

EMPLOYEE PERCEPTIONS OF ORGANIZATIONAL PRACTICES:
TAILORED VERSUS TURNKEY DIVERSITY PROGRAMS

by

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A thesis submitted to the
Faculty of the Graduate School of the
University of Colorado in partial fulfillment
of the requirement for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

Department of Organizational Leadership and Information Analytics

2021

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ABSTRACT

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Employee Perceptions of Organizational Practices: Tailored versus Turnkey Diversity Programs

Thesis directed by Associate Professor David R. Hekman

Why do some firms produce tailored diversity practices, while others copy turnkey approaches? Using a multi-case, inductive study of six growing mobile technology firms in the San Francisco Bay area, this dissertation integrates the private interview accounts of executives, Black and Latino/a employee affinity group participants, and several incumbents of the chief diversity officer role, a role which turns over frequently. The firms shared many characteristics and also had the same “inclusion first” diversity philosophy, expressing determination to retain the minority employees that they had already as taking priority above new recruitment efforts. Despite all their similarities, they differed substantially in their diversity-promotion choices. Specifically, I found that the main antecedents of diversity practice tailoring are (1) borrowing power from line executives; (2) effectual autonomy search to enable experiments with new practices; and (3) joint design sprints among the diversity-promotion coalition – handling design quickly rather than assuming that scarce executive time will always be available. Quantitative tests of this theory showed support for a reliable employee perception about whether programs are tailored, and awareness regarding *design sprints* as their antecedent process. While existing literature focuses on pressures from outside the firm driving diversity program choices, the result of these studies is a view of processes inside the firm that drive decisions to tailor rather than copy and paste standardized diversity practices.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I thank David R. Hekman, *primus sine paribus*, for his guidance, encouragement, perseverance, and wisdom. Dave taught me everything I know about being an exemplary mentor and ally in the academy. One of the great joys of this new career is the opportunity to choose my co-workers. With Dave, I am looking forward to continued collaboration because with the right people, research work is a lot of fun.

Thanks to my fantastic committee members. R. Wayne Boss taught me an invaluable lesson in "who to put on the boat and who to take off." Stefanie K. Johnson raised my intellectual ambition by pushing me to build theory and test it with every possible method I could. Stefanie was an early backer of this research, providing the seed funding from The Johnson Lab that made every subsequent innovation possible - betting on ideas still forming. Thank you, Stefanie. Marcus M. Stewart, leader of Bentley University's teaching education partnership with *The Ph.D. Project* happened to teach me a masterclass in virtual teaching in advance of a global novel coronavirus pandemic. It is to Marcus that I dedicate my graduate student teaching award from the University of Colorado. Jeffrey G. York is the keeper of the flame for the University of Colorado's historic strength in entrepreneurship and innovation research. Jeff developed me as an institutional theorist as no one else could have and he did so with a great sense of humor. As I witnessed mandatory diversity training - a well-intentioned but harmful tactic - spread like wildfire through organizations in the aftermath of municipal civil servant homicides of their Black taxpayers, I lamented to Jeff, who responded, "isomorphism, baby!" It was what I needed to feel like I'm not the only institutionalist noticing things.

Within the halls of the Koelbel Building at the University of Colorado, I thank my partners in coffees, research meetings, and research talks: Heather Adams, Ryan Allen, Liza Barnes, Doug Bennett, Sandip Bisui, Carla Bustamante, Unseok Cho, Jing Deng, David Eargle, Beth Embry, Eric Fu, Andrew Garofolo, Nianchen Han, Avondine Hill, Erik Jeffries, Tracy Jennings, Jessica Jones, Ksenia Keplinger, Jessica Kirk, Laura Kornish, Christina Lacerenza, Brittany Lambert, Kai R. Larsen, Jintae Lee, Nick Light, (Dean) Sharon Matusik, Micah McGee, Ramiro Montealegre, Francisco Morales, Christina Morrin, Antonio Papuzza, Justin Pomerance, Rick Reed, Hasti Rahemi, Jessi Rivin, Aakash Saxena, Kevin Schaub, Harsha Tadikonda, Steffie Ungphakorn, Phoenix van Wagoner, Zhiyi Wang, Lawrence Williams, Edward van Wesep, Fan You, Kun Zhang, and Noah Zikmund.

Following advice to match my research methods to my research questions, I went to the source of case study theory-building methodology: Stanford University. At my undergraduate *alma mater* Jason Rathje and Laura Taylor-Kale were amazing friends who adopted me into their programs and inspired me to keep going during difficult times. Thanks to their inclusiveness, I met a dynamic team of qualitative scholars at Stanford University's Management Science & Engineering department. Conversations at both Kathy Eisenhardt's Stanford Technology Ventures Program (STVP) and at the Work, Technology & Organizations (WTO) group refined my field methodology. Specifically, Pamela Hinds's advice to compare groups facing similar identity threats - Black and Latino/a technologists in Silicon Valley - helped focus my work. Kathy Eisenhardt's two-day mini-conference on case study methods taught me to nest these two ethnic/racial groups within organizations that faced similar market

pressures - in three mobile technology sub-sector. Thank you to Riitta Katila and Melissa Valentine, shining exemplars of STVP and WTO's open-source research community. Thank you also to innovation scholar extraordinaire, David Kirsch of the University of Maryland College Park. David's encouragement and friendship have helped me gain confidence that there was indeed an innovation audience for my research on diversity topics.

I was so privileged to be the first-ever scholar-in-residence at a keystone institution in the San Francisco Bay Area's diversity work ecosystem. Thanks to Dr. Cynthia Overton at *The Kapor Center* in Oakland, California. Cynthia's diversity advocates' forum helped open my eyes to the dilemmas faced by professional and volunteer diversity advocates in high-technology sectors. Thank you to the over 80 confidential informants throughout the Bay Area's voluntary and full-time professional diversity workers. You shook my naivete and made me a scholar.

Distance learning and work-from-home became customary for a great many people during this Ph.D. study period. However, thanks to connections at the National Center for Faculty Development & Diversity (NCFDD), I have had my projects supercharged by my writing accountability partner Diana Askings McCarty. Our daily writing digital clock and NCFDD's resources made us unstoppable. Thanks to Christian Paiz at UC Berkeley, Stacey Greene at Rutgers, Nic John Ramos at Drexel University for the distance-writing partnership. Thanks to Anamika Chakravorty, Arvil Gonzalez, Angela Pan, and Anne Withers for the Star Trek, Ph.D. comics, and international relations memes, which arrived when I needed them most.

Bearing witness to this unforgettable journey's most challenging moments were friends from the Management Doctoral Students Association (MDSA), the Management Faculty of Color Association (MFCA), and my Washington D.C. families. Thank you to Melissa Abad, Tanya J. Bethel, Beth Baltzan, Triza Crittle, Lauren Davenport, Demond Drummer, Sheena Greitens, Meg Guliford, Dayanand Manoli, Courtney Masterson, Shubha Sastry, Michael Woldemariam, and Alden Young for your years of moral and practical support. Thank you to the MDSA family, especially Howard Jean-Denis, Celeste Diaz Ferraro, Alexander Lewis, Florencio Portocarrero, Sandra Portocarrero, Micah Rajunov, and Stormy Sweitzer. The MFCA's Angelica Leigh and Phillip Thompson provided wise counsel. They made me believe that I would one day join their ranks as a mentor to future faculty of color in management studies. *The Ph.D. Project* team at the KPMG Foundation made these connections possible: thank you.

Thank you to Josephine, the eight-year-old who enjoys laughing at June B. Jones's antics with me and who, for now, enjoys my dad jokes. Thank you to the Cheryl and Victor Sr., my parents. Thank you to my brother and fellow insomniac John Wesley Marsh. To Benjamin and Pandora Osler: thank you for making me feel so at-home in Black Forest, Colorado. Your place was a dream-come-true for any writer and I feel like I owe you rent. Allison M. Osler, Sean Williams, Langston, and Lena provided the best aunt, uncle, and cousins for Josephine.

After departing my beloved Detroit, Michigan in 2001, home has not been a single place for me, especially during my years as a globetrotter in U.S. public service. My home is one person: Danielle Osler. I am so proud to be your husband. In year 13 of marriage, we are reunited (again!), are geographically co-located parents to Josephine, and we are justifiably delighted about it all. Thank you, Danielle. We did not get "up in here" by just coming!

DEDICATION

For Danielle M. Osler, Esq.

First of Her Name
Nerd and Nerd-Lover
Builder of Daughter's Robots
Leader of Global High-technology Teams
Litigator of World Trade Organization Cases
All-Star of Blanket-Crocheting
Builder of Memories

Book of Ruth 1:16

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Employees, applicants, managers, trustees, and governmental agencies are predisposed to trust the hiring practices of organizations that follow legitimated procedures—such as equal opportunity programs.

- Meyer and Rowan (1977)

I think it was very much the bare minimum, it was like cut-and-paste. You celebrate these events...hat tips to those cultures, but not really empowering them or tackling the structural system...in any way.

- Interview Participant #27

Diversity-related scandals provide a clear practical context for why a firm subsequently decides to create (and announce loudly) new ways of organizing related to diversity. For example, in November 2015, Leslie Miley, the only African-American in a senior technical role at Twitter quit the company via a public blog post accusing Twitter of not authentically value workforce diversity, despite its business advantages for addressing a racially and gender-diverse consumer population (Bates, 2015). In January 2016, Twitter's CEO announced the departure of the very executive Miley criticized in his blog. Himself laid off from the firm, Miley refused to take a severance package in order to not be bound by non-disparagement clauses, media report (Bates, 2015). When such a senior, African-American, industry insider questioned the sincerity of the company's commitment to diversity, it was clear that Twitter would do something, but it was unclear what it would choose to do. Firms that face the same external societal pressures have different ways of organizing themselves to respond (Greening & Gray, 1994), and vary in the extent to which they adopt either a standardized ready-made program or specific, tailored approaches (Raffaelli & Glynn, 2014).

Tailoring is Customization

Tailoring is the process of developing an initiative that is “more complex, challenging to implement, and customized to fit both the organization’s particular capabilities and the needs of the community served, such that they are ‘built to order’” (Raffaelli & Glynn, 2014). The opposite of a tailored approach is a turnkey approach, which is defined as driven by simpler fee-for-service consultant based solutions, or template program designs, making them ‘off-the-shelf.’ There are two approaches to defining a program as “tailored”: a top-down definition, and a perception measurement. In their defining work, Raffaelli & Glynn (2014) compared two types of corporate volunteering programs: skills-based volunteering (tailored) and day-of-service volunteering (turnkey). Pro bono law clinics were an example of a tailored volunteer practice, because the practice used the specific skills of the volunteers, the specific competencies of the organization, and the specific needs of their beneficiaries. By contrast the day-of-service volunteering model was deemed to be turnkey, because it was the type of program that was off-the-shelf, and could be modelled by any organization and serve any community. This dissertation began with the deductive approach of Raffaelli & Glynn, observing firms in action, documenting how they developed their HR programs, and deciding for myself if it was tailored or turnkey (Study 1 and Study 2).

An alternative approach to defining tailoring is by employee perception – asking the employees using validated survey questions. This is the approach of Study 3 and the theory testing. Rather than a cut-and-dry tailoring or turnkey judgment, I developed a 7-point tailoring judgment scale and administered it to employees. This bottom-up impression that a diversity program was tied to organizational strengths, used employee skills, and fit the needs of program

users (tailoring) was then linked significantly and negatively to employee cynicism about organizational change.

Tailoring is Distinct from Effectiveness

The designation of a practice as being tailored or turnkey is not the same as designating it as normatively good or bad, effective or ineffective at promoting diversity. Indeed, the central contribution of this work is that (unfortunately) employees can be led to believe that a diversity practice that is harmful to minority advancement (mandatory diversity training) is still okay because it is presented as tailor-made (see **Table 1** and **Table 2**). Diversity practitioners do not all have knowledge of diversity effectiveness research. The innovation management challenge highlighted by this dissertation is that firms are often wasting their program customization attention on low-performing (e.g. bias training) rather than high-performing (e.g. mentorship) practices.

Practices vs. Structures

Existing research on diversity program effectiveness lumps together the various new structures that companies create (e.g. employee race/ethnicity affinity groups, EEO compliance offices, diversity program offices, diversity centers of excellence, Chief Diversity Officer jobs, executive task forces, hiring committees, etc). For my research purposes, all these are structures. These structures are distinct from the activities that they perform in the organization. For example, some organizations promote mandatory implicit bias training (a low-performing diversity practice), while others endorse mentor-matching programs, and campus recruitment at historically Latino/a and Black universities (both are high-performing diversity practices) (Kalev, Dobbin, & Kelly, 2006). My approach was to choose cases that had similar structures, even if they had different race/ethnic diversity-promotion practices. Every case had a diversity

coordinator that evolved into a Chief Diversity Officer role, but that evolution came along very different paths and embedded very different powers in the role. Each case also had employee-created racial/ethnic affinity groups. Among these groups, I traced the Black and Latino/a

Table 1.

Tailoring in Research-Supported (Good) Practices and Research-Rejected (Bad) Diversity Programs

| Case | Pro-Diversity Organization Structures | Level of w/i Demography Organizing | Diversity practices enacted | Base Practice Good? | Tailored? |
|------------------|--|------------------------------------|--|---------------------|-----------|
| MatchPlat | Affinity Groups Task Force Diversity Staff Diversity Exec | Black: HIGH | A. Diversity Training (microaggression focus) | A. No | A. Yes |
| | | | B. Release Data on Race/Ethnicity Demography | B. Yes | B. No |
| | | Latino/a: LOW | C. Funding to Industry-Wide Pipeline Programs | C. Yes | C. No |
| | | | D. Targeted Recruitment Outreach | D. Yes | D. Yes |
| | | | E. --- | E. --- | E. --- |
| | | | F. Leadership Development Program | F. Yes | F. Yes |
| RollInc | Affinity Groups Task Force Diversity Staff Diversity Exec | Black: LOW | A. Diversity Training (implicit bias focus) | A. No | A. No |
| | | | B. Release Data on Race/Ethnicity Demography | B. Yes | B. No |
| | | Latino/a: HIGH | C. Funding to Industry-Wide Pipeline Programs | C. Yes | C. No |
| | | | D. No-then-Yes: Targeted Recruitment Outreach | D. Yes | D. No→Yes |
| | | | E. Formal Mentorship Matching | E. Yes | E. Yes |
| | | | F. --- | F. --- | F. --- |
| | | | G. Other: Pan-Minority within Core Function Affinity Group | G. No | G. --- |
| WheelCo | Affinity Groups Task Force Diversity Staff Diversity Exec | Black: HIGH | A. Diversity Training (implicit bias focus – <i>mandatory</i>) | A. Very No | A. No |
| | | | B. Release Data on Race/Ethnicity Demography (No → Yes) | B. Yes | B. No |
| | | Latino/a: LOW | C. Funding to Industry-Wide Pipeline Programs | C. Yes | C. No |
| | | | D. Targeted Recruitment Outreach | D. Yes | D. Yes |
| | | | E. --- | E. --- | E. --- |
| | | | F. --- | F. --- | F. --- |
| | | | G. Other: Bonus Pay for Affinity Group Performance | G. Unknown | G. Yes |
| SortStart | Affinity Groups Task Force Diversity Staff Diversity Exec | Black: HIGH | A. Diversity Training (implicit bias focus - <i>recruiters</i>) | A. No | ∅ |
| | | | B. Release Data on Race/Ethnicity Demography | B. Yes | |
| | | Latino/a: LOW | C. Funding to Industry-Wide Pipeline Programs | C. Yes | |
| | | | D. Targeted Recruitment Outreach | D. Yes | |
| | | | E. Formal Mentorship Matching | E. Yes | |
| | | | F. Leadership Development Program | F. Yes | |
| FinWorld | Affinity Groups Diversity Staff Diversity Exec | Black: HIGH | A. Diversity Training (implicit bias & allyship skills – <i>mandatory</i>) | A. Very No | ∅ |
| | | | B. Release Data on Race/Ethnicity Demography (Yes → No → Yes) | B. Yes | |
| | | Latino/a: LOW | C. Funding to Industry-Wide Pipeline Programs | C. Yes | |
| | | | D. Targeted Recruitment Outreach | D. Yes | |
| | | | E. --- | E. --- | |
| | | | F. --- | F. --- | |
| FinCheck | Affinity Groups Diversity Staff Diversity Exec | Black: LOW | A. Diversity Training (implicit bias focus – <i>voluntary</i>) (No → Yes) | A. No | ∅ |
| | | | B. --- | B. --- | |
| | | Latino/a: Unknown | C. --- | C. --- | |
| | | | D. Targeted Recruitment Outreach (No→Yes) | D. Yes | |
| | | | E. --- | E. --- | |
| | | | F. --- | F. --- | |
| | | | G. Other: Public "brand refresh" for affinity groups that do not meet nor hold events. | G. No | |

affinity groups at each of the six firms. On their websites today, these affinity groups appear similar, but they evolved very differently over time.

