 1973, 117-118). Wilson mapped these values in terms of gender: he argued that women embraced European value systems, pointing to their emphasis on home life and religion, in contrast to men who regularly challenged these outside of the home. Jean Besson (1993) provided an important corrective to Wilson, demonstrating that he had not adequately studied women, and arguing that women's lives were characterized by consistent class struggles, which mapped onto the expression of respectability and reputation values. In sum, peasant women do not subscribe to respectability.

While scholarship on the Caribbean has examined how cultural duality shapes possibilities for identity, nationhood, and class (Page 2015; Freeman 2007; Browne 2004; Thomas 2004; Burton 1997; Yelvington 1995), here I aim to extend inquiry into the relationship between whiteness and morality and economics. Katherine Browne (2004), for instance, in her study of *débrouillards*, or local actors in the informal economy, demonstrated that culture and history matter to economic behavior. *Débrouillards* are clever and sly, and work around bureaucratic rules to achieve specific goals. These behaviors are regarded as brave; *débrouillards* value personal liberty, autonomy, and being their own boss. Browne argued that these values reflect and are shaped by centuries of struggle against French colonialism. Whereas Browne links slavery to contemporary creole economics, I inquire into the relationship between white moral economies characterized by self-interest, and I ask, how do diversity professionals contest these histories and moralities through a concern for collective interests?

With the commercialization of the public debt in the 18th and 19th centuries, a new merchant class externalized their relationships and began to see themselves as a "society" that could realize its interests through the market (Maurer 2013, citing Pocock 1985). As opposed to passions, interests began to be imagined and operated in economic theory as rational and calculative, and as such, were seen as capable of counteracting the undesirable, destructive human passions (Hirschman 1977). As Albert O. Hirschman (1977) wrote, there was once a distinction in the term interest and interests,

> "'Interests' of persons and groups eventually came to be centered on economic advantage as its core meaning, not only in ordinary language but also in such social-science terms as 'class interests' and 'interest groups.' But the economic meaning became dominant rather late in the history of the term. When the term 'interest' in the sense of concerns, aspirations, and advantage gained currency in Western Europe during the late sixteenth century, its meaning was by no means limited to the material aspects of a person's welfare; rather, it comprised the totality of human aspirations, but denoted an element of reflection and calculation with respect to the manner in which these aspirations were to be pursued" (1977, 32).

By the time Adam Smith wrote that the culmination of untethered individual self-interest in the market (i.e. *laissez faire*) would work for the common good, Hirschman argued, European society was readily willing to accept the notion that humanity's self-destructive tendency could be offset by economic calculation, which led to intellectual specialization and the creation of economics as a kind of science. Thus, the expansion of commerce came to be regarded as "innocent" and "calming" of the passions, as the *doux commerce* (Hirschman 1977).

Self-interest was institutionalized alongside whiteness. Engaging in commerce was seen to take the barbarian out of individuals who engaged in economic transactions; commerce promised to create more polished and sensible individuals. Yet, as Hirschman observed, "The persistent use of the term *le doux commerce* strikes us as a strange aberration for an age when the slave trade was at its peak and when trade in general was still a hazardous, adventurous, and often violent business" (1977, 62). This aberration was not strange, I contend, as a distinction was also being formed between persons and properties, that is, slaves. In other words, the institutionalization of self-interest as a primary mode of capitalist commerce racialized the bourgeoisie was white. Insofar as these early capitalist economies were valued for their capacity to distinguish interest from passion, self-interest became a means by which to reproduce whiteness.

Problematizing Interests

Economic anthropology largely agrees that people are not exclusively driven by self-interest, but that the concept of maximization as a propelling force for economic, social, and moral activity can be seen across cultures (Cancian 1966). Here, I turn to examine how diversity professionals problematize the notion of interests between white and non-white collectives.

On the semiotics of whiteness

In the months leading up to the Presidential election, the mainstream media discussed Trump as having run on a racist, sexist, and homophobic political platform. They also attributed the rise of the "Alt-Right" and Ku-Klux-Klan membership to his unapologetic rhetoric that made blanket statements characterizing entire racial populations, such as Mexicans and Muslims, as rapists and terrorists, respectively. A couple of weeks after the election, I had been traveling for

archival research. I kept in contact with my interlocutors at American D&I. Phyllis and I engaged in an hour-long conversation by text after they found out that one of their aunts and uncles voted for Trump in the 2016 Presidential election. The conversation went as follows:

Phyllis: 😕 😕 I am so pissed! I have family that voted for him

Lucy: 😨 What? Why? How?

Phyllis: I have this aunt and uncle who think they are white

Lucy: What? Explain

Phyllis:

This is them.

Lucy: LOL [laugh out-loud]

Phyllis: They are just crazy people who hate Hillary and think he is the best thing ever. I don't even know what exactly they believe

Lucy: Are they white passing?

Phyllis: They live in a white trailer trash neighborhood, they are light skinned, but I think you can tell they are Hispanic

Lucy: I'm terrified. Why did they think Trump was great????

Phyllis: They are so stupid!! And I have to see them on Saturday, [because] they throwing my dad a surprise party. It's going to be so awkward [because] we all know they voted for him."

Social scientific scholarship of whiteness has generally taken whiteness to be the "unmarked" term in the analytical binary between white/black.[30] Here I propose that diversity experts make visible racial regimes (Robinson 2007) through semiotic processes that enable them to make whiteness historically significant and contemporarily productive. The photo above was part of the text-message exchange. Had I summarized the conversation and provided the picture, the caption would have read "*Mujer con el nopal en la frente*," meaning "Woman with the *nopal* [cactus] on the forehead." The nopal is emblematic of the Mexican flag. Communities from Mexican descent invoke the term to describe a person who has presumably relinquished their ancestral Mexican roots. In other words, their actions suggest to others that they are not aware that they are Mexican, but that they are still visibly recognizable as such. Phyllis, like others who invoke this term, point to a perceived contradiction in the actions of others with visible racial identities that presumably do things like vote against their racial interests— or the interests of their racial identity-based communities.

[30] Most notably, science and technology scholars have critiqued expertise for producing totalizing worldviews. These disembodied claims, they argued, are actually made by privileged white and male persons (Haraway 1988; Harding 2004). These experts have a historical privilege that enable them to disembody their perspectives to make authoritative truth-value laden claims, something gendered and racial persons do not have. What we see in diversity management, however, is almost the inverse. Standpoint perspectives are valued and those of white persons are questioned.

That she gave no explanation is suggestive of how commonplace *nopal en la frente* is in Mexican Spanish language. Although Phyllis had never mentioned this to me before, they knew that I would understand the image. They knew that I grew up in an undocumented immigrant household, where this term was used to criticize Hispanics and Latinos who voted for laws and policies that would displace families and criminalize undocumented immigrants. In this instance, Phyllis had used it to suggest that her family had voted in the interests of white people, not realizing that they themselves were not "actually" white, and what is more, could presumably be targets of legislation and policy perceived as anti-Hispanic.[31]

The interests of whiteness have been examined within critical studies of whiteness, which takes whiteness as a category that is invested in and awards certain privileges to members of society (Lipsitz 2005). This scholarly trajectory has drawn significantly on Cheryl Harris's (1993) work on "whiteness as property," which showed how race and property were interrelated developments in legal and American history. In other words, by awarding certain groups of people societal privileges, such the ability to own property, American legal institutions have created "white" as a racial category. The law has been employed in creating and differentiating social benefits, simultaneously enabling communities to develop identities around the racial categories it creates. Critical race theorists and other scholars of whiteness have examined how whiteness is produced at the intersections of legal, economic, and cultural practices. Much of this scholarship flourished in the 1990s (e.g. Allen 1994; Brodkin 1998; Hartigan 1999; Crenshaw and Morrisson 1992; Roediger 1999, and later, Lipsitz 2005; Moreton-Robinson 2015). These scholars have analyzed the relationship between whiteness and possession and how non-whites have and continue to be excluded from American social and economic belonging.