Table 2.*Examples of Diversity Practice Tailoring*

| Case | Types of Practice Tailored | Description of Tailoring Behavior (Base Program Research Support) |
|------------------|---|--|
| MatchPlat | Diversity Training | Mandatory Training (Bad): Describe workplace micro-aggressions using video of Black and Latino/a colleagues' narratives. “Oh, well yesterday, an employee who didn't know me asked me, a Black man, if I was the person who was here to shine our shoes, because [MatchPlat] had paid for a shoeshine to come.'...And we ended up deciding that one of the breakthrough ways to have the rest of the company who had not yet..., to get religion on it; was to help them understand it's happening here, right now.” |
| | Recruitment (x2) | |
| | Development Program | Targeted Recruitment (Good): Refocus recruitment events from panel discussions to culture displays with audience participation. “He came with the great idea that he wanted to do diversity events that were way different. He didn't want to do like the typical formulaic event. Instead of talking about culture let's put it on display...Honestly, it didn't feel like a recruiting event. It just felt like...I'm with my people. I'm assuming it felt like what some our White counterparts feel like when they go to a holiday party.” Targeted Recruitment (Good): Re-write job recruitment ads, focusing on predictors drawn from current top performer behaviors. “I would always say, look at your organization. You have top performers right now that don't meet the criteria that you're setting out right now. Really this stuff isn't measuring what's necessary for success. We need to reimagine the way that we evaluate talent. Let's instead look at the critical skills necessary for the role. Let's look at the certain qualifications they have.” |
| | | Development Program (Good): Create an in-house-designed leadership program, with current senior executives (usually White men). “It's...essentially a cohort based model where we had a six month leadership development program that gave some type of guided facilitation, accountability, partnership, sponsorship, and mentorship, as well as executive coaching... It was all in-house.” |
| RollInc | Recruitment | Targeted Recruitment (Good): Structure: the head of all recruitment, with a focus on executive hiring, was head of D&I too. Again, I'm not a staunch proponent of the Rooney Rule, but whatever she was doing with the Rooney Rule was working...[as a result] we had a pretty diverse group of VPs and a pretty diverse board as well. |
| | Mentorship | Mentorship (Good): Feedback to technical division ethnic minorities of all genders and White women on evaluations process. We would just get managers to volunteer for the lunch hour for a couple of days a week....You'd have your [draft performance review] on you... It was nice because these male managers could volunteer... I think that was kind of eye-opening for our managers. |
| WheelCo | Recruitment | Targeted Recruitment (Good): Establish proxy e-mail access for diversity recruiters, to seem as if they are the engineering line managers. “We'll narrow down the million engineers in Silicon Valley to 14 that are all black...everyone is going after these folks...[I'd] be provisioned to send emails on behalf of... Say you're a software engineer. Yeah. So you would get an email from one of the [software engineering] leaders... And I was getting a way higher response rate because again, if they think it's coming from the manager... people ...don't love talking to recruiters. So you just have to get creative in ways that would just get them excited.” |
| | Bonus Payments to Affinity Group Volunteers | Affinity Groups (Bad) Bonus Payments (Unknown): Structure: Award affinity group leaders for company culture contributions. “We had a dedicated ERG program manager, who was the point of contact for all of [WheelCo's] dozen or more employee resource groups (ERGs). And that work included managing their roadmaps and strategic plans, their budgets...[WheelCo] decided to grant bonuses to the ERG leads, which is something not all companies do... Yeah. Creating a process for making sure we identified who was to get that kind of compensation, and then making sure it happened in an equitable way was managed by someone.” |

Be they tailored or turnkey, institutional theory provides reasons for observers to take a cynical view regarding the motives of executives that create programs and structures that publicly conform to a society's moral values (Meyer & Rowan, 1977), especially when those practices are adopted by so many peer institutions that the pressure to conform is intense (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983). Diversity is no exception (Edelman & Petterson, 1999).

Diversity practices are organizational initiatives aimed at improving workplace outcomes (including the odds of reaching management ranks) for groups that face disadvantage in the broader society (Leslie, 2019; Nishii, Khattab, Shemla, & Paluch, 2018). Previous research about diversity practices, using institutional theory, offers some structural insights about the antecedents of firms' program choices. Internal "opportunity structures" including the political preferences of chief executives (Briscoe, Chin, & Hambrick, 2014); a firm's historical tendency to respond favorably to new social causes (Briscoe & Safford, 2008; Frank Dobbin, Kim, & Kalev, 2011); and the proportion of White women already in manager roles at the time that any diversity practice is considered (Frank Dobbin et al., 2011) all related strongly to firm choices to adopt a diversity practice. External pressures that drive practice adoption include surprising switches by conservative peer firms towards a contentious liberal workforce policy (Briscoe & Safford, 2008); the legal environments for private litigation in their U.S. judicial region (Skaggs, 2008, 2009) or state (Skaggs, Kmec, & Bae, 2020); and industry-wide peer pressures, adopting the programs that have already achieved high adoption rates in their industries (Briscoe & Safford, 2008; Frank Dobbin, 2009; Frank Dobbin et al., 2011). Overall, mimetic isomorphism (copying high-status firms in your industry) and normative isomorphism (pasting in the programs that are popular throughout society), are two structural peer pressures operating across a field of organizations, and both hold an outsized influence in firm choice of diversity practices.

While previous research is informative about the external copycat pressures shaping firm choices, several challenges remain and knowledge about mechanisms remains sparse. Indeed, we are still in the early stages of defining diversity practice research as evidenced by the fact that some researchers view diversity practices as constraining manager behavior through accountability in some studies (Castilla, 2015; Ferguson, 2015; Kalev, 2014; Sørensen & Sharkey, 2011), while other studies depict the same diversity practices as boosting managerial discretion through managerial engagement in other studies (Abraham, 2017; Frank Dobbin & Kalev, 2016a; Frank Dobbin, Schrage, & Kalev, 2009; Kalev et al., 2006).

If we cannot articulate what diversity practices actually do in workplaces, we will create conceptual models that provide little insight to and give bad advice to practitioners. The state of knowledge today is so low that even those executives who would wish to respond cynically with mere symbolic gestures would lack a solid understanding of which practices could not be effective. An enduring puzzle in this work is that some of the very programs that people intuitively dismiss as merely symbolic – such as cross-departmental diversity task forces – actually relate to, well-replicated, significant increases in the number of racial minority managers at U.S. private firms over time (Frank Dobbin & Kalev, 2016a; Kalev et al., 2006; Kim, Kalev, & Dobbin, 2012). Meanwhile, the plaintiff attorneys in racial discrimination lawsuits often insist on settlement terms that require firms to adopt a practice that empiricists reject – mandatory diversity training – which actually relates to either no significant impact on biased behavior (Chang et al., 2019; Forscher et al., 2019) or to significant 5.9% decreases in the number of Black women (Kalev et al., 2006), and an average 5% decrease in the number of Asian men and Asian women in managerial roles at private firms ($p < .01$) (Frank Dobbin & Kalev, 2016b; Frank Dobbin & Kalev, 2018). Whether one be a person who believes that meritocracy currently exists

and is reflected properly in representation by White incumbents in manager jobs, or a discrimination attorney with the best economic incentive to find practices that actually promote racial diversity, the current literature leaves one ill-equipped to choose a diversity practice that matches one's will, as a recent review concluded (Nishii et al., 2018).

Second, institutional research tends to neglect the program emergence process and human agency inside the firm. Yet, research on growing entrepreneurial firms suggests that the origins of programs and the knowledge, skills, and abilities of the humans that create the initial programs could have long-term effects on the future of organizational practices (DeSantola & Gulati, 2017; Marquis & Tilcsik, 2013; Stinchcombe, 1965), including specifically those practices related to human resources (Baron, Burton, & Hannan, 1999; Baron, Hannan, & Burton, 1999).

Third, just because a firm states that it has enacted a diversity practice does not mean it has enacted the same behaviors that another firm has enacted when using the same label (Nishii et al., 2018). A popular label might diffuse widely, but the actual practices might differ substantially or even be altered completely by the human participants in the organizational practice (Gouldner, 1954; Hallett & Ventresca, 2006; Mahoney & Thelen, 2009). For example, in one of the firms in this study, the term “executive sponsorship,” one label, carried a great number of meanings. It was all at once: (a) a specific practice in technology sales departments for escalating a high-value client to the appropriate level of executive salesperson within the selling firm; (b) the name of a liaison role connecting members of an employee affinity group to senior officials at the company; and also (c) the term for a practice that involves a heightened form of mentorship in which the senior-level mentor spends time sharing the accomplishments of their protégé publicly rather than only the typical, private, mentor-protégé coaching activities.

In topic area such as diversity practices, where symbolic labels abound and conformity peer pressures are intense, it is challenging for employers to do something creative. For researchers, it is even more challenging to know when something tailored is actually happening. Learning more about where diversity practice innovation comes from will help researchers to detect hidden variation between the “0” and the “1” of the various antecedents to diversity practice adoption (Frank Dobbin et al., 2011).

Holding constant the regional context, and firms’ diversity-promotion philosophies, the purpose of Study 2 is to look inside the firm to understand why some develop tailored while others develop turnkey diversity practices. Based on 88 recorded interviews, and countless unrecorded conversations with diversity-skeptics, diversity volunteers, and diversity professionals, this dissertation looks inside the firm to trace how practices came about (antecedents). The first two studies are based on 2016-2019 field work, where I integrated myself into the diversity-promotion community of the SF Bay Area region and thereby learned the subtleties of how different firms used each of the common practice labels. Study 3 will examine the extent to which lessons learned in this context generalize to other contexts within the United States. This dissertation cannot yet judge the effectiveness of newly-customized practices as a final demographic diversity outcome; however, it can inform those judgments by noting when firms are spending their customization energies on programs that usually fail (Tables 1 and 2). The first step towards judging program effectiveness is to ensure like practices are compared to like practices rather than simply those with the same label.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW AND ASSESSMENT

2.1 ANTECEDENTS (Adoption of Organizational Practices and Structures)

Research on new programs tends to use *institutional theory*, specifically the diffusion perspective: tracing how organizational programs and structures spread inside an industry, or across the U.S. economy. The key dependent variable in this literature is the *adoption* of an organizational practice or internal structure (e.g. a specific job role for Chief Risk Officers or Chief Diversity Officers, etc.). In general, we learned that companies are more likely to adopt a practice or structure if they are: (1) coerced by the government (judiciary or executive); (2) embedded in regions with pro-change logics; (3) led by CEOs whose political beliefs align to the pro-change norms; or (4) are pressured by the popularity of approaches inside their industry and the professions that carry the “best practices” from place to place. This literature often assumes little change from firm-to-firm in such practices: a turnkey, standardized approach. For the race and gender diversity studies, the empirical work is overwhelmingly focused on mimetic isomorphism (copying what high-status firms are doing). But mimicry is not the only way that templates for diversity programs get spread.

Coercive Conformity

Sometimes creative tailoring of practices is illegal. Whether the external actor is government or private stakeholders, the idea that organizational practices are subject to some hard external constraints is known either as *resource dependence* (Pfeffer & Salancik, 1978) or *coercive isomorphism* (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983), theoretical traditions that are applied through analyses of various external factors: activist social movements, private resource-holders, and governments.

Table 3.

| <i>Antecedents of New Firm Practices and Structures</i> | | |
|---|--|--|
| Antecedent | Causal Logic | Research Examples |
| Coercive (Governments or Social movements → Org) | Organizations depend on externally-provided resources. Government pressures, investor pressures, and social movement activism impact the organizations through the risk of disruption of those resources. Those firms that are more vulnerable to disruption and have low compliance costs are more likely to adopt pro-diversity practices and structures. | <p>Theory Pfeffer and Salancik (1978) DiMaggio and Powell (1983)</p> <p>Empirical: Diversity Lit Edelman (1990); Erin Kelly and Dobbin (1999); Leonard (1989) <i>on the role of government civil rights coercion</i>; Liders (2006) <i>on the role of social movement pressure on businesses' choice to enact racial discrimination</i></p> <p>Empirical: Other Lit Krause, Wu, Bruton, and Carter (2019) <i>on how board interlocks promote coercive change of private practices</i></p> |
| Normative Logics (Regional Culture → Org) | Connecting individual agent cognitions to society-wide patterns of belief, practices are adopted in a cultural context. One such context is the role of regional values in shaping private organizational practices and structures. | <p>Theory Alford and Friedland (1985) Thornton, Ocasio, and Lounsbury (2015)</p> <p>Empirical: Diversity Lit Hirsh (2009); Skaggs (2009); Skaggs et al. (2020) <i>on the role of regional political logics on firm decisions regarding gender and racial diversity</i>.</p> <p>Empirical: Other Lit Grattet, Jenness, and Curry (1998) <i>on hate crimes law state-to-state diffusion and tailoring</i>; Leitner, Hehman, Ayduk, and Mendoza-Denton (2016a, 2016b) <i>on how regional patterns in racial implicit bias scores relate to Black health / death outcomes</i>; Vedula, York, and Corbett (2019) <i>on how regional logics relate to entrepreneurial entry decisions</i></p> |
| Firm Culture (Leaders → Firm Culture → Firm Practice Choice) | Societal norms are internalized into an organization's <i>conscience</i> , organizational culture. Within the organization, this can be conceptualized as driven by organizational elites in the <i>upper echelon</i> (top-down) perspective. It can also be interpreted as <i>insider activism</i> (bottom-up) perspective where program adoption is driven by employee demography, or program choice driven by employee lawsuit settlement. | <p>Theory Selznick (1957) <i>on conscience</i> Kunda (1992) <i>on normative control</i> Schein (1990) <i>on culture</i></p> <p>Empirical: Diversity Lit Briscoe et al. (2014); Cook and Glass (2016) <i>on top-down leader influences on diversity practices</i>; Cook and Glass (2015) <i>on bottom-up influences on diversity practice selection</i>.</p> <p>Empirical: Non Diversity Lit Schilke (2018); <i>on how leader normative identification with the organization predicts avoidance of environmentalist organizational practices</i></p> |
| Mimetic (Fields → Professions → Org Practices) | <p>The prevalence of a diversity practice and its promotion by management consultants, the academy, and professional societies explains a practice's spread to a focal organization. The locus of causation is a network spanning organizational boundaries. The competition between professionals, the impact of conservative converts on subsequent diffusion, and the impact of program popularity on actual legal consequences are three features that diversity scholarship contributes back to broader institutional theory.</p> <p>This is the most active area of antecedent research.</p> | <p>Theory DiMaggio and Powell (1983) <i>on fields</i> Frank Dobbin (2009) <i>on the HR profession</i></p> <p>Empirical: Diversity Frank Dobbin and Sutton (1998); Edelman (1990); Konrad and Linnehan (1995) <i>on how civil rights law predicted organizational structures and practices</i>. Frank Dobbin (2009); Edelman, Abraham, and Erlanger (1992) <i>on how professional practices influenced diversity structures in firms</i>. Briscoe and Safford (2008); Frank Dobbin et al. (2011) <i>on how the popularity of diversity practices in an industry predict firm choice of diversity practices</i>. Edelman, Krieger, Eliason, Albiston, and Mellema (2011); Edelman and Talesh (2011) <i>on judges' use of diversity practice popularity (not practice effectiveness) to determine that firms are complying with the law</i>.</p> <p>Empirical: Other Lit Fu, Tang, and Chen (2020) <i>on the rise of Chief Sustainability Officers</i>; Raffaelli and Glynn (2014) <i>on how professional networks predict lower CSR practice tailoring</i>.</p> |

The 1964 Civil Rights Act was backed up by an activist state determined to implement the law, vigorously, at first (Frank Dobbin, 2009). Organizational design of structures and routines was often directly-influenced through key court decisions, executive orders, and rule-making. With respect to structures, we know that defense industry contractors under the direct supervision by the U.S. federal government were the earliest adopters of Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) offices (structures), and initiatives (Frank Dobbin et al., 2011; Frank Dobbin & Sutton, 1998; Edelman, 1992). Research contributions in the coercion area indicate that federal government contractors and lawsuit defendants tended to spark the creation of identity-conscious diversity-promotion structures (EEO offices), but are not associated with the creation of identity-blind, or all-purpose HR office structures (Konrad & Linnehan, 1995). Meanwhile, the courts shaped practices that industrial organizational psychologists had long championed from the academy, such as validation of job tests (Frank Dobbin, 2009). Likewise, the executive branch applied race and gender hiring goals, targets which were not met; however, the goal-setting behavior did relate positively to significant increases in employment of White women (Leonard, 1984, 1989) and Black women and men (Leonard, 1984, 1985, 1990) in the regulated industry. By the 1980s, such coercive tactics, which were implemented by both major U.S. political parties, became unfashionable during an anti-statist, pro-market turn in U.S. politics (Frank Dobbin, 2009).

Normative Conformity by Region

Institutional logics, or shared systems of meaning that confer legitimacy, is a powerful framework for theorizing what are enduring fundamental interests across organizations (Thornton et al., 2015). In effect, this research tradition asks: what are the peer pressures from society (not just the government) facing organizational decision-makers? The geographic version of this idea has inspired recent advances in understanding workforce diversity too. With federal

enforcement in question in the 1980s, state-level variations in norms gained new importance. Research on regional cultural variation suggests that more progressive cultures provide social pressure that guides corporate behavior on race and gender. In this tradition, researchers have focused on norms blended with coercive institutions. We now know that states that have progressive political cultural norms also adopt stricter EEO enforcement laws and thereby experience higher rates of diversity programs and managerial racial and gender diversity (Skaggs et al., 2020). There is also evidence that corporations attend directly to the political leanings of their region-based federal district courts, and that this attention by executives can advance the status of African-Americans into retail management roles (Skaggs, 2009).

All told, the regional logics or ambient normative perspective could use further development in diversity research. Diversity scholarship in this area has been more limited, focused on legal norms, rather than the more ambient regional trends studied by institutional entrepreneurship scholars (D. Miller, Le Breton-Miller, Amore, Minichilli, & Corbetta, 2017; Vedula et al., 2019; York, Vedula, & Lenox, 2018); by criminology scholars (Grattet et al., 1998) and by political scientists (Ansolabehere, Rodden, & Snyder Jr, 2006; Fiorina, Abrams, & Pope, 2005). This background knowledge should guide future workplace diversity research attention to regional normative variations in the United States and other federalist systems. It is remarkable, for example, that regional mapping of implicit racial attitudes have not sparked a diversity research movement rooted in the role of ambient regional logics of race. Notable exceptions have been advances in health studies, where regional implicit race attitudes predict Black and White mortality, and Black cardiovascular health (Hehman, Calanchini, Flake, & Leitner, 2019; Leitner et al., 2016a, 2016b; Leitner, Hehman, & Snowden, 2018). Recent work has also reversed the causal arrow, tracing how region-wide shifts in public opinion translate into

individual-level changes in implicit and explicit gender beliefs over time towards LGBT+-identified people (Ofosu, Chambers, Chen, & Hehman, 2019).

Study 2 is nested explicitly in one regional logic: anti-regulation but pro- racial diversity Silicon Valley (Broockman, Ferenstein, & Malhotra, 2019), with the hope that this explicit attention to region will facilitate comparisons in the future.

Normative Conformity Inside Organizations

The organization-level embedding of societal norms is another key antecedent of the choice to create an initiative or structure. Much of this work builds on the theoretical foundation of organizations conforming to norms through the mechanism of leader behavior inside the organization (Kunda, 1992; Selznick, 1957). One approach is to study the currently prevailing norms inside a firm among the firm's employees from the bottom-up (Benjamin, Erhart Mark, & Macey William, 1990; Holmes IV et al., 2020; Schneider & Reichers, 1983). These bottom-up approaches have also been interpreted as proportions of a firm's employee demography. For example, the percentage White women in the first level of manager roles leads to increased adoption of EEO recruitment advertising and diversity training practices in the private sector (Frank Dobbin et al., 2011). Unfortunately, these two types of practices – ads and classes – are mostly ineffective, if the diversity classes are mandatory (Kalev et al., 2006). The presence of Black and other minority racial ethnic groups at the bottom of the hierarchy does not have a similarly significant effect on shifts in workplace diversity practices and structures (Frank Dobbin et al., 2011).

There is potential in the diversity literature to continue to get more specific about which types of organizational diversity norms are most conformed to inside an organization (Dwertmann, Nishii, & Van Knippenberg, 2016). It would be fruitful to continue to compare

organizations with a color-blindness approach to those with a color-conscious multiculturalism, for example (Leslie, Bono, Kim, & Beaver, 2020).

Study 2 improves on Study 1 by focusing only on firms that have the same diversity norm: an explicit choice to focus on “inclusion first,” hoping that making efforts to retain current racial minority women and men and White women would lead to the workplace becoming more attractive to applicants of the same background. I hope that making this attention to organizational culture explicit will facilitate future scholarship too.

Mimetic Conformity by an Organization

Across most organizational scholarship, attention to institutional theory is concentrated on mimetic pressures and diversity practice research is no exception (Mizruchi & Fein, 1999). The most active area for diversity practice antecedents research has been the spread of ideas through “best practice” mimicry – conformity to what is popularized and standardized by high-status firms and professional groups. But what drives organizations – even innovative technology firms – to simply copy the turnkey approaches of other firms’ diversity programs?

Means-Ends Uncertainty

The 1963 Equal Pay Act for gender and the 1964 Civil Rights Act initially focused firms on what *not* to do, a task with much more clarity than that of what to affirmatively do. For race, it was certainly illegal to post signs explicitly rejecting Black job applicants, for example. In the 1980s; however, as society stopped believing in statist coercion, firms’ attention shifted away from what *not* to do, to just what *to do* (Frank Dobbin, 2009). Lacking a precise answer from science and lacking precise guidelines from courts (at first), firms began to be both creative and conformist: some firms experimented creatively, and those creative ideas advocated at high-status firms and endorsed by famous professional groups, became the most viral, mimicked, conformed-to ideas (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983; Frank Dobbin, 2009). Uncertainty about what

types of organizational actions would produce the socially desired results, referred to as means-ends uncertainty (Bromley & Powell, 2012), took three forms: the first about preventing bad results for the firm.

First, uncertainty was about preventing non-compliance punishments especially during the 1970s, when Congress gave the EEOC the power to sue private companies for non-compliance with a vague law (Congress, 1972). The EEOC, newly empowered, was not an institution that firms understood well. Its behavior appeared erratic to CEOs (Frank Dobbin, 2009). Chief executives had a choice: they could listen to their legal advisors, who gave their honest assessment that discrimination lawsuits and EEOC behavior were truly uncertain (Knight, 1921), because the law was new. Alternatively, they could listen to the more proactive Human Resource (HR) specialists, who had many ideas for how to reduce bad outcomes for the firm such as lawsuits and fines, although they had no empirical evidence at the time to suggest their programs would work. CEOs chose the latter and a few innovations spread by the diversity/EEO specialists became extremely popular (Frank Dobbin, 2009; Edelman, 1992; Edelman, Petterson, Chambliss, & Erlanger, 1991).

Since there were no models of how to avoid lawsuits, legal professionals declined, in those days, to speculate about what might work; however, diversity specialists were very willing to speculate about what might help avoid lawsuits (Frank Dobbin & Sutton, 1998). We know from institutional diversity research on this period that mimicry drove the spread of EEO grievance procedures inside firms (Edelman, 1990, 1992; Edelman et al., 1991; Edelman & Petterson, 1999; Sutton, Dobbin, Meyer, & Scott, 1994); sensitivity training programs (Frank Dobbin, 2009; F Dobbin & Kalev, 2018; Frank Dobbin et al., 2011); and external consultant audits of organizational culture (Frank Dobbin, 2009). Diversity and equal opportunity

specialists won the battle for CEO favor, with their bevy of proactive ideas to prevent lawsuits, compared to the careful, non-advice of lawyers (Sutton et al., 1994). For example, it was not lawyers but actually the diversity specialists who emphasized the need for formal procedures to prevent lawsuits and they convinced CEOs of legal risk despite not themselves having legal training (Frank Dobbin, 2009; Edelman et al., 1992; Edelman, Fuller, & Mara-Drita, 2001). Formality was on the rise and was not always good for employees. For example, the rise in the general level of formality in employee-employer relations, intended at first to protect workers from discrimination, also brought about the rise of formal at-will employment contracts that let firms ask applicants to sign away various personal legal rights (Sutton & Dobbin, 1996; Sutton et al., 1994). Overall, from the 1960s-1970s, U.S. workplaces became a lot more legalistic as a result of uncertainty regarding how to comply with an active federal government (Frank Dobbin, 2009; Sutton et al., 1994). Times were changing.

In the late 1970s, during the presidencies of Gerald Ford and Jimmy Carter, the economically conservative Republican and Democratic party presidents both removed a great number of formal regulations of private firms from laws that had been on the books since World War II. For example, conservative think tanks in Washington D.C. praise both Ford and Carter for their work removing regulations in the transportation sector (Wallison, 2006). Gone were the days when one had to file a form with the U.S. federal government to ship a product from one state to another – a wartime measure that had survived beyond the end of the second World War (Wallison, 2006). The United States executive and judiciary began to decrease firm uncertainty about the role of the government in a great many areas, a process that Ronald Reagan's presidency accelerated in many areas. This only shifted means-ends uncertainty from a negative domain to a positive domain.

In the anti-regulation 1980s, the logic for supporting diversity practices switched: away from the prevention-focused lawsuit avoidance and towards the promotion-focus talent management frame for the sake of organizational effectiveness (Frank Dobbin, 2009; Frank Dobbin & Sutton, 1998). The shift in frame is important as it shifted mindsets from diversity-as-coercion to avoid getting sued, to diversity-as-opportunity to select one's managerial and entry-level talent alike from 100 percent of the population, instead of just 30 percent of the population (White men) (Frank Dobbin, 2009). Diversity specialists responded flexibly to the pro-market turn in public opinion, promoting a synergistic vision for diverse workplaces (Frank Dobbin, 2009). In this vision, diversity at work is a demographic inevitability and the challenge was training managers how to control their biases and thereby better integrate their workplaces (Frank Dobbin, 2009; Johnston & Packer, 1987). Rather than hard formal procedures, the 1980s emphasis became soft skills and a new industrial boom in diversity consulting began.

During this time period, institutional scholarship shows that the new positive, pro-business spin on desegregation was copied from place to place and industry to industry (Frank Dobbin, 2009). Since the 1980s, mimicry (not coercion) drove the creation of new diversity specialist offices in private firms (Konrad & Linnehan, 1995); entrenched gender balance promotion of maternity leave policies (Erin Kelly & Dobbin, 1999); carried over practical adherence to old affirmative action hiring goals long after the companies' formal affirmative action program had ended (C. Miller, 2017, 2019). Furthermore, companies accelerated the creation of employee affinity groups (now called employee resource groups, or ERGs) (Briscoe & Safford, 2010); and in the 1990s began widespread extension of tax-deductible, company-provided health benefits for gay and lesbian couples long before the U.S. Supreme Court permitted same-sex marriage (Briscoe & Safford, 2008).

As DiMaggio and Powell (1983) predicted, the totality of empirical evidence shows that peer pressure works to bring a new diversity practice to a firm (Frank Dobbin, 2009). The study of diversity practices is one area where diversity scholars have made a substantial contribution to the direction of institutional theory as a whole, discovering important exceptions (statistical boundary conditions or moderators) to the copycat pressures. The impact of peer pressure on firm choice of diversity programs depends upon a few other factors such as: regional logics (Hirsh & Kornrich, 2008); executive leader views (Briscoe et al., 2014); and whether or not the most change-resistant famous firms in the industry, ultimately change their practices, which can spur even faster spread of the practice throughout the U.S. economy (Briscoe & Safford, 2008).

Diversity scholarship has even modernized the view of the U.S. judiciary. No matter what judges say that they are doing, statistical evidence from diversity research strongly suggests that jurists are ultimately convinced by the popularity of firm practices (rather than effectiveness of firm practices) when they assess compliance with U.S. laws that ban discrimination. If you have a popular practice, then a judge will say that you are making good faith efforts to alleviate discrimination (even if social scientists say that the same practice likely makes race/ethnic job discrimination worse). Practically, judges gauge whether a firm is complying with law based on if the firm has adopted popular HR practices or not for programs dealing with workplace racism (Edelman et al., 2001; Edelman et al., 2011; Edelman & Talesh, 2011); and also on issues of gender anti-discrimination (Frank Dobbin & Kelly, 2007; E. L. Kelly, 2003). Human resource majors in college, sharing ideas among themselves one day at diversity specialist conferences, go on to be more powerful than they probably imagine themselves to be, effectively writing the first draft of U.S. judicial doctrines. These findings are far from obvious to even advanced students of U.S. politics; yet, there is so much about diversity practices scholars for which scholars have no

answers.

The practices most popular with peers are not guaranteed to work, perhaps especially if they are copied mindlessly from another context (Kalev et al., 2006). The widespread taking-up of a popular idea is often assumed to be a turnkey, copy-and-paste approach. So far, one study in the corporate social responsibility field (CSR) has advanced comparison of organizations that adopted the standardized versus a creative, tailored approach to answer society's social demands for CSR (Raffaelli & Glynn, 2014). The second means-ends uncertainty, therefore, was a shift from how to avoid lawsuits to how to achieve managerial diversity voluntarily (the next section of this literature review) and finally, how to tap racial and gender diversity for the pecuniary benefit of the firm (the third section of this review).

2.2 EFFECTIVENESS (Diversity Practices and Structures → Managerial Diversity)

There are many potential goals for diversity initiatives, but like quantitative sociologists, I embrace the strictest definition: racial desegregation of high-status jobs in organizations. This means representation: increased numerical proportions of targeted groups, including a population-availability-convergence pattern at management ranks, because these were the goals of the equal opportunity social movements supporting workplace organizational change (McAdam, 1983). Measuring the extent to which those social movements have succeeded or failed is a vital research question (Bidwell, Briscoe, Fernandez-Mateo, & Sterling, 2013; Briscoe & Gupta, 2016). Other worthy goals, such as workplace inclusion (positive interpersonal interactions regardless of race) are possible means to that same end state: racial/ethnic management-rank desegregation. It could be that desegregating firms will be much more appealing to White women and ethnic minorities looking for jobs if they are treated with respect, but that causal linkage is but one of many potential ways the diversity practice effectiveness literature has studied (Nishii et al., 2018).

Similar to the approach of the high-performance work practices (HPWP) literature in HR, I take here the approach of identifying what links researchers have found between various diversity practices/structures and a performance measure: managerial diversity (B. E. Becker & Huselid, 1998; Koster, 2011). This is distinct from the third section which will evaluate organization-level outcomes such as avoidance of negative consequences (e.g. lawsuits) and the promotion of firm performance (e.g. sales, returns, profits) – which I call pecuniary outcomes.