[31] There is also a sense invoked of racial solidarity, which I will not explore here.

Hence, I turn here to ask, how do diversity professionals intervene in these capitalist corporate bureaucracies? First, I suggest that diversity professionals draw on the visibility of whiteness to make their role as experts meaningful productive, and this includes white diversity professionals who are acutely aware that they have to perform an antiracist sincerity in order to achieve credibility. In interviews, for instance, I asked diversity consultants if they ever had moments in which their authority was challenged. Soon after I began asking this question to consultants, I noticed that it acted as a critical fork in the conversation: either we discussed the role of business in training diversity professionals (that is, whether they obtained their MBAs or worked in corporate America) or as was the case with certain management consultants, being white in a largely non-white professional field. Almost every white management consultant that I interviewed narrated how being perceived as white was a challenge to overcome. One management consultant, with over twenty years of experience, Jerry said,

> **Jerry:** You know I've learned a lot about perceptions. I had a moment when I realized that my skin color, you know, when I come to work in a suit and tie my skin color represents something to some people. That's not good. You know based on history [and] based on current experience. It's not necessarily personal or that I represent that. But I look like people that come from that thing-- Are part of a system of— you know, there's conversations on white supremacy and white privilege conversations that are big… So ironically sometimes I get stereotypes based on my skin color as other people have their whole life. So two wrongs don't make a right. But it's made me conscious of my whiteness too you know, and my privilege… I worked really well with people, but again along the way there [have

been] people who have been skeptical of me taking time or from people who just thought that I can't do this work, because I'm white.

Jerry has performed hundreds of workshops and trainings, writes academic and professional articles on diversity management, and attends large diversity management conferences, and is connected to an international circuit of experts. In a similar way that non-white persons come to recognize themselves as racialized, Jerry and other white professionals are regularly confronted with the visibility of their bodies, which reflect membership in of group defined by self-interests.

In contrast with their non-white peers who articulate a felt debt to conducting diversity work, white diversity professionals often invoked a desire for organizational and societal change. Jerry later explained, "I know and believe that white men would like to make a difference. There are many people very committed to this, we [white men] are not homogeneous; we are very diverse all levels." Like non-whiteness, whiteness is also an indexical sign that invokes the past and channels the present into a project of social and economic inclusion. Whiteness is more than symbolic. It mediates understandings of systemic exclusion. Furthermore, white individuals who enlist into diversity work are seen as suspicious, not for the knowledge and competencies they *hold* or the business degrees they have attained, but for who they are *seen to be*. Their bodies give them or take away their credibility.

Whites as Less Than Credible

At American D&I, much of the work of the thirty-something coordinators employed at the headquarters entailed planning and executing diversity events. They researched and wrote on topics, such as leadership skills and how to negotiate a promotion, and invited guest speakers to provide their insights as advice to eager professionals interested in doing diversity work or in pursuing career mobility. These guest speakers are almost exclusively women or people of color.

One rainy day, I urged Phyllis to come grab lunch with me. I had been curious to try the non-California tacos, and finally I decided it was time. They were hesitant, as they wanted to take a 30-minute lunch break so that they could leave early. I offered to drive and semi-guaranteed our speedy taco-pick up adventure and they came along. Little did I know that on the way to the taco place, which was a mere two miles away, there would be so much construction and flooding. We were in the middle of a week full of summer rain. Hence, while the tacos were done in less than five minutes, the whole trip took a total of 40 minutes.

As I was driving back to the office I asked them to tell me how they worked and what they did. My time at American D&I consisted of researching and writing papers, and what little I knew of Phyllis' and the other coordinators' work until this point was that they organized events and invited speakers using mostly spreadsheets, the internet, and a LinkedIn account. I wanted to know specifically how they invited people and whom they invited to be on a panel of racially diverse speakers. I asked them, "How do you begin planning an event?" They asked me bluntly and suspiciously, "What do you mean?" I reminded Phyllis of my dissertation research, for which I have to account for what diversity management is and what it looks like. I also admitted to never having done the kind of work that they did in the office. Phyllis broke the stare and said much more relaxed, "Oh yeah, oh yeah." Then proceeded to give me step-by-step instructions as if they were training someone to fill-in for them at work.

With every event they said, you first have to have a location— a city— of where the event is going to be. The first thing one has to do is to look up the demographics in the area. It generally is insightful, "Except Maine," they said recounting the last project they did, "which is like 90% white." I asked them why these demographics were insightful, and they said that they were, because "depending on whether it's very diverse or not it [is] easier to find speakers." If it

is a very white state, the chances of finding non-white executive professionals to be speakers in any profession are very low. I said that I understood that there are not many non-white professionals out there, but that I did not understand *why* they needed to have people of color on the panels they organized. They thought about it, and said matter-of-factly, "Well, for me— and you— wouldn't we feel better if we saw ourselves represented [on the panel]"? They had spoken for both of us, as persons from Mexican ancestry. On the other hand, they said, seeing an all white panel would have the opposite effect for us and other people like us, "Because you know that white people have all the power, so how could you connect to people like that?"

Phyllis had made explicit some of the unspoken rules of diversity work— that it is often seen as the domain of non-white people and that people of color disproportionately engage in or are given diversity work. What Phyllis revealed, however, is that while scholarship on diversity identifies that People of Color disproportionately do more diversity work (Ahmed 2012, 2017), People of Color also police who may and may not do this work. In other words, at events that foreground women in business, such as on parents' work/life balance, being an assertive leader, and learning how to negotiate a salary, diversity professionals hardly raise a problem with white attendees. White and non-white women are seen to share similar concerns over their exclusion in the corporate workplace. Yet in regards to sharing expertise on the topic of diversity generally, such as in management consulting, the tensions in racial politics become salient. In these instances, concerns over the credibility of experts were at stake, and legitimated (or not) by their racial visibility.

For example, after attending a workshop at one of the largest conferences on diversity and inclusion in the country, the Forum for Workplace Inclusion, I asked the leader of the workshop for the opportunity for an interview. She was the Chief Executive Officer of her own

consulting company, and the work she presented was thoughtful and nuanced. In the training, I had judged her to have sensitivity for cultural practices and for individual agency even as she shared concern for workforce performance. She had also identified herself to us as a white woman. The conversation with Catherine went as follows,

> **Lucy:** Can you think of a time when your authority was challenged?
>
> **Catherine:** Oh I think it is every single time I step in front of a new group— *every single time*. Oh yeah definitely. Every single time because of that resistance again, because folks are thinking 'Yeah right.' … 'Who the hell are you to tell me?'… Our identities also impact that. My identity as a white woman impacts that. My authority is questioned. I'm sure a lot more unconsciously by folks, 'Oh [what] does she know, because she's a woman,' or 'what does she know, you know, she's white.' Or 'What does she know, she's straight,' or 'what does she know, she's able bodied.' So I think in diversity and inclusion we are OK with consciously questioning someone just sort of just because of their identity. Whereas, I mean, can you imagine you have a… sales rep meeting, and a sales expert comes to give a training— can you imagine if people outwardly said, 'But seriously what do you know? I mean you're white'…
>
> **Catherine:** But that's OK to consciously say… think, and express when it comes to diversity. So that means you know that we're okay with holding that question again. I think it goes back to resistance and even resistance [which] comes from marginalized people. You know I don't see someone that looks like me and so therefore you can't relate to any of my experiences and so therefore what do you know.