The empirical studies that explicitly link a diversity practice to the concrete numerical outcome of managerial diversity suggest five main mechanisms explaining positive relationships between enacting the practice and managerial diversity changes. Diversity practices that relate

positively to subsequent managerial diversity tend to rely on either: (1) organizational goal-setting; (2) voluntary engagement of powerful organization members; (3) transparency regarding HR practices; (4) accountability to specialists; and limited support for (5) HR process “formalization.” The practices that have been replicated and have significant positive relationships to subsequent higher diversity, *high-performance diversity practices*, include affirmative action goals/plans; programs that link highly powerful and less powerful employees in positive relationships (targeted recruitment and any mentorship matching programs); and a variety of transparency practices (public job notices; demographic data collection; etc). The *high-performance diversity-promoting structures* include diversity task forces; in-house legal counsels; and diversity and EEO specialists (Frank Dobbin & Kalev, 2015; Kalev, 2014; Kalev et al., 2006). Table 4 is organized by level of analysis, while the text below goes by theory mechanism-by-mechanism.

Table 4.

Effectiveness of Diversity Practices and Structures

| Level | Causal Logics | Research Examples |
|--|--|---|
| Micro Changing attitudes and behaviors within-person, post-intervention, and thereby changing organizations through unspecified aggregation processes. | This work often tests at the individual level and suggests aggregation dynamics as follows. Organizations adopt a practice, which is then enacted. The enactment is judged by organization members (majority and minority). Employee and manager behavioral reactions then inform the overall extent to which the organization increases or decreases its managerial diversity over time. This literature is concerned with each potential break in this process: between adoption and enactment; and between judgments and behavior change (backlash effects). It is less focused on the change of program enactment over time. | Theory Leslie (2019) <i>typology of unintended backlash against diversity practices</i> Nishii et al. (2018) <i>process model of diversity practice effectiveness</i> Empirical: Diversity Lit Aquino, Stewart, and Reed (2005); Cropanzano, Slaughter, and Bachiochi (2005); Federico and Sidanius (2002) <i>relate explicit identity-conscious diversity program choice to target perceptions of justice, non-target judgment of targets (stigma), and judgments of the organization.</i> Gardner and Ryan (2020); Hekman, Johnson, Foo, and Yang (2017) <i>relate the identity of the diversity-promoter to audience reactions and judgments.</i> Chang et al. (2019) <i>online diversity training relates to attitudinal, but not behavioral change.</i> Avery and McKay (2006) <i>a review of the unintended consequences from diversity-targeted recruitment.</i> Empirical: Other HR Lit Koster (2011); Nishii, Lepak, and Schneider (2008) <i>relating employee perceptions of the 'why' of HR practices to employee behavior;</i> Gant, Ichniowski, and Shaw (2002) <i>workers do their jobs differently (smarter not harder) when organizations adopt HPWPs.</i> |
| Meso Changing interactions between persons, across-races, within groups/teams | This work acknowledges that diversity is a group-level construct measuring the <i>variety</i> of ascriptive identities present. There is a split in this field of study between those who believe that demographic diversity can relate significantly to work group performance, versus those who believe that only deep-level characteristic (e.g. information access; knowledge; functional training) diversity relates positively to work group outcomes. The focus being on the work group, this body of work does not often explicitly consider organization-level demographic change over time. | Theory Tasheva and Hillman (2019) <i>personal range and team effectiveness</i> Van Knippenberg, De Dreu, and Homan (2004) <i>category elaboration</i> Lau and Murnighan (1998) <i>faultlines disrupt diversity's value</i> Empirical: Diversity Lit Kalev (2009); Pierce, Wang, and Zhang (2020) <i>on whether and how work task structures related to diversity outcomes;</i> Joshi and Roh (2009); Van Dijk, Van Engen, and Van Knippenberg (2012) <i>on the opposing views between demographic versus deep-level diversity and the relationship between diversity type and work group performance</i> Empirical: Other HR Lit Premeaux, Shaw, and Ichniowski (1997) <i>introduction of complementary configurations of HPWPs associated with higher work group productivity;</i> Chadwick, Way, Kerr, and Thacker (2013); <i>on the boundary conditions small firms face choosing to invest in HR systems</i> |
| Macro Desegregation of occupations, within-org | High-performance practices, once adopted by firms, take on a life of their own. They are created perhaps with the intention of being window-dressing; however, for some reason, certain practices result in consistently more diversity than others. Some practices consistently aggregate to poor results with respect to managerial diversity. Although unclear about causation processes, this body of work is focused explicitly on the change of organizational demography over time. | Theory Frank Dobbin and Kalev (2016b) <i>self-determination theory predicts why diversity programs fail</i> Mahoney and Thelen (2009) <i>on long term tailoring, subversion, and reversal of organizational practices</i> Empirical: Diversity Lit Frank Dobbin, Schrage, and Kalev (2015); Ferguson (2015); Kalev et al. (2006) <i>on managerial diversity;</i> Abraham (2017); Castilla (2015) <i>on de-biasing organizational bonus rewards by gender and race.</i> Kalev (2014) <i>on de-biasing layoffs through accountability.</i> Kalysh, Kulik, and Perera (2016); EL Kelly, Kalev, and Dobbin (2007); Briscoe and Kellogg (2011) <i>on the impact of family-friendly work practices on women's and program users' representation in managerial ranks over time.</i> Empirical: Other HR Lit Baron, Burton, et al. (1999); (Baron, Hannan, et al., 1999) <i>on the durability of initial HR decisions and imprinting effect with HR attraction consequences.</i> |
| Population View Rising segregation between firms, especially new firms | A focus on entrepreneurship and HR is key to this view. Modal White-race U.S. workers, over time, have experienced increasing racial and gender diversity within their firms. However, at the same time, likelihood of White race contact for minorities (Black, Hispanic, Asian) has actually fallen over time. Majority-minority firms are born often, still have few minority managers at the top, and contribute to a churning segregation. This population-level view of entrepreneurship and demographic diversity had its first-ever AOM symposium in 2020 (Ferguson et al., 2020). | Theory DeSantola and Gulati (2017) <i>on rapid increases in hiring during firm growth</i> Empirical: Diversity HPWP Lit McTague, Stainback, and Tomaskovic-Devey (2009) <i>on the sharp reductions in occupational segregation over time;</i> Ferguson and Koning (2018) <i>on how within-firm segregation decreased, but between-firm racial segregation increased since the 1970s;</i> DeSantola, Ramarajan, and Battilana (2017) <i>on how key developmental milestones represent targets of opportunity to boost the likelihood of a firm adding its first woman director to the board.</i> Empirical: Other HR Lit Honoré and Ganco (2015) <i>on entrepreneurial team size as signal of stability to the skilled labor market.</i> |

Hiring Goal-Setting

The careful tracking of employee demography is required by all U.S. firms with more than 100 employees in the United States; however, federal contractors have to additionally make a plan that sets goals for future demographic change to intentionally elevate the status of minorities. In short, empirical evidence suggests that these approaches work to improve minority representation even while consistently missing the formal goals (Frank Dobbin et al., 2015; Kalev et al., 2006; Leonard, 1984, 1985, 1989; McTague et al., 2009).

Engaging White Male Managers

The engagement of powerful managers in targeted recruitment and in mentorship programs is especially strongly related to subsequent managerial diversity, with especially strong positive effects for the odds of Black women becoming managers (Kalev et al., 2006). With respect to mentorship programs, unlike in so many initiatives, scholars have actually identified the mechanisms through which these practices become so high-performing. Tammy Allen and colleagues' meta-analysis discovered small but significant effects for mentorship on objective career outcomes, especially for career-focused mentorship relation (mentor-protégé) pairs, as opposed to psychosocial-focused or multiplex (both social & professional) ties (Allen, Eby, Poteet, Lentz, & Lima, 2004). In fact, initial assignment of women to a powerful mentor has a moderating effect reversing the "penalty" most face from actually utilizing a work-life balance initiative (Briscoe & Kellogg, 2011). The mentorship gap for White women and minorities of all genders is even an issue at very high levels of rank in organizations (McDonald & Westphal, 2013). To the extent that mentorship improves protégé social capital, managerial diversity increases (O. C. Richard, Roh, & Pieper, 2013).

Engagement need not come only in a hierarchical manner, or only as the result of explicitly pro-diversity arrangements. For example, sociologist Alexandra Kalev (2009) finds

that racial and gender inequality declines in firms that adopt self-directed work teams and cross-training initiatives, both of which restructure one's actual job.¹ This is distinct from the null career effects in Kalev's 800-firm sample from minority participation on problem-solving task forces, which include each profession, but do not restructure their actual jobs. For theorists at the micro level, who are concerned that backlash effects hold back the effectiveness of explicit diversity initiatives, this line of research could hold promise and lead to large improvements in diversity without mentioning the words "racial diversity" (Leslie, 2019).

Race/Ethnicity Data Transparency

Evidence shows that even more subtle goals may help too. After a 1980s shift in the EEOC reporting thresholds (adjusted from 50-person firms to 100-person firms) firms changed their behavior. The level of race/ethnicity diversity in actual hiring at small firms changed significantly and negatively at these new firms (Ferguson & Koning, 2018). The original threshold change was due to the onerousness of federal government paperwork. Now that the reporting paperwork is electronic, and burdens are reduced compared to the past, it could be non-controversial for the U.S. government to reinstate the 50-person threshold and thereby nudge smaller firms to get greater race/ethnic diversity, without ever mandating it.

Transparency-promotion by human resources (HR) professionals shows positive relationships with career outcomes for the targets of transparency. The publication of job offerings, so ubiquitous in online platforms today, actually first got popular as an EEO initiative and contributed to within-firm desegregation (Frank Dobbin et al., 2015). Although proposed first by personnel experts for sake of reducing nepotism issues, these ideas remained on the shelf, only spreading economy-wide because of new urgency generated by race- and gender-equality

¹ For counterpoints in a Chinese worker context, see (Pierce et al., 2020).

movements (Frank Dobbin, 2009; Frank Dobbin & Sutton, 1998). These highly-visible transparency initiatives are high-performing, in that the publication of positions; the transparent provision of job ladder information; and exposing how internal job markets actually work all relate positively to managerial race and gender diversity over time (Frank Dobbin & Kalev, 2016b; Frank Dobbin et al., 2015). Transparency reforms often go in-tandem with accountability reforms. For example, in two famous field studies by Emilio Castilla (2008, 2015) tracking and then resolving organizational bias in performance pay, the clarification of bonus reward standards (transparency) could be just as plausible an explanation as the new structures used to implement it, which increased accountability (Castilla, 2015). If organizations only adopt reforms in tandem bundles, not one without the other, then scientific lack of clarity will likely continue about the unique impact of new organizational structures, versus the bundles of structures and practices (Sørensen & Sharkey, 2011).

Accountability: to task forces and to diversity managers

With respect to organizational structures in the workplace, it generally takes human audiences, and the feeling that one might have to answer to that audience to make managers feel that they are accountable for their behavior (Tetlock, 1992). Diversity task forces – defined as committees of department heads that all take on diversity topics – are a high-performing diversity practice that do not tend to use any additional staff, but do use up considerable executive time (Frank Dobbin et al., 2009, 2015). A major departure from these findings is found outside the private sector, where recent work studying whether chief diversity officers relate to university faculty diversity have shown no significance different from luck (Bradley, Garven, Law, & West, 2018). What about context explains the difference between a similar structure operating in two different environments – academia and private firms - remains unexamined in

research.

Formalization

Perhaps the most hotly debated and the least understood mechanism is “HR formalization,” which takes three broad forms: reducing ambiguity of manager action; using workplace policies to restrict manager discretion; or increasing the number of middle managers in the firm over time as a firm matures. First, reducing ambiguity through improved transparency about job postings; management training courses with clear entry requirements; etc, are high-performing practices covered as transparency (Frank Dobbin et al., 2015). As Sørensen and Sharkey (2011) point out; however, ambiguity-reduction can be thought of distinctly from the idea of reducing discretion for managers.

In fact, several forms of discretion-reduction diversity practices are considered low-performance diversity practices because they relate so negatively to the representation of White women and people of color of all genders at managerial ranks. For example: mandatory diversity training has proven consistently problematic even as it has grown in popularity (Frank Dobbin & Kalev, 2013, 2015, 2016a; Frank Dobbin, Kalev, & Kelly, 2007; Frank Dobbin et al., 2015; Kalev et al., 2006). Likewise, the practice of rating an executive in their performance evaluation on the extent to which they demonstrate EEO-promotion in their work behaviors is also linked to lower career outcomes for minorities (Frank Dobbin et al., 2015). In my pilot study, I found that diversity practitioners attribute the creation of the restrictive type of policies to a performative reasoning: they establish that the organization told employees the right way to behave: “I find that maybe helpful from a reactive point of view, something has happened and you've got to show the business that you're taking it seriously, and everybody has to go through this training.”

Finally, there is an entrepreneurship literature regarding the enduring consequences of choosing how many managers to have in the first place for predicting one's ability to attract future employees. In this use of the term "formalization," a firm that has divided labor into more formal roles is more formalized over time (Baron, Burton, et al., 1999; Baron, Hannan, et al., 1999). There is ample room for growth in connecting this to a population-level view of workplace diversity.

Population View

U.S. culture widely celebrates the country's impressive reductions in racial and gender segregation by occupation, but research focus on established firms misses population-wide (between-firm) segregation patterns. Research based on evidence from the EEOC demonstrates one encouraging fact: firms did reduce their within-firm racial segregation over time. For example, sociologists have found that race is a weakening predictor of what job one holds over the past 40 years, a sign that segregation by occupation is decreasing (Hirsch & Macpherson, 2004; Tomaskovic-Devey et al., 2006). However, there are two trends that make it reasonable to focus on diversity issues at a population level, and in entrepreneurial firms specifically.

First, increased diversity inside the workplace came along with "an increased over-representation of white men in the most high-status jobs" (Ferguson & Koning, 2018; McTague et al., 2009). For the normative goal of creating a multi-racial society, with majority-rule voting, but without race hierarchy, it matters whether or not all races are represented at the highest levels of workplaces.

The second trend that surprises many is that workplace segregation has actually increased from the 1980s, explained by racial segregation between firms rather than inside them (Ferguson & Koning, 2018). The likelihood of a White worker encountering a minority has gone up over

time, while the likelihood that an Asian, Black, or Hispanic/Latino/a worker encounters a White employee has gone down over time. This contact decline was especially consistent for Asian, and especially steep for Latino/a workers (Ferguson & Koning, 2018). Furthermore, this demographic picture is not the result of greater entrepreneurship by ethnic and racial minorities. Instead, minorities work more often today in majority-minority firms, but those firms are owned by Whites (Ferguson & Koning, 2018). It is a paradox. On the one hand, if a White worker brings their parents to visit their workplace today, their parents will be struck by occupational desegregation. On the other hand, if a Hispanic worker brings their parents to work, the level of integration will usually look different, because the White and Hispanic/Latino/a worker are usually at different firms. This effect is not simply an overall look across the entire U.S. economy, but rather reaches down to the local, county-level patterns of clustering of minorities within certain firms (Ferguson & Koning, 2018). These increases in between-firm segregation are the main driver of why overall racial segregation has increased in the U.S. economy from the 1980s onward. During this time, “race has become more predictive of which establishment a worker is employed in” to such an extent that total racial segregation in 2014 is comparable to its early 1970s levels (Ferguson & Koning, 2018).

High-Growth Firms

Firm demography changes less as firms grow older (DeSantola & Gulati, 2017; Ferguson & Koning, 2018), making the entrepreneurship story an important one for the social goal of desegregating U.S. society. With respect to high-growth firms, the challenge is stark, as researchers put it: “the higher levels of segregation among *entering establishments* represent greater actual segregation” (Ferguson & Koning, 2018). A policy focus on workforce composition “when establishments were smaller...might have a far bigger aggregate impact on

hiring and diversity than specific diversity programs adopted in more established firms” (Ferguson & Koning, 2018). The human resource growth process, periods of rapid firm employee growth, should therefore be of greater concern to entrepreneurship scholars and diversity scholars alike (DeSantola et al., 2017; Ferguson et al., 2020).

Overall, there is strong evidence that voluntary practices of goal setting, mentorship, transparency practices and targeted recruitment are high-performing for managerial diversity, but it unclear how exactly these practices work, or how they change over time. Study 2 focuses explicitly on high-growth firms in order to incorporate the lessons learned from sociological work on the importance of this stage for future firm diversity. At this stage, firm founder and CEO leadership imprints can be better traced – one of the focuses of Study 2.

2.3 ORGANIZATIONAL OUTCOMES (Diversity Practices → Pecuniary Benefit)

The literature linking a firm's demographic variety to firm performance is voluminous (Q. Roberson, Holmes IV, & Perry, 2017), but research linking specific diversity practices and structures to firm-level pecuniary outcomes is, unfortunately, rare. Unlike in the effectiveness literature (see section 2.2 above) the organizational outcomes literature is largely about the value capture from a firm's current level of diversity rather than the bottom-line impact of intentional programs intended to change future diversity levels.

Yet, there are some suggestive insights from the correlational research to date. Diversity practices might relate positively to pecuniary firm outcomes (e.g. market-to-book ratios; firm value; positive stock market reactions) through the following theoretical mechanisms: (1) resource dependence (improved legitimacy \Rightarrow resource acquisition); (2) information elaboration (inclusive culture \Rightarrow information elaboration \Rightarrow improved innovation); and (3) a dynamic, configuration-based approach to how firms utilize (not just acquire) diverse talent. All told, we are left with a picture of 30 different measures of organizational performance outcomes and a set of diversity predictors divided across levels, with gender studied at the level of the elite (boards of directors, or BODs); race and gender studied at the lowest level of status (entry-level employees); and a set of deep-level diversity characteristics studied at the level of top management teams (TMTs). Although some studies have taken into account the dynamism of the organization's industry externally, and entrepreneurial orientation internally (O. C. Richard, 2000; O. C. Richard, Ford, & Ismail, 2006; O. C. Richard & Johnson, 1999), the data is largely from established firms – not from growing entrepreneurial firms.

Resource Dependence

Examining primarily the provision of resources by external actors (with stock price DVs), the research on Board of Directors diversity is primarily about *legitimacy*. Alternatively described as including everyone who is a vice president and above, including only those who have “Chief” in their titles, or only including those who are board directors, the strongest performance effects are found for already-present diversity at senior levels of a company. For boards of directors, the findings relating the proportion of women (predictor variable) to various types of firm performance (dependent variable) are significant and positive. More women on boards is associated with more favorable market-to-book ratios (Bonn, 2004); firm value (Campbell & Mínguez-Vera, 2008; D. A. Carter, Simkins, & Simpson, 2003); abnormal returns (Campbell & Vera, 2010); and firm performance (D. Carter, D'Souza, Simkins, & Simpson, 2007), with evidence that sales goal-accomplishment means of measuring performance have stronger diversity relationships than alternatives (Siciliano, 1996).

Table 5.

| <i>Organizational Outcomes from Diversity Practices and Structures</i> | | |
|---|--|--|
| Theorized Mechanisms | Causal Logic | Research Examples |
| Resource Dependence (External Resources → Org Outcomes) | Organizations depend on externally-provided resources. Both tangible investments resources and intangible legitimacy resources can jointly predict firm reputation and market position. The “business case” for diversity does not depend on actual value-added from racial or gender diversity proportions, but instead from the <i>signal</i> that this diversity sends to the marketplace. | <p>Theory Pfeffer and Salancik (1978) <i>on resource dependence</i> D. A. Thomas and Ely (1996) <i>access and legitimacy through diversity</i></p> <p>Empirical: Diversity Lit Leonard, Levine, and Joshi (2004); Avery, McKay, Tonidandel, Volpone, and Morris (2012) <i>on congruence between employee race and regional consumer population race and ethnicity</i>; Siciliano (1996) <i>on the congruence between employee gender and regional donor base</i>.</p> <p>Empirical: Other Lit: De Prijcker, Manigart, Collewaert, and Vanacker (2019)) <i>on entrepreneurial firm physical relocations to CA and MA for better VC resource acquisition</i>; Abdurakhmonov, Ridge, and Hill (2020)) <i>on firm dependence on government contracts predicting firm investment decisions</i>.</p> |
| Value Capture (Org Values as Resources X Diversity Resources → Org Outcomes) | Connecting company culture and workplace climate for diversity, the key mechanism is not the human resource diversity <i>alone</i> but instead the processes by which that value transitions from potential to actualize value. In this synergy-based processual view, the organizational processes that allow for information elaboration (the good potential of diversity) while minimizing what hinders information elaboration (the bad potential of faultlines) will deliver positive pecuniary results for the organization (a “business case” for diversity). In strategy theory, this is in the ecological original formulation of <i>dynamic capabilities</i> approach to human resource value. | <p>Theory G. S. Becker (2010) <i>on discrimination as an economic distortion</i> Chadwick and Flinchbaugh (2020)</p> <p>Empirical: Diversity Practice O. C. Richard, Su, Peng, and Miller (2015) <i>on an external diversity practice (supplier diversity programs) impact on firm performance</i></p> <p>Empirical: Diversity Lit: Demographic O. C. Richard and Johnson (1999, 2001); O. Richard, McMillan, Chadwick, and Dwyer (2003) <i>highly innovative firms benefit from diversity, but low-innovation firms are harmed by diversity</i>; O. C. Richard et al. (2006) <i>diversity enhances performance at early-stage, but harms performance at late-stage firms</i>; O. C. Richard, Murthi, and Ismail (2007) <i>diversity enhances performance linearly in the long term (Tobin’s Q), but not performance in the short term (productivity)</i>. Olson, Parayitam, and Twigg (2006) <i>age TMT diversity relates negatively to firm performance through lowered R&D intensity and lowered alliancing</i>.</p> <p>Empirical: Diversity Lit: Deep-Level Cox and Blake (1991) <i>cognitive</i>; Milliken and Martins (1996); and Van Knippenberg and Schippers (2007) <i>informational</i>; Buyl, Boone, Hendriks, and Matthysens (2011); Simons and Pelled (1999); Olson et al. (2006) <i>functional background</i></p> <p>Empirical: Non Diversity Lit Sine, Mitsuhashi, and Kirsch (2006) <i>entrepreneurial firms with higher managerial intensity and HR structures survive more often</i>; Davis, Eisenhardt, and Bingham (2009) <i>in volatile environments, entrepreneurial firms should add formal structure with simple rules</i>. Meier, Stephenson, and Perkowski (2019)) <i>trusting organizational cultures predict more job specialization over time and therefore higher org-level productivity</i>.</p> |
| Missing: Dynamic Practice View (Org Resources + Org Processes → Org Outcomes) | Firm-level outcomes research does not have to focus on immediate pecuniary resources (stock price; profits), but instead can focus on intermediate resource gains and mid-range theories that are expected to deliver compounding results. In this version of dynamic capabilities, the capabilities being studied are very practical “best practice” processes among new firms that are growing. These include firms’ human talent attraction, individual development, job crafting, and employee voice processes. Within the field of diversity and inclusion, the practices of diversity program generation and evolution are largely unexplored. | <p>Theory Eisenhardt and Martin (2000) <i>on dynamic capabilities as normal practices</i> Teece, Pisano, and Shuen (1997) <i>on dynamic capabilities as meta-practices</i> Q. Roberson et al. (2017) <i>on meta-practice dynamic capabilities and deep diversity</i></p> <p>Empirical: Diversity Lit Bierema (2005) and Baker (2009) <i>on how women’s, Black, and Hispanic affinity groups end up serving either their constituent interest or executive interest</i>; M. Scully and Segal (2002) and M. A. Scully (2009)) <i>on how multiple workplace affinity groups find inter-group collaboration challenging due to emotional narrowing and doubts about the feasibility of pro-equality organizational change</i>; Creed and Scully (2000) <i>on how workplace LGBT rights activists manage individual encounters with domestic partner benefit-skeptics and DPB-opponents</i>.</p> <p>Empirical: Non Diversity Lit Davis and Eisenhardt (2011) <i>on how firms generate innovation from their alliance collaboration practices (shared vs. alternating leadership)</i>; Ozcan and Eisenhardt (2009) <i>on how new firms (early and late entrants) differentially build alliances that generate resources</i>; Bingham and Eisenhardt (2011) <i>on the content (what) and process (how) for new firms learning from their repeated market experiences</i>; Garg and Eisenhardt (2017) <i>on how first-time CEOs in series-B ventures manage their Boards of Directors</i></p> |

There are numerous exceptions and qualifications, even at the top management team (TMT) level where claims of value-in-diversity are stronger than at other levels. One study shows how gender diversity on boards relates positively to performance but not to firm value (D. Carter et al., 2007). When combined with a recent meta-analysis suggesting that diverse teams perform better on objective performance indicators but perform less well on subjective performance indicators, the *legitimacy* pathway looks less convincing than an pathway of *higher-but-devalued* performance explanation (Van Dijk et al., 2012).

The resource dependence mechanisms explored in these studies at time rely on the idea that the firm's internal human resources need to mirror its external resource base. In this *access and legitimacy* perspective developed by D. A. Thomas and Ely (1996)), firms whose retail employees are racially diverse fare better when store locations are in racially diverse locations (Leonard et al., 2004) and women board members seeking resources for their organization with a male donor base are less impactful on firm performance. All told, this resource dependence perspective suggests, indirectly, that diversity practices could be significant signals to resource providers, sometimes positive and sometimes negative.

Information Elaboration

A long-term project of several organizational behavior (OB) diversity scholars is to transition from studying links between workplace fairness and performance towards studying instead a full model that includes how to derive synergies from demographic diversity (Dwertmann et al., 2016; Holmes IV et al., 2020). Scholars in narrative reviews (Dwertmann et al., 2016) and in a meta-analysis (Holmes IV et al., 2020) have concluded that existing diversity research focusing on how employees answer questions like “is this behavior fair at this firm?,” an organization's justice level, relate significantly to employee attitudes but not to organizational performance. These researchers recommend that in its next phase, diversity researchers and

organizational culture researchers focus instead on what practices guide people to feeling *included* as part of the firm's culture and allow them to unleash synergies from their varied demography (Van Knippenberg et al., 2004).

A favored orientation in this work is that of “just the right amount” of diversity. Findings tend to take on a curvilinear effect of diversity on firm-level pecuniary outcomes. The idea is that human resources are a source of value that can create sustained competitive advantage if and only if the value is unleashed through processes that enable people to share their deep-level individual skills despite their surface-level or visual demographic features (Van Knippenberg et al., 2004). In this tradition, the mechanism of *information elaboration* theoretically explains effects of the value-in-diversity, but this mechanism is rarely measured.

For example, top management team-level age demographic diversity relates positively to sales growth outcomes when the age diversity is low to medium, but relates negatively to two types of outcomes (sales growth and return-on-assets) at high levels of age diversity (O. C. Richard & Shelor, 2002). With respect to race, TMT racial diversity had curvilinear effects on multiple outcomes in a U-shaped pattern where diversity related negatively to firm outcomes before an inflection point (22 percent representation) after which the level of racial diversity related positively to firm outcomes such as revenues, book-to-market, and net (Q. M. Roberson & Park, 2007). Alternatively, the story could be more straightforward for gender diversity at the top: one study found that gender diversity at the TMT-level related positively to firm value, and especially so when women's social capital is at high levels (Ren & Wang, 2011). The value-in-diversity hypothesis is invoked in these studies, with information elaboration suspected, but that mechanism was not part of the data structure for these macro studies.

Several macro studies have investigated how the context might alter the impact of demographic diversity on firm performance. For example, macro OB studies have found that organizational return-on-equity outcomes relate positively to race and gender manager-level diversity, but this effect depends on the amount of innovativeness of the firm and on its entrepreneurial risk orientation (Dwyer, Richard, & Chadwick, 2003; O. Richard et al., 2003; O. C. Richard & Johnson, 1999, 2001). The same contingent effect was found for gender (Dwyer et al., 2003). Likewise, racial diversity relates positively to return-on-equity for banks if the bank is pursuing an asset growth strategy, but not if they are pursuing alternative firm strategies (O. C. Richard, 2000). Considering organizational life cycles, racial diversity at the employee-level relates to enhanced performance linearly over the long term, but negatively to productivity in the short term (O. C. Richard et al., 2007).

This literature suggests that just the right amount of *contemporary* diversity will benefit firm outcomes, but it is rare to see studies relating practices aimed at changing *future* diversity to firm outcomes. In a rare exception, one study examines how an external diversity practice, a firm's efforts to improve the racial and gender balance among its input suppliers (Richard et al., 2003). In it, the relationship between supplier diversity practices and long-term firm performance is positive, but it depends upon market environment munificence (the competitiveness of a firm's market) when the firm creates its supplier diversity program (O. C. Richard et al., 2015). Generally, the links between current diversity and firm performance are highly context-dependent, but we do not know how intentional diversity-promotion *practices* relate to firm-level pecuniary outcomes.

To remedy the theoretical fuzziness in existing value-in-diversity research, Roberson and colleagues have proposed a shift “moving from ‘what’ to ‘how,’” in diversity research, that

would explicitly add in key firm meta-processes in a *dynamic capabilities* (DynCap) approach (Q. Roberson et al., 2017). This approach extends the resource-based view of the firm (RBV) with an added focus on what firms do, such as creating organizational and managerial routines (Peteraf, Di Stefano, & Verona, 2013). This approach assumes that the capabilities are distinct from operational “day-to-day” practices, focusing instead on meta-routines that “enable firms to transform these processes to take advantage of market opportunities and achieve competitive advantage” (Q. Roberson et al., 2017; Winter, 2003). Roberson’s theoretical advancement is firmly in the original meta-routines DynCap tradition that eschews focus on day-to-day practice, but there is a cold war brewing in the DynCap tradition (Di Stefano, Peteraf, & Verona, 2014; Peteraf et al., 2013).

The remainder of this dissertation is firmly in an alternative practice-based, day-to-day focus, which does not assume that diversity practices can ever deliver more than objective performance (not necessarily financial returns) and even then not necessarily in a sustained way over long periods of time (Eisenhardt & Martin, 2000). A practice view of HR associated with Eisenhardt and Martin (2000) allows instead for diversity performance benefits to be significant at critical times, but not necessarily linked to a permanent position advantage in the market. It calls for mid-range theories of action and interaction. Performance relationships to diversity are vexingly unclear. However, what diversity practice innovations might enable is to test the extent to which the Civil Rights and Women’s Rights Movements, with which firms profess alignment, have succeeded or failed in organizations.

2.4 ASSESSMENT AND RESEARCH OPPORTUNITIES

The diversity practice literature is robust in institutional mimicry antecedents, and missing theories of actual practice. When firms face social pressure to answer a normative requirement of their society, they vary in how much they tailor their practices versus copy-and-paste them (Raffaelli & Glynn, 2014). Study 1 demonstrates how the tailor-made approaches are more attractive to employees than the turnkey approaches.

CHAPTER 3: STUDY 1

3.1 STUDY 1: RESEARCH QUESTION

How do employees judge whether workplace diversity practices are worth their time and effort as participants or co-designers? The issue of organizational cynicism concerning diversity practices is the topic of Study 1.