As a diversity expert who began her first diversity-related work while in the Peace Corps in the 1990s, Catherine said that her expertise was questioned "every single time." She also illustrated that being questioned, as a white person, was part of everyday work as a diversity consultant, distinguishing this job from others, such as in sales.

Yet, it is the comparison with the sales representative that is revealing of how a concern with "experience," which is a form of abstracting human relations to a scale of commonality, is material when work is concerned. In other words, what Catherine failed to mention in her analysis is that in sales, whiteness often goes unnoticed, because it is the norm. In diversity management, it is as if these roles are almost reversed. That is, whereas in diversity management, Women of Color are seen as naturals for the job, [32] Women of Color scholars have also written that their expertise is also questioned in positions of authority, such as in academia; they are presumed incompetent (Gutiérrez y Muhs et al. 2012). When I asked both Catherine and Jerry how they overcome these challenges, which derive from them being perceived as white, they both answered that they need to prove that their intentions are genuine. This comes, they both said, with building trust and relationships over time. In a workshop, they build trust rather quickly by sharing personal details about their lives.

Performing Antiracist Sincerity

Insofar as bodies of white management consultants signify being beneficiaries of exclusionary systems, how do they gain the credibility needed to become diversity management experts? Linguistic anthropologists have examined how such normalized categories emerge as a racial identity and ideology (Tretchter and Bucholtz 2001). Here I show how white diversity

[32] Sara Ahmed (2018) Complaint as Diversity Work. UCLA. Not white, not male, not cis— as Sara Ahmed (2018) has said of academic workers, do more service work. "The more 'not's you are the more committees you are in."

professionals perform antiracist sincerity in order to be seen as competent experts in diversity management.

On one of the last days that I spent at the headquarters of American D&I, Susan asked me if I was planning on returning. I had originally told her that my work would entail leaving and returning once I secured more funding. By the time she asked me again, I was already convinced that I would not be returning. Having done office work, I came to understand that much of what consultants do is prepare their work from home then travel to do corporate assessments and deliver trainings. To get this kind of exposure, I explained to Susan, I would continue to develop the research branch of American D&I from home and collaborate with consultants on projects, and hopefully get to travel with them. I had gotten close with my co-workers; they often used me as a sounding board to workshop their projects or to complain about their managers.

So, I explained to her some preliminary plans, and I also mentioned casually that one of the researchers on the team, a retired white man, Frank, had been very kind and generous in helping me develop the research branch. He also was giving me literature and historical background of the diversity management field, which I appreciated, along with resources that I could use to build a solid foundation for doing my own consulting. She stared at me with suspicion, raising an eyebrow, and I abruptly stopped talking. She said, "He's actually not very nice or generous." I looked around at the office; everyone was hard at work on their computers and had their headphones on. I became suddenly aware of how close we were all seated in cubicles with low walls that at the moment only gave me the eerie feeling that the open workspace had become Foucauldian. I could whisper and the fifteen people in the office would hear me. So, I did not ask for more, but made a mental note to ask her at a later time.

Later, on the way home from lunch we stopped at the pharmacy. Susan wanted to pick up a birthday card for one of her friends. I followed her as she walked through the aisles and then stopped at the cards to peruse the categories. I asked her what she had meant about Frank. She said in an abrupt tone, suggesting an annoyance that I knew was not directed at me, "Older white people do this thing when they look at you. [They] think that you belong in the same club—[they] think that they know you—and they start saying racist shit." It wasn't the first time she had expressed this idea. The last time it was in reference to having spent time with friends of her best friend. That other day she told a colleague and me that a stranger said to her in a group setting something she interpreted as racist (she did not say what this was). She said that she had "called him out," telling him, "That's really inappropriate." The person, Susan said, walked away dumbfounded that she would confront him.

This time at the pharmacy the person in question was one of our work colleagues, had higher status within the organization, and was also an older person. She couldn't— fearing real professional consequences— "call him out." She told me expressing discomfort, as if she was revealing a company secret, how he treats her like a friend. She told me how he confided in her his discomfort at the idea that one of his children might be dating a non-white person. He did not like this, she said. His reasoning was that it was "easier" for his children to date people of the same race, rather than date outside of their white race, because they had certain "cultural customs" that were difficult to adapt to.

Susan never confronted Frank. She was afraid, she said, of being reprimanded or of losing her job. Yet, in Susan telling me what could amount to at most to office gossip, two things became evident. The first is that antiracism in diversity work was performed, in ways that both reproduced diversity work as concerned with racial discrimination and minimized trust placed in

individuals who are not seen to share this interest. The second is that it was evident that Frank was performing antiracism, in the sense that Susan no longer believed him and interpreted his actions as faking them, but in disclosing this to me, Susan was also performing her own kind of antiracist sincerity.

John Jackson (2005) presented the notion of racial sincerity in an examining how racial identities are formed through negotiations and debates over what it means to "keep it real." Rather than a question of racial scripts, which confines agency, or authenticity, which presupposes a subject-object relationship that reduces complex actors to almost caricatures, Jackson argued for examining racial sincerity as a "liaison *between subjects*… [which] imply social interlocutors who presume one another's humanity, interiority, and subjectivity." In this way, he argues, racial sincerity "is an attempt to… explain the reasons it can feel so obvious, natural, real, and even liberating to walk around with purportedly racial selves crammed up inside of us and serving as invisible links to other people" (2005, 15). In effect, racial sincerity is about a very human need and desire to belong socially, and in turn, to do work that aligns with personal values.

Jackson described the case Leo Felton, who was arrested for using counterfeit money, but had plans to blow-up Jewish monuments. Felton lived his life as a neo-Nazi skinhead, despite having an African-American father. He chose to live his life as white after much trying— and failing— to fit in with black peers. Jackson argued that the question of whether he is "faking" his identity misses the point. "He wasn't living a lie, only a deeper more significant racial truth." Jackson continued, "All his life, [Felton] felt white on the side… he was materially black, but spiritually and soulfully white" (Jackson 2015, 19). He continued, according to this skinhead, racial interiority is not grounded in ancestry, "This interiority is predicated on a spiritual

connection to race that grounds identity in intention, faith, belief, inclination, and commitment" (2015, 21). By definition these racial performances are material, as well as reflexive and intentional.