3.2 STUDY 1: RESEARCH DESIGN

Inductive research using a qualitative method is ideal for answering research questions that are focused on theory development, particularly when identifying a theoretical process is the focus (Strauss and Corbin, 1990; Creswell, 1998; Langley et al., 2013). Further, I employed purposeful sampling, which involves identifying interviewees who I knew would have a relatively clear view of the dynamics of theoretical interest (Yin, 2011), but I also employed a snowball technique where I asked each interviewee to refer me to subsequent interviewees who they believed would have a great deal of insight and experience regarding my theoretical topic (Yin, 2011). I was focused on identifying (1) leaders (often minorities) who were responsible for formulating and implementing some aspect of the organizational diversity practices; (2) over-represented White American and Asian-American program bystanders who were not the target of the diversity practice but were aware of them; and (3) minority employees who embraced as well as those who made a point of avoiding diversity programs at work purposefully – as all three positions could shed insight into their organization's approach and its unintended consequences. By sifting through the many program designs, leader behaviors, and organizational practices that were reported to me, I was able to triangulate what about organizational practices sparked high versus low levels of organizational cynicism regarding diversity.

3.3 STUDY 1 DATA SOURCES

The total of 42 interviews lasted an average of 50.45 minutes (Median 50.45 minutes, Range: 15.93 to 87.35 minutes), were recorded by the author and transcribed professionally in a total of 739 pages. Transcriptions proved accurate as they were checked against the actual audio recording. Interviews were semi-structured as the interview protocol was used as a springboard rather than a prescriptive cookbook, with flexibility for asking questions off-script in order to follow up and probe into potential insights or new perspectives. No archival material was used in this first study. **Table 6** lists key demographic of the interview participants. Participants worked in 29 distinct organizations, in 12 different economic sectors, across six different U.S. regions.

Table 6.

Study 1 Interview Participant Demographics

| | Position | Organization | Job Tenure (Years) | Age | Gender ID | Race/Ethnicity | Interview Minutes |
|----|-----------------------|----------------|--------------------|-----|-------------|----------------------------------|-------------------|
| 1 | Co-founder Tech | Startup A | 1-5 | 30s | Man | South Asian | 47.93 |
| 2 | Employee Non-Tech/HR | University A | 1-5 | 30s | Man | White | 60.25 |
| 3 | Employee Non-Tech/HR | TechCo #01 | 1-5 | 30s | Woman | Black West African and Caribbean | 50.98 |
| 4 | Employee D&I Team | TechCo #02 | 1-5 | 30s | Man | White | 33.08 |
| 5 | Employee Tech | TechCo #03 | 1-5 | 20s | Man | White (Russian-American) | 15.93 |
| 6 | Employee Non-Tech/HR | Gov Agency #01 | 1-5 | 30s | Man LGBT+ | East Asian | 34.00 |
| 7 | Employee Non-Tech/HR | ConsultCo #01 | 1-5 | 40s | Man LGBT+ | East Asian | 42.53 |
| 8 | Employee HR | TechCo #01 | 1-5 | 20s | Woman | Black | 50.00 |
| 9 | Employee HR | TechCo #02 | 1-5 | 30s | Man | Black | 45.58 |
| 10 | Employee Non-Tech/HR | TechCo #04 | 6-10 | 40s | Woman | East Asian | 87.35 |
| 11 | Employee Non-Tech/HR | TechCo #05 | 1-5 | 40s | Woman | Hispanic | 37.27 |
| 12 | Employee Tech | TechCo #01 | 1-5 | 30s | Woman | East Asian | 53.67 |
| 13 | Co-founder Tech | TechCo #06 | 1-5 | 30s | Man | South Asian | 33.47 |
| 14 | Manager Tech | TechCo #03 | 1-5 | 30s | Man | White | 30.57 |
| 15 | Executive Non-Tech/HR | Gov Agency #01 | 11-15 | 40s | Man | Black | 45.67 |
| 16 | Manager Non-Tech/HR | ConsultCo #02 | 6-10 | 30s | Woman | Black | 66.75 |
| 17 | Executive Non-Tech/HR | Gov Agency #02 | 1-5 | 40s | Woman | Black | 49.57 |
| 18 | Employee Non-Tech/HR | Gov Agency #01 | 6-10 | 30s | Woman | East Asian | 52.02 |
| 19 | Executive Non-Tech/HR | TechCo #07 | 1-5 | 50s | Man | Black | 49.22 |
| 20 | Employee Non-Tech/HR | Gov Agency #01 | 6-10 | 30s | Woman | East Asian | 38.97 |
| 21 | Employee Tech | Gov Agency #02 | 6-10 | 30s | Man | East Asian | 86.53 |
| 22 | Manager Non-Tech/HR | Gov Agency #01 | 11-15 | 40s | Woman | Black | 65.55 |
| 23 | Employee Non-Tech/HR | Gov Agency #01 | 6-10 | 30s | Man | Black | 79.74 |
| 24 | Employee Non-Tech/HR | University A | 1-5 | 20s | Man | Latino | 63.95 |
| 25 | Employee Non-Tech/HR | ConsultCo #03 | 1-5 | 30s | Woman LGBT+ | Black | 28.28 |
| 26 | Employee Non-Tech/HR | TechCo #08 | 6-10 | 30s | Woman LGBT+ | Black | 82.85 |
| 27 | Co-Founder D&I | ConsultCo #04 | 1-5 | 30s | Woman | White | 39.98 |
| 28 | Employee Tech | TechCo #09 | 1-5 | 40s | Woman | Latina | 51.49 |
| 29 | Executive Non-Tech/HR | Gov Agency #01 | 21-25 | 60s | Man | Haitian-American | 66.22 |
| 30 | Manager Non-Tech/HR | BeverageCo | 6-10 | 40s | Man | South Asian | 67.74 |
| 31 | Employee Tech | WheelCo | 1-5 | 30s | Man | Black | 55.03 |
| 32 | Employee Tech | SortStart | 6-10 | 30s | Man | Black | 60.23 |
| 33 | Employee ERG-to-D&I | WheelCo | 1-5 | 30s | Woman | Afro-Latina | 83.77 |
| 34 | Manager Tech | WheelCo | 6-10 | 40s | Man | Latino | 49.55 |
| 35 | Manager HR | Bank Inc | 6-10 | 40s | Woman | White | 50.00 |
| 36 | Manager Non-Tech/HR | Bank Inc | 6-10 | 30s | Man LGBT+ | Black | 45.00 |
| 37 | Manager HR | Bank Inc | 6-10 | 50s | Woman | White | 45.00 |
| 38 | Employee Non-Tech/HR | TechCo #01 | 1-5 | 30s | Man | Black | 60.28 |
| 39 | ERG-to-D&I Team | MatchPlat | 1-5 | 20s | Woman | Black | 50.45 |
| 40 | Employee D&I Team | TechCo #01 | 6-10 | 20s | Man | Black | 65.35 |
| 41 | Executive D&I | TechCo #10 | 11-15 | 40s | Man | Black | 65.35 |
| 42 | Manager D&I | TechCo #01 | 1-5 | 40s | Woman | Black | 48.35 |

3.4 STUDY 1 DATA ANALYSIS

I conducted a thematic analysis of the interview transcripts (Braun & Clarke, 2006), transforming the comments of interview participants into similar groupings or, nodes, using NVIVO 12 for Mac qualitative analysis software (Boyatzis, 1998). With a research assistant, with whom I met weekly during the data analysis period, we coded and re-coded transcripts throughout Fall 2017 semester, after having completed the 42 interviews in summer 2017. Tables we generated tracing codes based on interview participant affects; level of burnout (job/community demands); willingness to engage in boundary-spanning behavior between communities; and level of organizational commitment all failed to produce meaningful groupings, we examined attitudes towards diversity programs in terms of contributors to cynicism.

3.5 STUDY 1 FINDINGS

Cynicism About Organizational Change (Diversity Change)

In the grouping of umbrella constructs (Boyatzis, 1998), diversity program active participants/organizers, non-participants, and non-targeted bystanders often reported some cynicism regarding diversity and inclusion efforts. Setting about to explain the many pathways to high cynicism, three types of attributions were enduring themes: low affective commitment to the organization in general translated into high levels of cynicism. Again, participants and non-participants in workplace diversity programs both had a wide range of levels of affective bond to the organization. These attributions tended to be put in stable terms, as enduring traits of the organization itself.

Secondly, the risk of stigma by the majority populations (White in most organizations where I drew participants) was a pronounced concern of minority avoiders. At first, my research

assistant and I thought this was a result of identity complexity (for example, identifying as Jamaican rather than Black). However, as interviews progressed, I learned that self-perceived identity complexity did not relate clearly to the level of cynicism.

Finally, interview participant concerns about sincerity were linked to what they viewed as a standardized, turnkey recipe for pretending to care about diversity and inclusion. Celebrations of race and gender-thematic history months were pointed out with particular scorn. The agendas of workplace diversity initiatives were considered stale, as the issues never seemed to be resolved. The activist-oriented employee resource groups were tiresome to some participants, who were annoyed at hearing the same unsolvable complaints repeatedly. Findings are summarized in **Figure 1**.

Diversity Specialists: An HR Advantage at Managing Power Dependence

My next clue to the high amounts of variation – from turnkey to customized approaches – came with respect to one interview with a Chief Diversity Officer at an established, non-growing firm, in Study 1. He lamented that his own background a line management business, a profit-and-loss (P&L) reporting unit, had not prepared him for the unique role despite his race being Black. He confessed that he had not wanted the role at first: “I turned it down several times because it just didn’t feel big enough, it was a little bit undervalued and low in the org chart.” What changed his mind? The times. Like in virtually all the cases, this person was keenly attuned to an opening window of opportunity in the organizational field: “Reverend Jackson, Rainbow PUSH Coalition were coming back to the Valley...it was a time when the increased focus [on diversity] was really starting again.” Therefore, one of the D&I leader’s first accomplishments was to establish himself (he had an executive background) as an executive still in his new D&I role:

“We've been able to elevate the function a few notches on the org chart and get a seat at the leadership table where the program belongs.”

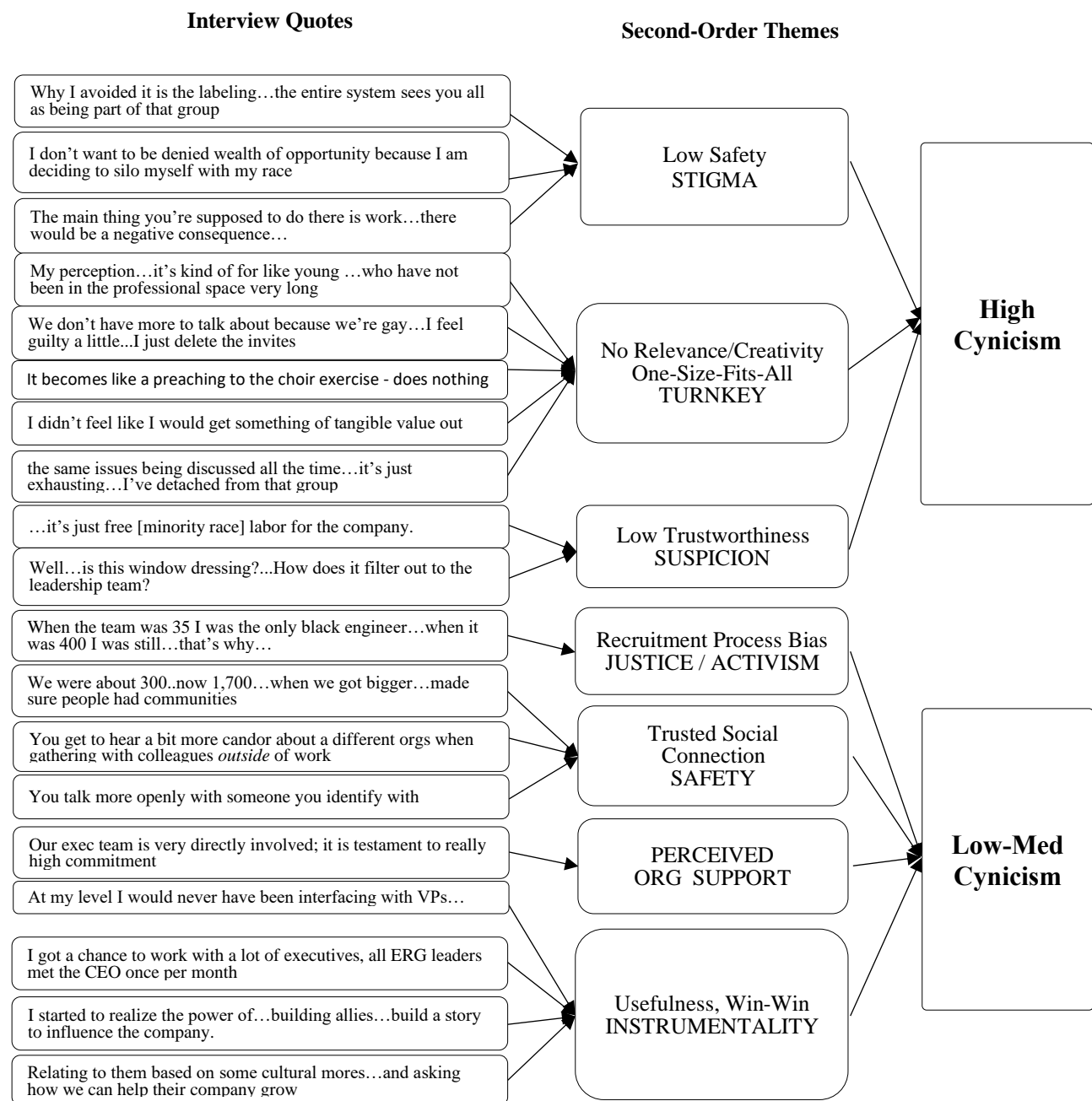
Having a voice in decisions, the “Chief” role, and exposure to executives does not mean having *power* over decisions, so the D&I executive had to borrow power from others who had it. This executive recognized that: “I don't own hiring anybody and I don't own firing anybody. I don't own making selections for the upper executives. It's the HR business partners and the talent acquisition lead.” However recognition of one's power imbalance is not enough.

In order to be successful, you had to speak the language of talent acquisition and demand signals and comps and compensation and benefits and all those other elements of the engine of human resources. So, that's taken a while for me to get. I think the CDO's that come from out of HR...I think they get it a little bit more because they know about pain of HR. The path to success as a D&I executive was “to make all my peers on the HR leadership team successful (Interview #41, Study 1).

Limitations

There were limitations in this participant sample were primarily in its lack of nesting. With so many organizations and regions of the United States represented in the sample, it was hard to tell what of the feedback was rooted in the particularities of place versus the individual differences among the participants.

Figure 1.
Cynicism about workplace affinity groups



CHAPTER 4 (STUDY 2)

METHODS

4.1 RESEARCH QUESTION

The purpose of this study is to learn what drives firm choice to create tailor-made versus turnkey diversity practices.

4.2 RESEARCH DESIGN

The Study 2 design differs in several ways from the original. Study 2 is a multi-case, inductive study of the intra-firm collaborations (sometimes in taskforces, sometimes less formal) that lead to either a copy-and-pasted or customized diversity program. Case studies are especially well-fit to the task of studying collaboration processes and the connection of that process to firm choices, because the case method allows a detailed tracking of an unfolding set of human actions that cannot (yet) be controlled in a laboratory setting; and are usually not recorded in archives (Yin, 1994). I considered doing a single case study as an update to previous work on this sector and region (Kunda, 1992), but appreciated instead how multiple case comparisons enable a replication logic – the ability to treat initial propositions as disconfirmable in the next case’s interviews (Eisenhardt, 1989; Yin, 1994).

The sampling method, because of the reputation-sensitive nature of the topic, was an “uphill” snowball, in which I targeted the lowest possible ranked individuals involved in diversity initiatives first to start the case timelines. Moving up in rank overtime, interviews with senior officials were less able to dodge questions about whether events had occurred when asked directly – alternating between a prosecutorial and conversational style, as is commonly done to establish timeline sequences in case research.

4.3 RESEARCH CONTEXT

Industry: Mobile Applications Firms

The six cases chosen for Study 2 are all in mobile applications, with two companies in transportation; two in social platforms; and two in financial technology (FinTech). This was part of the purposeful case selection.