What I examine, however, is not the performance of racial identity as much as the performances of antiracism necessary to negotiates one's racialized body in relation to one's goals. In this case, antiracism is performed in order to achieve expert competency. Through everyday professional and work relations, diversity management demands of individuals to enact a kind of reflexivity over the past in order to effectively conduct diversity work in corporate workplaces. This is illustrated in the reflexivity employed by diversity professionals; diversity professionals demonstrate an awareness of their racial positionality in relation to others and their work. In other words, they calculate and negotiate the perceptions others have of them with their personal desires to do diversity work. Susan's revelatory comments, for instance, made clear that Frank performed antiracism while conducting diversity consulting. Yet, she did not dare expose him as someone that was, in so little words, merely performing— without believing in— antiracism. Furthermore, in performing her own antiracist sincerity, Susan, also a white diversity professional, positioned herself as "not like" those other white people, like Frank's, whose interests and intentions are contradictory to her own.

Susan's and other white diversity professionals often communicate a desire to be not seen as "those other" white people. Much to their dissatisfaction, as said explicitly by Catherine and Jerry, others often abstract their individualities and categorize them as self-interested white people, along with neo-Nazis, White Supremacists, and racists. They do not appreciate and they often resent being recognized as "white," because this often entails confronting an association that is antithetical to their personal beliefs and values. Through a complicated semiotic process

that is historical as well as futuristic, in being recognized as "white," these "well-meaning people" are bundled with a historical whiteness that is recognized as exploitative, oppressive, and exclusive. Whiteness as an indexical sign, in other words, invokes the past to give legibility to contemporary diversity business management projects.

In interviews with white management consultants, many described the need to show their authenticity and genuine intentions when interfacing with clients and trainees. For example, when talking to Catherine about how she overcomes the hurdle of being distrusted, she said that part of the problem is that non-white white-collar workers do not think that she can relate to their experiences. She often hears, "You can't relate to me— you haven't been oppressed… You haven't been black, you don't know about diversity." She explained how she manages these perceptions now:

> **Catherine:** This isn't a story that I tell, but this is the point of what I'm getting at. A number of years ago [my husband and I] went to my daughter's parent teacher conference and… her French teacher was telling us about some of the things that they're going to be doing, talking about French culture and about things that they they're going to be teaching [about it]. And she's only talking to my husband and she says to him— because he's black, so he's the one that knows about culture— She says, 'Well you know I'm showing some of the complexity of culture,' and she says, '*You* know what I mean.' And, I'm looking at her thinking, 'Oh god. This is hysterical, because she doesn't know what she means, but I do. You know, because I literally wrote the book on it. But she doesn't even think that I might, because I'm a white woman. So, it's that same concept in my sessions. I will typically tell a story right away about my [interracial] family because that

> establishes my credibility in diversity. Not because I've done 25 years of work, not because I literally wrote the book, but because they give me credibility because of their identity. My husband as a man of color gives me my credibility.

The Economics of Credibility

It is important to highlight here that white people must perform antiracist sincerity to be seen as credible experts. In what follows, I will examine the relationship between credit and interest as mutually constitutive, and inquire into how it is productive for the production of capitalist work. In defining the concept of interests, Hirschman (1977) wrote, "The history of the term goes back much farther for its other meanings, such as the interest that is charged on borrowed money" (32). Similarly, Graeber (2011), while noting that the origins of "interest" will never quite be known, also argued for its historical relationship in perpetuating debt-based economies. Here, I show how interests are re-imagined and re-configured in relation to credibility, and how this reconfiguration is both an economic and moral one.

Anthropologists have written extensively about the association between credit and honor, and of credit as liberating and beneficial for the creditor, whereas debt is constraining and limiting (Peebles 2010; Truitt 2007; Zelizer 1994). Pocock (1975) showed how the popular understanding of credit as good and as reflecting morally virtuous individuals developed historically alongside the creation of a civic personality and societal norms in the 18th century. In other words, credit and morality became constituted as English intellectuals made sense of the role of Britain acquiring land across the Atlantic and of international trade in relation to English society and the state's indebtedness. Pocock argued that as credit was read through the lens of Puritanism, rather than the Catholic monarchy, credit gained a positive reputation, which propelled financial relations. For instance, through the lens of Puratinism, credit gained a

positive reputation insofar as it was regulated by moderation and liberty, rather than popery and tyranny (Pocock 1975, 456).

Pocock invoked the influential economist and mercantile theorist, Charles Davenant, who in observing that Britain was a major imperial power, explained that the "ultimate determinant of national prosperity is now credit." Imperialism and colonialism depended on credit. Yet, credit is precarious, Davenant argued. Credit "has existence only in the minds of men… [which] hangs upon opinion and depends on our passions" (Pocock 1975, 451, citing Davenant). During the ushering of republicanism, there was a political struggle for state control by the old aristocracy, which derived its wealth from land, and the new bourgeoisie, which accrued wealth incrementally from capital— from lending credit to the state and receiving interest. As Davenant noted how the value of the land dependent on state commercial activities, he came to conclude that the entire "economy [was] dependent upon public finance" (Pocock 451). This new economy "depends on the rate at which capital can be got;… and this in turn depends upon men's confidence in one another" (451). Pocock continues summarizing Davenant, "while in the long run it depends upon their perception and material realties, in the short run [is] determined by opinion and passion, hope and fear" (451).

Thus, credit and credibility have been defined in economic as well as moral terms. Davenant pointed to the notion that credit is subjective, both shaping who is "worthy" of credit and the human and social conditions by which credit is in itself of positive value. Graeber, for example, points to how sixteenth and seventeenth century English understandings of credit, which relied on medieval standards for loan lending, have persisted. He wrote, "When people used the word 'credit,' they referred above all to a reputation for honesty and integrity; and a man or woman's honor, virtue, and respectability, but also, reputation for generosity, decency,

and good-natured sociability, were at least as important considerations when deciding whether to make a loan as were assessments of net income" (Graeber 2011, 328). Those that did not pay their debts became seen as criminals.

As many scholars of economic theory have noted, Puritan values have factored into Protestant notions of liberty, moderation, and capitalist work (e.g. Pocock 1975, Hunt 1983, Weber 1905). Max Weber (1905), for instance, argued that capitalism was driven by Protestant values of self-discipline, tenacity, frugality, and hard work. Pocock, on the other hand, noted how these values were constituted in a new bourgeoisie class and into a capitalist English society. With regards to credit, a state, Pocock wrote was imagined to thrive economically and societally insofar as it was imbued with the "spirits of liberty, moderation, and the Protestant succession" (1975, 456). Pocock continued, "The precondition of her health is the health of all society and the practice of all the moral activities which society entails" (1975, 456). The question of virtuosity and credit, therefore, was not only a question of traders in the market, but those engaged in public finance. In sum, opinions, passions, and fears determined credit and credit-worthiness, and these in turn shaped economic, social, and moral valences at large.

Understandings of credit as morally virtuous continue into the 21st century. Noelle Stout (2016), for example, showed that after the economic crises and Occupy Wall Street movements, debtors purposefully defaulted on their mortgages, even when they could afford to pay them. These were political actions, which challenged discourses on debtors as dishonorable by making arguments that pose creditors as immoral, and hence, less deserving to be paid back. They raised concerns over social and economic injustices, such as, how creditors targeted People of Color for less-than desirable mortgage loans, even when they qualified for desirable fixed-rate interest loans. Instead, the debtors argued, they were given loans where the interest rates would increase

over time, setting them up for failure (Stout 2016). Hence, credit-worthiness has historically and, as Stout shows, continues to be defined according to racial lines. Diversity professionals, however, are reconfiguring the relationship between credit, interest, and race, creating new moral valences around achieving social interests within capitalism.