Similar Philosophies: Inclusion First, Gender First

Company approach to diversity was identified in my literature review as an important cultural consideration. In all six cases, respondents reported that the company's approach is to focus on inclusion, with the intention of keeping the minority employees that they currently had as a means of creating a workplace attractive to diverse future applicants. Importantly, respondents indicated that this "I" before "D" (inclusion before diversity) was articulated in private by firm CEOs and often in public strategies too.

Similar Within-Firm Segregation Patterns

Each had a geographic concentration of minority populations at support centers away from headquarters, with high-status minority professionals concentrated at headquarters (but in touch virtually with co-racials/ethnics within the firm, across-establishment).

Similar Organizational Supports

In these companies, work-life balance initiatives and programs were similar and considered generous by U.S. standards for parental leave.

Practices and Structures Created 2014-2019

All six firms studied went on to develop the internal organizational structures that correlate with high managerial diversity: hiring specialists focused on diversity topics, with some adopting task forces too. All but one firm adopted the high-performance diversity practice of having public reporting on their firm demography. The firms were also similar in terms of their adoption of unproven-but-popular approaches. For organizational forms, all six firms adopted employee resource groups (ERGs) based on ethnic/racial and gender affinities. With respect to

practices, all six adopted company-wide diversity training. Although it was not technically mandatory, the CEO signaled clearly that the trainings were expected of all.

Within each industrial pair, there is one early-adopter and one later adopter of the high-performing diversity structures mentioned above. Adoption timing did not relate to tailoring.

Region: San Francisco Bay Area

The role of regional logics having been acknowledged in the literature review (Section 2.1 antecedents), I sought to narrow the variation by focusing on one region that is well-studied by recent political science and public opinion research. Political scientists have taken an interest in the SF Bay Area region because of its important role as large-dollar funders for federal candidates in the Democratic party nationwide. At the time (unlike at the time of writing in 2020-2021), the main concern was that Silicon Valley CEOs might adopt either hardline anti-statist libertarian views across the board, or endorse pro-business Republican positions (Sengupta & Lipton, 2013). Famous Silicon Valley libertarians like Peter Thiel drew outsized attention, with many forgetting that what made Thiel so famous was that fact that he was in a minority position.

Empirical political science and public opinion research found that the SF Bay Area's tech sector represents an emerging force that might reshape public policy in a pro-market direction over decades to come. Elites and workers in this sector not across-the-board libertarian, but they are opposed to government regulation of business (Broockman et al., 2019). With some commentators dubbing the pattern "liberalitarian," the region hosts a unique combination of strong regulation-skepticism along with strong support for national wealth redistribution; globalist stakeholder views on the environment; and passionate liberal identity values – being at the forefront of early supporters of transgender inclusion and movements such as Black Lives

Matter – including when #BLM was far less popular than it is now (Cohn & Quealy, 2020). The region likely represents an important part of the future of a major establishment political party:

Technologists could help push lawmakers, especially Democrats, further to the left on many social and economic issues. But they may also undermine the influence of some of the Democrats’ most stalwart supporters, including labor unions. And they may strive to push Democrats away from regulation on business — including the growing calls for greater rules around the tech industry. (Manjoo, 2017).

Diversity Practice Boom, 2014-2019

In the first study, I learned that technology sector ERG participants in different organizations questioned the authenticity of their executives’ espoused commitments to diversity. Many shared a sense of cynicism. However, they also believed that the year 2014 represented the opening of a window of opportunity for activism. They described the importance of transparency advocacy by Pinterest engineer Tracy Cho, and famous venture capitalists Freada Kapur Klein and Ellen Pao. Cited most prominently was the role of civil rights leader Rev. Jesse Jackson, who coordinated the announcement by Google - one of the more secretive companies - to release its employee demography (Harkinson, 2015), an event that represented a high-performance transparency practice (Kalev et al., 2006). In (unrecorded) conversations with a source close to Rev. Jackson, I learned:

You’ve got 2% minorities. Data don't lie. We put them on the defensive. The media coverage - I did not expect it - week after week there was a story. I was a source for USA Today, Mercury News, the AP, Reuters, Bloomberg, TechCrunch. We hit a different company every week. We hit the unicorns, which are non-public, too. You only get action when issues popped up externally. So for 2014-2015 they [the technology companies] were on the defensive.

Companies on the defensive start doing a great number of things – a mixture of consultant-driven turnkey diversity practices as well as, sometimes, a tailor-made diversity practice. What is important for Study 2 is that this reversal by a secretive company towards

transparency then catalyzed further releases of data in a diffusion pattern that is now familiar in institutional theory as the *Nixon-in-China* effect, where the toughest firms to turn towards a new norm are the most influential on future adoptions of a contentious practice (Briscoe & Safford, 2008). The social movement led by Rev. Jackson targeted 25 companies at first. All but one of them released their demographic data in the same year (the holdout being Oracle). Secondary mimicry was even more profound, with newspapers filled with public releases of large and small SF Bay Area technology firms issuing reports of their demography. Accountability about one's diversity numbers and goals is the rare case of a widely-diffusing diversity practice that is actually high-performing, linked to improved managerial diversity (Frank Dobbin et al., 2015).

Yet, the same institutional pathway that brought one good practice – mimicry – also brought about firm choices of a variety of the least impactful diversity practices. Implicit bias training, for example, was sold to many of the firms in this study as new and scientific, despite being based on very old ideas about teaching sensitivity to managers in mandatory settings (F Dobbin & Kalev, 2018). These trainings tended to be part of pre-designed training packages provided by consultants that answered a market opportunity. Selecting firms that have similar work; cultures; diversity approaches; and diversity-promotion structures, would provide the best chance at discovering what makes certain firms (and not others) decide to create their own tailored diversity practices.

4.4 DATA SOURCES

Data Collection

Immersing myself in the field setting, I spent summers in the SF Bay Area starting in Fall 2016, visited most weekends 2017-2018, and relocated permanently to the region in 2019.

Attending forums on diversity and inclusion issues hosted by large technology firms; the Kapor Center for Leveling the Playing Field; a regional Diversity Best Practices conference; workplace organizing coaching sessions by national labor groups; and social movement conferences sponsored by Rev. Jackson's Silicon Valley initiative, I gained a sensitivity for the way language was used to distinguish turnkey and tailored approaches to diversity practices.

The snowball technique helped identify those present at the creation of the various diversity initiatives (see **Table 7**). Minimizing bias, the founders of a practice were not in touch with each other at the time preceding the interviews, having usually departed the companies. The research includes a nested design, where inside each firm, informants from diversity professionals (usually in the HR or People Operations department) were supplemented by informants recruited from Black and Hispanic/Latin employee affinity groups - often the targets of the diversity initiatives. I sampled in an uphill snowball, to learn the origins of each diversity practice – starting with former employees who were present at the creation of the diversity practice at their firm and progressing slowly towards those of the highest ranks currently serving in the firm. This limited the impact of impression management by executives. It proved critical in many cases to demonstrate that I had learned something about prior events before asking for senior-level accounts. Learning from the creators of diversity practices was especially important.

To encourage candor, I assured all participants of confidentiality for themselves and all institutions they mentioned. These are historic cases. To mitigate hindsight bias, I triangulated with multiple participants; networking to find sources through separate pathways to reduce the

likelihood of coordination of recollections. In semi-structured interviews I have focused informants on relating the chronologies of events rather than their evaluations of events. The most typical follow-up question was “and what happened after that?” The interview guide is in **Appendix A**. With multiple sources at each firm I verified information with other informants, public records, and internet archives using *The Wayback Machine*. Each case study timeline includes the emergence of diversity practices, and accounts of implementation behavior.

Table 7.

Study 2: Diversity Initiative Founder Experience, n=46

| | | 1 st & 2 nd Gen | | |
|------------------|---------------------------------|--|------------------------------|------------------------|
| | Mobile Technology sub-sector | Diversity Officer | Affinity Group Founder(s) | High Level (CEO +2) |
| SortStart | Social Platform | Y | Y | 1 |
| MatchPlat | Social Platform | Y | Y | 2 |
| RollInc | Transportation | Y | Y | 1 |
| WheelCo | Transportation | Y | Y | 2 |
| FinWorld | Financial | Y+ | Y | 2 |
| FinCheck | Financial | Y | Y | 1 |

Table 8.

Study 2 Interview Participant Demographics
(4 interviews carried over from Study 1 italicized)

| | Position | Tech Company | Job Tenure (Years) | Age | Gender ID | Race/Ethnicity | Interview Minutes |
|----|-----------------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|------------|------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------------|
| 31 | <i>Employee - Tech</i> | <i>WheelCo</i> | <i>1-5</i> | <i>30s</i> | <i>Man</i> | <i>Black</i> | <i>55.03</i> |
| 32 | <i>Employee - Tech</i> | <i>SortStart</i> | <i>6-10</i> | <i>30s</i> | <i>Man</i> | <i>Black</i> | <i>60.23</i> |
| 33 | <i>Employee - ERG-to-HR</i> | <i>WheelCo</i> | <i>1-5</i> | <i>30s</i> | <i>Woman</i> | <i>Afro-Latina</i> | <i>83.77</i> |
| 39 | <i>Employee - ERG-to-HR</i> | <i>MatchPlat</i> | <i>6-10</i> | <i>30s</i> | <i>Woman</i> | <i>Black</i> | <i>50.45</i> |
| 43 | Employee - Non-Tech/HR | SortStart | 1-5 | 30s | Man LGBT | Black | 91.54 |
| 44 | Employee - HR | SortStart | 1-5 | 30s | Woman | Black | 21.83 |
| 45 | Employee - HR | SortStart | 6-10 | 40s | Woman | Black | 87.08 |
| 46 | Employee - Non-Tech/HR | SortStart | 1-5 | 20s | Man | Latino | 43.20 |
| 47 | Executive - Non-Tech/HR | SortStart | 1-5 | 40s | Woman | White | 26.43 |
| 48 | Employee - Non-Tech/HR | MatchPlat | 1-5 | 30s | Man | Black | 51.72 |
| 49 | Employee - Non-Tech/HR | MatchPlat | 1-5 | 20s | Man | Black | 91.32 |
| 50 | Employee - Non-Tech/HR | MatchPlat | 1-5 | 30s | Male | Black | 91.98 |
| 51 | Employee - Non-Tech/HR | MatchPlat | 6-10 | 30s | Woman | Black | 26.50 |
| 52 | Employee - Non-Tech/HR | MatchPlat | 6-10 | 30s | Man | Black | 35.6 |
| 53 | Employee - Non-Tech/HR | MatchPlat | 6-10 | 30s | Woman | Hispanic | 25.1 |
| 54 | Employee - Non-Tech/HR | MatchPlat | 1-5 | 40s | Man | Latino | 69.1 |
| 55 | Employee - Non-Tech/HR | MatchPlat | 1-5 | 30s | Man | Hispanic | 98.82 |
| 56 | Employee - HR | MatchPlat | 1-5 | 30s | Woman | Latino/a | 44.08 |
| 57 | Employee - HR | MatchPlat | 1-5 | 20s | Man | Mexican-American | 93.3 |
| 58 | Employee - D&I Team | MatchPlat | 1-5 | 40s | Woman | White | 69.92 |
| 59 | Executive - D&I Team | MatchPlat | 1-5 | 40s | Woman | White | 49.8 |
| 60 | Executive - D&I Team | MatchPlat | 1-5 | 50s | Woman | White | 65.42 |
| 61 | Executive - Non-Tech/HR | MatchPlat | 6-10 | 40s | Man | White | 19.72 |
| 62 | Employee - ERG-to-HR | RollInc | 1-5 | 20s | Woman | Latino/a | 35.27 |
| 63 | Employee - ERG-to-HR | RollInc | 1-5 | 30s | Woman | White | 47.20 |
| 64 | Executive - Tech | RollInc | 1-5 | 30s | Woman | White | 141.37 |
| 65 | Employee - Tech | RollInc | 1-5 | 40s | Man | Hispanic | 57.97 |
| 66 | Employee - Non-Tech/HR | RollInc | 1-5 | 20s | Woman | Latino/a | 68.15 |
| 67 | Employee - ERG-to-HR | RollInc | 1-5 | 30s | Woman | Black | 47.70 |
| 68 | Employee - Non-Tech/HR | WheelCo | 1-5 | 30s | Man | Black | 50.93 |
| 69 | Manager - Tech | WheelCo | 6-10 | 40s | Man | Latino | 49.55 |
| 70 | Executive - D&I Team | WheelCo | 1-5 | 40s | Man | Black | 56.49 |
| 71 | Executive - D&I Team | WheelCo | 1-5 | 40s | Man | Black | 84.57 |
| 72 | Employee - HR & D&I Team | WheelCo | 1-5 | 30s | Man | Black | 38.48 |
| 73 | Employee - Tech | FinWorld | 1-5 | 30s | Man | Black | 40.73 |
| 74 | Manager - Non-Tech/HR | FinWorld | 1-5 | 30s | Woman | Black | 42.30 |
| 75 | Employee - Tech | FinWorld | 1-5 | 30s | Woman | Black | 51.12 |
| 76 | Executive - D&I Team | FinWorld | 1-5 | 30s | Woman | Biracial (Black and White) | 37.48 |
| 77 | Manager - D&I Team | FinWorld | 6-10 | 30s | Woman | White | 45.72 |
| 78 | Employee - D&I Team | FinWorld | 1-5 | 30s | Woman | Black | 63.42 |
| 79 | Employee - HR | FinWorld | 6-10 | 30s | Woman | South Asian | 52.95 |
| 80 | Executive | FinWorld | 6-10 | 40s | Man | White | 22.70 |
| 81 | Employee - Non-Tech/HR | FinWorld | 1-5 | 30s | Woman | White | 36.70 |
| 82 | Employee - Non-Tech/HR | FinWorld | 1-5 | 20s | Man LGBT | White | 37.60 |
| 83 | Employee - Non-Tech/HR | FinCheck | 6-10 | 40s | Man | Black | 59.12 |
| 84 | Executive - D&I | FinCheck | 1-5 | 30s | Woman | Black | 44.25 |

4.5 DATA ANALYSIS

This case study method is agnostic regarding data type, welcoming my collection of private and public archives; interview transcripts; ethnographies at 6 ERG-sponsored events; and internet archive material (Eisenhardt, 1989), with claims made in interviews verified by another

informant or archive (Jick, 1979). The purpose is to build a comprehensive timeline of the external and internal events related to the topic, diversity practices, for each of the six companies. The cases studies themselves contain material that is confidential. Each confidential case begins with an integrative timeline (Langley, 1999; Murray, Kotha, & Fisher, 2020). The result was six individual case histories at a total of 200 pages with key quotes and chronologies, condensing the accounts of 46 people recorded in 888 pages of transcripts, an average of 19 transcript pages per person.

After understanding the change in cases over time, I turned my attention to comparing across cases. Several ideas emerging from one case that did not generalize to more than one case. For example, I began my analysis with the *MatchPlat* case, where a pro-diversity executive, a White man I called *Itempas*, was so converted from being inattentive to diversity, to passionately embracing concepts of privilege, that he attracted a following of minority employees that viewed him as sending reliable signals of commitment to race/ethnic diversity. It was only until I reached the *RollInc* case, where no such executive passion was on display, but minorities still joined the diversity practice design efforts, that I challenged the initial idea about what drove busy minority employees to expend discretionary time in pursuit of workplace diversity initiatives.

Early concepts such as CEO commitment to diversity were similarly made complicated upon further analysis. I believed initially that explicit strong CEO support for diversity was critical. However, I ended up with a cautionary tale from the FinCheck case study with a more limited claim: that passive CEO non-opposition to diversity efforts is more important than active CEO support. Explicit CEO opposition was an insurmountable force at FinCheck, killing an

initiative. By contrast, both neutral non-objections by CEOs and active CEO support provided fertile soil for diversity program growth and customization (tailoring).