Collective Interests and Antiracist Capitalism

In the summer of 2016, I co-facilitated a diversity training that was delivered to over 70 middle managers of a large multinational corporation. The training was created employing a "train the trainer" model. In other words, a senior consultant, with over 15 years of experience was to provide the knowledge, tools, and resources to managers who would become "experts" in diversity and inclusion. To these ends, we had surveyed the audience by testing their level of competency and created a day training that would push their expertise further. The training we gave was on how to create diversity councils and align the business strategy to everyday diversity work. These trainees held middle-management positions across the country and represented a particular geographical region wherein they worked. After a few days they were to return to their everyday work locations and lead the implementation of diversity initiatives.

The corporate headquarters resembled a packing warehouse. As I looked for the entrance while still in the taxi, I received a text message from Calvin, the senior consultant, "It's that big brightly colored building." It seemed that the GPS maps had given him a similar wrong location. I asked the taxicab to turn around and drive me to the other location, thinking in particular that I did not want to sprint across the large parking lot in my heels. When I got off the taxi, which waited for me to wave good-bye to him, Calvin was already there with a woman from human resources, Lacey, whose voice I recognized from our multiple phone conversations. Her petite stature surprised me. They both asked me, laughing if I had trouble finding the place. I was three

minutes late. I nodded. We walked over to the counter where we gave them our identification and we were logged in. The entire place was modeled as if it was a welcoming home: rugs, couches, coffee tables of various colors and sizes.

Lacey took us to the training room, which reminded me too much of an oversized elementary school kind of classroom. I counted 88 chairs different color chairs. Some circled the room and the rest were organized around three rectangular brown-topped tables, which made a perfect square. A whiteboard covered a 30-foot wall. The rest of the walls were covered with lined butcher paper. The diversity training had already been going on for a couple of days before we arrived. During this time the human resource professionals oriented them to the company's new program, workbooks, and mission statements. We were also informed that they did team-building activities and trust exercises. After this short introduction we went to the cafeteria for coffee, then we began to set up for the day. We took out our white board markers, activity stickers, tested the microphone, and organized our literature onto the table.

As I was new to diversity consulting, the lead consultant asked me to present a few slides, and also encouraged me to do more than just observe. The first slide I presented was one titled "Diversity, Inclusion, and Culture." I was to provide definitions for these terms, and according to the consultant, set the foundation of the training. I was to first present the slide only with the key term, then one term at a time, I was to prompt the audience for their thoughts on what the term means, and lastly, I was to press the clicker, revealing the official definition. I began by saying that because these terms can be defined differently, we needed to come to an understanding of what they mean while at work at the company. This allowed us to have common language so that we could have an effective training. We did not want to find ourselves several hours into the

training realizing that we were having different conversations, and we would have to start all over again. I got a few laughs. I jumped right in and asked them, “How do you define diversity?”

A woman, who had a noticeably British accent, first responded saying that some people think diversity is exotic, and great because it’s mysterious, and that other people are afraid of it. Then another woman described diversity as “demographics” and that it had to do with who was in a group, I nodded noticing that she had given the definition that we would work with. The participants that followed added that it was locally different everywhere. I noted in transition, “You are all so smart!” Then I asked them— “what about inclusion?” After a few seconds of silence, I answered my own question by saying that inclusion was about what we do with these differences. I then pointed to the new diversity mission statement they received, and tied it to the company’s words: “actions,” “access,” and “involvement.” Inclusion, as the company defined it, meant being intentional about creating access at work for everyone. I added that they should be conscious that being inclusive with some people can also exclude others.

Then we transitioned into how culture was something that “we learn” and had to do with “collective knowledge.” I spent some time describing that everybody has culture, nobody lacks it, but some cultures become the norm and because of this we do not always immediately see them. It is not until we are confronted with differences that we think, I said, “Oh that’s different, I did not realize it that I always assumed this was the only way to do it; the only way to think about something.” Culture thus, I explained, has to do with beliefs, values, practices, ways of doing things, all of which we learn to do. It seemed for a while as if I was talking to myself aloud. That is when someone, Patrick, said,

“Lucy—may I interrupt you?” “Yes,” I said. “I just made an observation about why all these three terms are so important—the Ku Klux Klan, the Tea Party, White Supremacists, they

have their own culture and subcultures, but they don't have much diversity. They are not very inclusive, and that is why they reproduce hate and bias." He continued making his observation, but I could not hear it over the sound of applause. I presumed that, rather than ask him to repeat it, which would interrupt the sense of collegiality that was just created, I should go with the crowd. That is when I said into the microphone, "I love that observation," and around me people resoundingly agreed, "Yes. Right on."

It was in that moment that the discussions we had been having around inclusion, which abstracted social differences through invoking experiences with exclusion, had been made material. They had invoked race. Patrick later openly identified himself as a white man from Brooklyn. Patrick made a point to ground inclusion— and enroll himself into the training— by drawing on and reinforcing shared definitions of white supremacy and anti-black racism. Rather than operationalize diversity exclusively through shared desires for social justice, in that training Patrick drew in understandings of racism to make sense of the corporate definitions of diversity, inclusion, and culture. That is, in order to for inclusion to be effectively implemented at work, diversity was needed, and hence, an awareness for historical racism.

In other words, when Calvin and I were hired to do the training we were given literature materials the company had already developed. The company provided materials, including definitions they developed over the organizational values they held: diversity and inclusion. They defined diversity as diversity scholars have done, according to "categories that cannot be changed," which included race, ethnicity, age, gender identity, sexuality, ability, as well as those that could, including differences in skills and religion. Inclusion tied the various categories of difference in ways that made them relevant and beneficial for the organization, as they entailed action that worked towards creating "flexible and collaborative ways of working." For Peter, as

well as the rest of the participants, diversity did not only speak to tolerance and not creating harm. In order to have inclusion as practice that worked to change organizational culture, white supremacy and racism had to be eliminated.

Later, for example, the company managers engaged in a series of activities that connected these antiracist visions to the bottom-line. They were asked, "What idea are you most passionate about that you believe could benefit [your company] the most if launched as part of a diversity council initiative?" They were also asked, to come up with ideas in various categories of organizational intervention, including in gaining executive support, creating a "business case," and creating various different organizational roles to executive initiatives. At every step of the way they were asked how their commitment to diversity and inclusion can "contribute to better service, products, customer satisfaction, and a competitive advantage," and they were given real industry examples of other projects being done across corporate America. In effect, what I had been witness to and a willing participant of had been in creating a kind of diversity practice that ensured there was a role for every individual in the room. This entailed creating shared definitions on diversity, as well as agreeing on a vision for diversity work as antiracist practice to the extent that it is congruous with business objectives.

Diversity management has been at the center of postcolonial feminist critiques. These scholars have shown that through institutions like the corporation, diversity enables the governance and exploitation of employees. Diversity, hence, only provides an appearance of fairness by creating values around multiculturalism that work through capitalist systems (e.g. Melamed 2015; Mohanty 2005; Ahmed 2012). Yet, little attention has been placed to how diversity management as business practice, is both personal and impersonal (Hart 2005). In practice, diversity management is full of contradictions, tensions, agreements, and

disagreements. Here, I place attention on how diversity entails coming to agreed-upon definitions over what it is, it's purpose, and it's future. I suggest, that through diversity management, new moral valences are created around social interests, which are antithetical to white self-interest, and which rely on performances of antiracism.

White diversity professionals claim that their credibility is always in question due to being white. In order to achieve credibility, they have to acknowledge how their own racial positionality and make public their personal interests. They share with trainees and peers their personal lives, their intimate relationships with People of Color, and denounce white supremacy groups. By doing so, they show that that they have social interests. Whether this is authentic or not is irrelevant. What this shows, however, is the emergence of new moral valences within capitalist corporate bureaucracies. Diversity professionals' credit-interest relations reinforce anthropological understandings of credit as having the capacity to bring the past, future, and present in dialogue, and to shape the boundaries between bodies and space. They also highlight how new economic and moral values are negotiated at the intersections of history, semiotics, racial thinking, and capitalist practice.

Conclusion

Many diversity scholars and professionals argue that, in contrast with 21st century "diversity and inclusion," the business practices of the 1980s and early 1990s that prioritized valuing multicultural differences often excluded of white men. For example, critics, including author of *The Diversity Machine*, Fredrick Lynch (1997) argued that diversity management was counter productive, making white people feel guilty and therefore excluding them from doing any forms of substantial and meaningful work to challenge systemic racism. In 2016, diversity professionals both publicly urge organizations to include white men in diversity work, while

expressing privately their distrust of them. They regularly regard white people as beneficiaries of a system of racist exploitation.

In this chapter I argued that concerns over credit, interest, and whiteness have long been intertwined. Following the works of Cedric Robinson (1983), J.G.A. Pocock (1975), and Albert O. Hirschman (1977), I traced how contemporary economic and moral meanings became intertwined within racial capitalism. Further, by examining how white diversity professionals articulate their own roles in diversity management, I show how American histories of racial exclusion are productive for diversity work in ways that reconfigure our understandings in the relationship between credit and interest. In particular, I show how in trainings and through the practice of diversity management, diversity professionals and white-collar workers create new moral valences that define collective interests in antiracism. By appealing to racial thinking and business logics, diversity professionals reveal how antiracist interests are collectivized, how diversity work is made meaningful, and how through the performance of antiracism white diversity professionals gain credibility and legitimacy. These findings suggest that capitalism is not only driven through self-interest rational decision-making, but through an attention to collective and social interests that aim to address American race relations within corporate bureaucratic processes.

CONCLUSION

Racial Visions for an Antiracist Capitalism

Class mobility is essential to most American's sense of inclusion in the United States. After the Civil Rights Movements of the 1960s, the federal government passed new legislation and promulgated executive orders, which forbade discrimination based on race, sexuality, color, national origin, and religion, and demanded evidence that corporations were taking "affirmative action" to ensure that employees were not discriminated against in hiring and employment. Thus, corporations standardized bureaucratic processes and created workplace practices, such as racial sensitivity and harassment trainings, in the name of creating "equal opportunity." In 2016, diversity management professionals exclaim that the work of racial integration in the workplace is not done; they claim that while the workforce is already diverse, very little has changed among corporate leadership. Yet they claim that in order to institutionalize diversity principles and work, managers, executives, and white-collar workers advocate for— and create— diversity strategies that advance the organizational bottom line, that is, increase profit. At the intersections of business and academia, diversity professionals employ a wide range of scholarly theories to make sense of why discrimination persists, despite the systemic dismantlement of affirmative action policies and legislation. In order to address institutional discrimination, which is explained as "exclusion," they draw on psychological theories, which set forth biologically-determined explanations for why humans are naturally inclined to be afraid of social differences.

In creating business knowledge and organizational techniques that purport to be more inclusive of social differences, and which claim that diversity has economic value for business, diversity professionals draw attention to unconscious bias. They explain how despite good intentions all humans discriminate, drawing on evolutionary psychology theories, which claim

that when confronted with difference humans respond by "fight or flight." In interviews, business scholars argue that in contrast to anthropology or feminist theories, psychology is productive for business, because it gives managers explanations and tools for addressing everyday business problems. By drawing on these theoretical paradigms for understanding social exclusion, diversity professionals address a historical legacy of racial discrimination in the corporate workplace in such a way that generates antiracist capitalist practice.

By way of conclusion, I identify two ways in which diversity management can help us to understand broader American political, racial, organizational, and economic processes. First, through mundane work, diversity professionals reveal how race is operated in capitalist corporate bureaucracies through the abstraction and materialization of race. Second, business and economic discourses surrounding diversity management and American racial politics highlight how capitalism is generated implicitly and explicitly as antiracist. These two findings operate through various modalities and scales that I call "racial visions," which highlight the visibility of race and discrimination, the transparency of capitalist bureaucratic work, the privileging of scientific and economic empiricism, and desires for social and economic inclusion. I draw inspiration from Franz Boas who in his own critiques of race campaigned against scientific racism, citing the "instability of human types," our limitations in conducting empirical science, the fluidity and arbitrariness of geography, and the limits of our own human imagination. Hence, insofar as management scholars, consultants, and managers correct for unconscious bias in diversity work, I contend, they generate capitalism as antiracist at the intersections of scientific and economic reasoning and affective dispositions.

More specifically, the term "racial visions" points to how diversity experts materialize and abstract race through scientific and economic reasoning, such as in classificatory and

statistical practices (Chapters 1 and 2), and how management consultants imagine the firm and the market in the creation of metrics to assess diversity progress, and how these create the conditions for inter-organizational business collaboration in implementing diversity (Chapter 3). Racial visions also allow us to understand how diversity experts choose to advance the social and economic interests of racialized and gendered strangers to pay forward their felt debts (Chapter 4), and how they imagine the interests of white people in diversity work as a question of historical credibility (Chapter 5). In effect, as the concept of "racial visions" coordinates these chapters, it also reveals how semiotics, politics, business, and economics work together to generate racial capitalism through antiracist ideologies and bureaucratic formulations. Such a coordination and convergence entails a continuous folding in of the past and the future into projects made in the present. As one consultant, said in an interview, "I work to put myself out of a job."

Racial Materializations and Abstractions

Anthropologists have examined the term vision in a number of ways, indicating empiricism, observation, signs, and an orientation towards the future. Through racial visions, diversity professionals manage corporate uncertainty and perform antiracism. In creating value in diversity in scholarship, and in metrics and literature to be used inter-organizationally, diversity professionals both standardize race through the use of racial and ethnic categories found in Equal Employment Opportunity forms, and abstract race through making race into a question of human difference. In its abstraction, hence, diversity is defined and operationalized as diversity of thought and perspectives. In everyday corporate work, diversity professionals abstract race in three distinct— but related— ways. The first is by employing racial categories found in demographic technologies, which employ the use of bureaucratic government forms. The second

is by employing psychological and evolutionary discourses to explain discrimination, turning racism into a concern with social exclusion. The third is by abstaining in talking about race.

The day before one San Francisco diversity conference, I had been helping two staff members of American D&I prepare for registration. Phyllis, Logan, and I had been in our hotel lobby across the street from the conference site stuffing badges with flags that said "SPEAKERS," "VIP," and "AWARDEES." It was always unclear to me who received a VIP sticker or why. Most of the time it was reserved to the higher-ranking awardees, although I was often unclear as to what this meant. We were using most of the long, thirteen-foot indoor wooden picnic table to lay out the badges in alphabetical order. The purpose of our mundane work was so that the volunteers would more easily be able to find and register the attendants. Then, Phyllis stepped out to answer a phone call. Logan and I worked in silence, while she was gone. We tore each nametag from perforated paper, found each name's classification and selected the appropriate ribbon with the titles VIPs, Speaker, or Awardee. Then we slipped the name into a plastic badge, gluing the ribbon on the bottom. Five minutes later, Phyllis hurried in and said in excitement:

Phyllis: He's coming!

Lucy: Who?

Phyllis: This guy. The one that didn't know he was receiving an award.

We laughed.

Lucy: What do you mean? He didn't know until today?

Phyllis: No, he just found out recently!

Lucy: When?

Phyllis: When I asked the VIPs to send their questionnaires. He e-mailed me back saying, "What do you mean I got an award? For what?"

She laughed nervously. I enthusiastically asked her to clarify, while I forced a laugh as if I understood the joke when I actually didn't.

Lucy: What did you tell him?

Phyllis: Nothing.

Lucy: What do you mean, what happened?

Phyllis: I freaked out. I didn't answer, I just said, "You are receiving a Multicultural Leadership award." And explained logistics and the time he would receive the award, It was awkward!

To her pleasant surprise, he replied something to the effect of "Oh great, that's right after my panel." And she described how relieved she was that she "didn't have to tell him anything." I laughed then, finally understanding how awkward the situation must have been.

Phyllis showed that while she knew that she had identified him as an award recipient for being "diverse," she did not want to tell him: *You are getting this award, Sir, because you are not a white person in corporate America.* Perhaps the recipient would be offended or maybe confused. Regardless, it would mean a breach in the social conventions of diversity management, where attendees and presenters alike discussed the challenges openly about diversity management, but also where individuals were awarded for their successes *as* non-white males in predominantly white-male business. Thus, Phyllis had intentionally avoided the question and re-iterated answers to other questions he had not asked, as if Phyllis were a savvy politician discussing controversial issues on national television. In effect, Phyllis had silenced their work as

antiracist. While diversity management professionals often explicitly told me that their work was about challenging racial discrimination, they couldn't necessarily tell everyone this.

Silencing enables abstraction. Susan Buck-Morss (2000) wrote two centuries of academic silence on the relationship between Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel and Haiti. Buck-Morss wrote Hegel and intellectuals of the eighteenth-century knew and discussed the Haitian revolution, "precisely because it challenged the racism of many of their preconceptions" (2000, 845). Yet, academics had not acknowledged that Hegel's theorization on the dialectical relationship between the master and the slave was written with Haiti in mind. On the other hand, She explained how through the silence, white Marxists abstracted the slave-master dialectic as quintessential of class struggle. Yet, they relegated slavery to a pre-capitalist economic system and ignored the works of Black scholars who argued that slavery was critical to capitalism, including C.L.R. James and Eric Williams. Silence, Buck-Morss argued, is productive and helps reproduce white hegemony.

Diversity management silences race strategically to make diversity valuable to business. While at American D&I, Keith had asked me to put together a presentation for a corporate bank, which was a partner to the diversity management firm. I admitted that I did not know how to do it. He said to structure it as: the past, where we are today, and the future. With almost no awareness to corporate politics, I added a historical section on the Civil Rights Movements. When I showed him the presentation, he said, "For sure, we're not going to talk about Emmett Till, so you can take that out." After a few moments of pause, I asked, "Is there a specific reason?" And he said, "Well they don't want to hear that." Then, I asked what I thought would be an easy follow-up question. "Can I talk about how the 'playing field' was not level and is still not level today? And he said, "Mmm. No. Don't mention that." So I did as I was told, as per

usual. Earlier, he had also asked me to remove the description of Bayard Rustin, a gay black and communist activist in the Civil Rights Movements from the PowerPoint presentation. He had said to that, "It just gives them a reason to discount him." I then realized that Keith was also concerned that he might be dismissed as a diversity expert as well.

Hence, this dissertation also examines the strategic silencing of 1960s Civil Rights Movements and social justice issues in the production of a business discourse on diversity, which is largely framed in terms of diversity of thought and perspectives. Yet this silencing, I suggest, is strategic. Diversity professionals both invoke the visibility of race and racism and abstract it. This is a process that entails a political savvy characteristic of business professionalism, as well as perpetual negotiations and re-orientations to diversity work. This is especially exemplified in how diversity professionals engage with a post-2010 discourse on diversity of thought.

In 2013, Anesa "Nes" Diaz-Uda, Carmen Medina, and Beth Schill from Deloite Consulting LLP published an industry report entitled "Diversity's New Frontier: Diversity of Thought and the Future of the Workforce." The article, which argued that having diversity of thought in the workplace helps guard against group-think and increases problem-solving and the ability to generate new insights, was cited generously across the sites in which I conducted research. In a training, one diversity consultant asked the audience what they thought of when someone said the word "diversity." The audience responded, "race," "gender." The consultant, Peter, then probed, "What else is it about?" Then one person said, "Diversity of thought." Peter perked his ears, "Who said that? Yes! You need to be able to just rattle these terms… [if someone tells you] 'we are already doing something about race and gender,' [you say,] 'but look, the definition of diversity is changing."

Every diversity management professional is acquainted with and recognizes the value of diversity of thought discourse. It has also been the subject of discussion in numerous popular business outlets, from magazines to "podcasts." Deloitte University and other consulting companies, however, came into this discourse after almost ten years since it was introduced by Scott Page's (2007) book, *The Difference*, which set out a mathematical explanation for how and why more diversity contributes to better problem solving, and over ten years after Robin Ely and Davis Thomas' (2001) scholarly work on diversity being valuable as a workplace "learning-and-effectiveness" paradigm. These scholarly and public academic contributions have largely helped settle a debate that once regarded diversity as detrimental for organizations, because some argued it would create conflict and harm productivity in the workplace.

In 2016, Mohamed El-Erian's (2016) published *The Only Game in Town*, which tied organizational processes with concerns in economics, politics, and global racial relations. El-Erian, an Egyptian American businessman, former IMF economist, and former chair to President Obama's Global Development Council from 2012 to 2017, argued that the "low growth, rising inequality, political dysfunction, and, in some cases, social tensions" of 2008-2009 [has] led to a "new normal" (2016, xv). Due to wealth inequality, as well as the rising inequality of opportunity for class mobility, we no longer can expect to experience a cyclical bounce back in growth. He showed how we are at a critical juncture, where we can let the economy continue with this period of low growth, high financial instability, and high economic and political uncertainty, or where we can take proactive policy, economic, and legislative measures to create economic growth. If we choose the latter, he argued, we would need to model systemic changes on inclusive growth, whereby ever citizen would benefit from economic growth. For this, El-Erian concluded, diversity of thought and perspectives is absolutely critical.

Antiracist Capitalist Discourse

Keith Hart (2000) has showed that in the 21st century, it is corporations— not individuals— that today hold most of the world's capital. While corporations have benefitted from overseas production, since the 1970s they have also emerged as critical financial actors. In the wake of the 2008 economic disaster, anthropologists pointed to the kinds of cultural ideologies, technical practices, and everyday kinds of practices that enabled large banks to crash (Ho 2009, Maurer 2012, Graeber 2014, Stout 3016). In discussing the urgent need of the business case for diversity management, most diversity professionals pointed to how corporations are sustainable institutions. Whereas federal policies on affirmative have been dismantled, companies would continue to pursuit profit maximization. Hence, to ensure its institutionalization, diversity has to be profitable.

Diversity management has been examined for managers and management experts produce new behaviors and values in the workplace that govern employees or produce new work and work subjectivities, as corporations overall resist organizational change (Gordon 1995, Ahmed 2012). Diversity management also produces business discourse. Since the 1980s, diversity work has been framed as "good for business," pointing to an insecurity of human resource professionals, management consultants, and other managerial actors with long-term work to challenge institutional discrimination. Diversity professionals produce new work processes, policies, behaviors within organizations, and they enable the inter-organizational collaboration of corporations, non-profit organizations, and academic institutions. Diversity consultants, in particular, do this by targeting specific problems that challenge efficiency in business processes, and by proposing concrete means by which to achieve economic growth. This large corporate project, which we now know as diversity and inclusion, has unfolded

through statistical forecasting, industry reporting, and the subsequent reengineering of corporate processes and techniques.

Diversity professionals do more than resolve conflicts at work; they integrate diversity into business strategy, whether this means advocating for the hiring of Spanish-speakers to match market demands or creating customer service models that are attentive to cultural differences present in specific markets. Yet, insofar as corporate clients request one to two day trainings, diversity often have to "upsell" their services. For instance, one diversity consultant described in an interview how the first thing executives believe they need help with is training about unconscious bias and more education over what discrimination is and how to address it. He tells them that this is not enough, and that diversity consultants have to examine the company for racial, ethnic, and gender demographics, organizational practices, and workplace policies. For example, in a call with a client, who was requesting a quote for training 700 employees and organizing a "diversity fair," Peter, one of the consultants on the call, said,

> "These are all good tactics, and can be part of an online program… but we [also] need a top-down [plan] of this is what we are doing and why we need to do it... having a fair doesn't necessarily move things along."

Then, supporting his statement, a consultant with twenty years of experience, who has been "around since the 90s, before they had management positions" for diversity, said,

> "Okay. The first thing that I suggest is that there needs to be some sort of a strategy around the training, because our experience has been if you just do training you lose your money in the long run… So what you've said— those activities— we don't so much look at activities as we look as initiatives. For example a brown bag luncheon thing they're not —for a lack of a better word—

> solid, [in contrast]… to, say we have found this particular group on this location [that] faces this particular issue, and we would like some particular help. [It] could be training, could be resources, so for example, one location might say—we really have an issue with parents who are Hispanic and don't speak Spanish, so one initiative would be we will set up a training for specific language around this issue. Or we are going to… set up a meeting with parents of how we can support them. So there are things that we can build on to build a solid strategy."

Diversity management has undergone significant transitions in its form and content. This is most evident in the examination of canonical texts: Roosevelt R. Thomas's *Beyond Race and Gender*, the most current version of O'Malley and Richter's *Global Diversity and Inclusion Benchmarks,* and Scott Page's *The Difference*. These publications show that in the 1990s, diversity management consultants were concerned with training employees to be more sensitive to cultural differences. In the early 2000s, diversity professionals aimed to convince employees and executives that the issues around race and gender were representative of issues that impede universal career mobility. And more recently, diversity issues have been re-tooled to address a concern with innovation and better economic decision-making. Moreover, since 2016, an increasing number of diversity professionals have more explicitly addressed American racial politics.

Trump and Racial Capitalism

In the era of the Trump Presidency, American racial politics have become more antagonistic, particularly as white supremacy ideologies have resurfaced in the mainstream media. Whereas once Eduardo Bonilla-Silva (2014, 2003) argued that a "post-racial America" was characterized by colorblind politics that reproduced racism without naming race, today race

and discrimination are at the foreground of mainstream media, as well as of business. Trump and the heightened racial antagonisms are not exceptional (Rosa and Bonilla 2017). I was no longer at the headquarters of American D&I when Trump was announced President of the United States. Yet, I had maintained in contact with some of my key interlocutors. One event coordinator told me that the day after the election the office had been "completely silent." It usually was lively and at times filled with gossip chatter. In fact, it has been so far from silent that the office managers implemented a seating chart to increase productivity. I did not even receive an e-mail from the firm. Yet, I did begin to ask consultants I had yet to interview about this.

Consultants claimed that their clients approached them days after the election: employees were crying in fear and others were afraid to show support for the President. Tensions were high. Consultants and diversity practitioners received support from their affinity groups. One consultant, Eleanor, said, "I think most of us who are doing this work are really like minded. We tend to gravitate toward one another and look to each other for support during times like these." Others quickly published and created targeted consulting (with free versions) around polarization, such as Mary-Frances Winter with her 2017 book *We Can't Talk about That at Work!* New collaborations began. Most diversity professionals openly expressed their discontent over having Trump as president. Others framed diversity and inclusion as being about learning how to engage with individuals across the political spectrum; they argued that diversity professionals needed to create workplaces where employees would not be afraid to say they voted for Trump. At a large international conference for workplace inclusion, for example, a keynote speaker chastised the audience, "We are not doing a very good job at handling this

situation. Look around you, at least one person near you voted for Trump. But, they're not telling you, because you're not listening to them." People clapped, albeit many did so uncomfortably.

Yet, when I asked another management consultant, Catherine, how she imagined diversity management would change in the Trump era, she said that she did not think that it would. She said that although she generally hopes that she has at least some "champions"— advocates of diversity— in the audience, "Ideally they're not champions. Otherwise I'm just preaching to the choir." Hence, "In that case it's very important— and we feel we have attempted to do this very strongly—to paint the business case. So rather than talk about this as a moral imperative… [we talk about] why is this valuable… So it [becomes] a discussion about why would you want diverse opinions, ideas [and] perspectives to come out, and how can that benefit your bottom line. How can that benefit your market [and give you] your return on investment. You know that has to resonate with everybody. So there's very little argument when it comes to that."

Diversity management, hence, is a process of continuous negotiations. Through it, diversity professionals remember the past as create means by which to change the future. Hence, it is a product of debate that brings to light the contradictions and the potentiality of our actions. Diversity professionals reveal how in everyday work we all align strategies, begin or foreclose relationships, and create justifications in order to make our visions a reality. Yet, while it is clear to organizational development scholars that diversity work does not need to be done for profit, diversity management— through an emphasis on creativity and innovation— has permeated almost every (purportedly) non-capitalist industry, including academia and non-profit organizations.

Given that capitalist practice is learned, enacted, and generated, I am curious as to whether diversity management can help us imagine non-capitalist forms of addressing systemic inequities, such as sexism, racism, and class, that is, while maintaining a concern for social and economic inclusion. Perhaps, I suggest, we need to redefine the latter not as a question of how to achieve class mobility, but how to disrupt the structures of class and capitalism itself. In these moments, I draw on the work of Gibson-Graham, which encourages us to seek alternative economic practices without making claims to be "outside" of capitalism. Gibson-Graham claim that we often do not do this, because "most people don't see themselves as significant actors in the economy, let alone shapers of it" (2013, xix). This is certainly the case within diversity management. Its very foundation has been shaped around the fatalistic notion that if we do not address systemic racism within the rhetorics of business, there will be no change at all, not after affirmative action. Hence, I wonder, is it possible to attach diversity work to something else, that is, to be able to produce new social discourses that are not based on the pursuit of profit? Are there other desires, motivations, or dreams that hold us together?

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