During this iterative process, I engaged with my PhD advisor in daily calls to challenge assumptions until constructs emerged from the analyses. It was iteration between emerging theory and data that helped develop diversity practice creation mid-range theory below.

CHAPTER 5: FINDINGS (STUDY 2)

5.1 DEPENDENT VARIABLE: TAILORED DIVERSITY PRACTICE (OR TURNKEY)

What accounts for the difference in diversity practice innovation outcomes? To preview the results, I found that the tailor-made diversity practices came about when would-be change agents: (1) rented power from others or possessed power themselves over an important department; (2) effectuated an autonomous space to experiment; and (3) engaged in a design sprint, by which national/organizational crises on race issues promoted quick work collaborations that piloted new approaches to workforce diversity while attention to the topic is high (sequential and coordinated versions both worked).

5.2 BORROWING POWER

Chief Diversity Officers Manage Power Dependence

The issue of power dependence was pervasive in my interviews. Participants expressed frustration that diversity specialists were held responsible for other departments' behaviors. Working in HR as a diversity specialist was depicted as "lobbying," as a "ministry" (Participant #84); as a "100% influence role" with "no actual direct ownership" (Participant #77); as having to report on "outcomes [that] are not even your own" (Participant #67). Moreover, informants reported that diversity specialists were often blamed by CEOs for bad results in the divisions of the company that they did not themselves control. Executives "get to off-board all the guilt" onto diversity specialists (Participant #67). This treatment extended to managers who volunteered for diversity-promoting employee resource groups (ERGs).

One executive pulled aside the head of a women's ERG "and berated her until she was crying and [he] told her that it was her fault as the leader of the Women's engineering group that the organization has failed to move their diversity numbers.

The field of organizational sociology (specifically professional cosmopolitanism) put strong emphasis on the role of *expertise* as a source of pride and a potential source of practice innovations. A classic finding in organizational sociology is the role of functional expertise, pride in craft, and professional identities as predictors of the level of ambition one exhibits in the contest for influence *inside* the firm. In his formative study on professional identity, Gouldner (1957) identified *cosmopolitans* as professionals who valued their skillsets, formal training, and chose external referents to judge how well they are doing in their careers. In this organizational sociology tradition, researchers have recently examined the “risk” of professionals being locked-in to their company because they belonged too much to the firm rather than to their professional field (Sirén, Thorgren, & Järlström, 2018). In this telling:

it appears to make less difference to cosmopolitans [compared to locals] whether they have high or low influence within their employing organization” (Gouldner, 1957).

Within diversity studies, organizational sociology has likewise charted a history of how the human resources *cosmopolitan* profession has changed over time from union-busting personnel departments staffed by men, to rights-promoting administrative units staffed by women (Frank Dobbin, 2009). The image is one of an HR profession and diversity specialist track that cares much more about the broader movement for equality of opportunity at work and not much about their local firm’s situation.

By contrast to this particular sociological view, I found that the diversity specialists I interviewed were extremely attuned to their level of influence and status inside the firm. Diversity officers described, unprompted, in great detail, their “proximity” to the Chief Human Resources Officer (CHRO); the extent to which the CHRO gives them “visibility” with their skip level boss; and the “leveling” of the job - the establishment of its rank in the organization chart at

the director or vice presidential levels. This frequent focus on their own levels of power indicates that they have plenty of political will. In only one of the six cases was recognizing power imbalances a challenge for a diversity officer (FinWorld Incumbent #2).

Instead, it was the varied approaches to addressing the power imbalances that came into play to predict whether or not a diversity advocate did any customization (tailoring). So, what distinguishes the diversity specialists that contribute to standardized versus tailored diversity practices? The years of HR background brought to the role of D&I leader appeared to matter. Chief Diversity Officers with an HR background were more likely to engage in personal alliance-making behaviors with powerful organizational actors. The behaviors helped the CDOs at MatchPlat and WheelCo grow their teams and program funding and helped the CDO at RollInc to achieve a cascade of positive results after implementing changes at the most powerful parts of the firm's most powerful department first. On the other hand, at SortStart and FinWorld, CDOs recognized their lack of power but did not tap the resources of allies. Meanwhile at FinCheck, the hostility of the CEO to the very goals of a diversity program stymied any ability of the CDO to function.

Table 9.*Borrowing Power: Managing Power Dependence***Chief Diversity Officer Abilities & Behaviors**

| Case | Recognize power dependence | Significant HR experience | Borrowing power? | Tailored Practices |
|------------------|----------------------------|---|---|--------------------|
| MatchPlat | Yes. | Yes. Incumbent #1: 5y in HR Incumbent #2: 0y in HR (consultant) Incumbent #3: 24y in HR (exec) | Yes. Incumbent #1: borrowing power “When you get those three large organizations [engineering, marketing, and sales] you got 80% of the workforce at that point.” Incumbent #2: borrowing power “One of my lessons in that year was I cannot ever do anything unilaterally. Any work that I do needs to be owned by another team.” | Yes |
| RollInc | Yes. | Yes. Incumbent #1: 6y in HR Incumbent #2: 0y in HR Incumbent #3: 18y in HR (exec) | Mixed. Incumbent #1: borrowing power “My boss was the VP of Engineering, and we had worked together for so many years, that he was to just let me run with whatever.” Incumbent #2: no borrowing power “a lot of things just fizzled out with [#2]” Incumbent #3: holding power “Eventually, the company started to get really serious about executive hiring, and [#3] ran D&I and recruiting as well...the best D&I pro.” | Yes |
| WheelCo | Yes. | Yes. Incumbent #1: 0y in HR Incumbent #2: 7y in HR Incumbent #3: 16y as Trainer (exec) | Yes. Incumbent #1: no borrowing power “WheelCo just wasn’t ready to invest in D&I” Incumbent #2: borrowing power “The [CHRO] was the worst boss I ever had...did not want my team to grow...I had to use [a tech leader]...leading from behind to get things done.” D&I Recruiter reporting to Incumbent #3: borrowing power “I [was] actually provisioned to send emails on behalf of [tech] leaders at WheelCo so you would get an e-mail ‘from’ one of the leaders.” | Yes |
| SortStart | Yes. | No. Incumbent #1: 0y in HR (exec) Incumbent #2: 10y in Compliance | No. Incumbent #1: no borrowing power Incumbent #2: no borrowing power Despite offers from a powerful engineering exec to fund internal diversity initiatives, the D&I executive focused on external communications. | ⊖ |
| FinWorld | No. | Mixed. Incumbent #1: 2y in HR Incumbent #2: 0y in HR (exec) Incumbent #3: 2y in Higher Ed | No. Incumbent #1: no borrowing power Incumbent #2: no borrowing power “So they had this whole [D&I] program they were shopping around and some teams were like ‘no it feels we’re lowering the bar.’” Incumbent #3: no borrowing power | ⊖ |
| FinCheck | Yes. | Moderate. Incumbent #1: 3y in HR (law)(exec) Incumbent #2: 5y in HR | No. Incumbent #1: holding power (exec) Position created, D&I executive found, fired. Incumbent #2: no borrowing power Deputy to exec promoted, quickly resigned | ⊖ |

Borrowing Power: Success Cases (MatchPlat, WheelCo)

MatchPlat: Interdepartmental Borrowing of Power

The first D&I Leader at MatchPlat (Interview #20) was willing to take a downgrade in status in order to have the chance to make a difference at a less-established, entrepreneurial, high-growth firm: “I had been at [old firm] where they had a very established D&I organization for many, many years. In my mind it was not moving at the rate and pace that I could...I was feeling a bit of a stalling effect.” Not every D&I official was comfortable in this environment. One temporary consultant on D&I whose experience had been in highly-structured large corporate environments found it disorienting: “It looks, like, frenetic. It looks disjointed, and it looks disorganized...It almost looked like the Wild West. Everybody was just doing their own thing (Interview #58).” The apparent chaos, with highly proactive employee affinity group leaders and less active D&I program staff had its roots in (1) a low level of resources in the D&I function and (2) a decision to seek the resources that powerful executives controlled.

At first, the combination of a small D&I effort and very passionate bottom-up employee activism increased demand for diversity programs, but not supply. The resource picture for the D&I offices was bleak, with the D&I officials making sense of this through the lens of getting line executives to “own” diversity work. From interviews; however, it was difficult to ascertain which came first: the low resources or the strategy to lease the power of others with the resources. Employees took the former view, that the external social movement pressure had led to a minimum viable diversity program, and an office as a symbol of concern rather than a node of action (Interviews #48, 49, 50, 51, 52, 53, 54), including minority employee informants who were in the HR department, where D&I was housed, at the time (Interviews #56, 57).

In this telling, it was the lack of resources that led decision-making on what to do:

There were only two people working on diversity inclusion...very lightweight, yeah, super lightweight...and it felt very palpable that that was in response to a lot of what Jessie Jackson had done at the time when he was getting on tech companies about their representation. (Interview #55)”

Another employee who worked in recruiting did not feel that the D&I office wielded much overt influence: “you can't count on the diversity team, unfortunately...we just took it upon ourselves (Interview #57).” And a member of the early D&I consultant support team linked it to industry-wide trends, with the resource limiting the organizational model to one of business partners: “...consultative experts is how a lot of diversity and inclusion functions are going because they don't have the resources anymore because they're so small (Interview #58).” The D&I program office was there as a “center of excellence” (Interview #59) that would support any business unit, but that itself did not control anything except its own expertise in a “staff office model” (Frank Dobbin, 2009). In this telling, the small resource picture comes first, and then diversity strategy adapts.

To the contrary, those inside the D&I office represented their office’s small start with two permanent hires as all part of a plan to prevent majority White employee backlash, and ensure that the line executives owned the effort themselves: “[The CHRO] did not want to put in a lot of infrastructure in play because we wanted it to organically to grow within itself. We felt if we put a lot of structure, we would get rejection (Interview #20).”

This lack of D&I resource centralization is the context for a flourishing of activity in all directions driven by three powerful White executives who ere newly “awakened,” “leaning-in,” “on-their-personal-journeys” regarding race/ethnicity diversity (Interviews #20, #48, #61). “There were three leaders on the leadership team that really started to rise above and started to go through their own personal journeys of diverse inclusion. They were leaning in more

heavily...and wanted to be part of where you could pilot and test within their organizations (Interview #20).”

The inaugural D&I leader tells a more agentic story in which she prioritized attentiveness to signals of executive commitment:

So we were like: ‘Hey, let’s go after the big ones. They’re the hardest, but if we can get them committed, we knew that we could get the balance of the company to come up...they represented 80% of the company workforce at the time...It was Sales, which was high-growth, Engineering, and Marketing (Interview #20).”

Practically, the first resource made available by line executives to the nimble (or impoverished) D&I team was: money. The experimental funding for early stage ideas was driven by the Sales department, where diversity and inclusion initiatives had carte blanche:

The Sales leader said ‘we’ll pilot it here if it works, I’ll fund it for any other group who feels they don’t have the money...And so most of the funding did not come from HR. It came actually from these executives (Interview #20).

Functional initiatives are technically under [the D&I program office], but again they’re funded by the business, so they’re very heavy stakeholders in all of this (Interview #39).

The result of this pattern of evolution was that each of the three most influential executives below the CEO went from their initial “lightning bolt moment” (Executive #61) towards a locking-in of funding for D&I management. What started as two people working on D&I for the entire firm became, over time, a 12-person office each with a specific portfolio of programs funded by a business division. The program office was hiring people to help staff each initiative, tracking the various results for their iterating initiatives and its permutations throughout the globe. Whether the results were intended or not, the end result is that as the office grew the number of program managers, each Diversity specialist position in the organization was funded by a specific initiative budget, not by the Human Resources department. Meanwhile, more established, well-known types of programs such as traditional mentorship programs (a

high-performance diversity practice) tended to be funded by each of the three business organizations themselves.

Momentum for D&I shifted decidedly towards the most passionate three line executives. In fact, the Sales Department D&I strategy became, and currently endures, as the official D&I strategy for the entire firm. The initial D&I executive was still, at this stage, not ready to publish her own D&I strategy, mired in qualitative data collection and hundreds of pages of reports:

I talked to many people through focus groups and one-on-ones...the findings took so many iterations and we weren't even comfortable enough to publish it, which was wrong. You really want to publish your strategy (Interview #20).

The Sales executive had, in the intervening time, recognized that his division was in hyper-growth, and would have non-diverse outcomes without some diversity strategy. He moved first and created one. "Meanwhile the Sales organization went out with what they believe, with their strategy. They knew they had to catch it. If you're growing, you have to catch it in your hiring" (D&I Executive #20).

This matches the Sales Executive's own recollection:

Well, I think it was a snowball departmentally. Like my [Sales] department at this point had a few years of focus in this area. It was really working out. It was clear, our numbers were shifting, our employee engagement scores were different. There was very clearly success, so other departments wanted to get in on it (Executive #61).

The strong, positive, ties between the three most powerful executives and the D&I office's close connection to them forged a bond between the low powered HR-embedded D&I team and executives who had literal resources to sustain initiatives, including after the eventual departure of the three executives. This suggests a possible imprint on these particular SVP roles.

WheelCo: Interdepartmental Renting of Power

To remedy the constant blocking of project ideas by a hostile CHRO, the D&I leader (a Black man) did what he called "leading from behind." He immediately reached out to other parts

of the organization who were willing to help. In response to the constant “blocking” by the CHRO, and so began to route his requests through senior executives of a different race. In order to launch a new survey-based investigation into inclusive manager behavior, and to begin work on auditing pay for racial and gender equity, he raised the idea first through the powerful head of the Europe & Middle East region (a person who did not have the liability of Blackness). When that powerful executive proposed to provide “more headcount” to the D&I official, the CHRO readily agreed (Executive #71). By contrast, when he had proposed the same himself, the CHRO had referred him to the CFO. Surprisingly, the CFO granted his requested, but the CHRO then sequestered the funds for her own purposes anyway (Executive #71; D&I Employee #33). The only reliable way to get the resources he needed was to involve other powerful executives in a way that let the other executive have formal control of the monetary resource for a position.

What was true at the executive level held also for lower levels at *WheelCo*. Like many firms, *WheelCo* had implemented a diverse slate rule (a turnkey practice), such that each finalist candidate pool must have at least two underrepresented persons interviewed for a position. The recruitment challenge was that minority race mobile app programmers were in high demand and so had a lot of experience deleting the messages of anyone with the title “Recruiter” or “Sourcer” (an early-phase type of recruitment): “people that are really talented and everyone's looking for job opportunities, they don't love talking to recruiters” (Recruiter Employee #72). Prospective employees surmised that they were merely filling out the candidate slots in jobs that would go to White programmers. To enable the company to have a chance at poaching minority talent from other firms, *WheelCo* allowed trusted diversity specialist recruiters to have proxy to send messages on behalf of senior-level technologists at the company to potential target minority recruits:

I can actually be provisioned to send emails on behalf of say leaders at WheelCo. Say you're a software engineer. Yeah. So, you would get an email from one of the leaders that WheelCo and just say, 'Hey, here's what my team's working on. I think you're awesome, I'd love to chat with you. Just a heads up, my recruiter is CC'd in the email who can actually get our call arranged.' And I was getting a way higher response rate...again, really setting that first touch point with a business up as an interface...speaks volumes in terms of really getting folks interested (Employee #72).

From Borrowing Power Failure, to Owning Power (RollInc Case)

The good news about firm decisions regarding Chief Diversity Officers, is that they seem to be correctable – even if a firm makes two mistakes in a row before it finally makes a correction. However, repair work took more actual power than simply starting from scratch. The first D&I coordinator was someone diversifying their time among other HR duties:

This is still very early in RollInc's time, they put this woman, Scimina, in charge of D&I...and it's just someone in HR who has expressed interest in this, and they're going to like put them in charge (Executive #64).

That person, who is White, inspired a revolt among employees because of their skepticism regarding the fundamentals of prevailing D&I norms, basic conformity to which signals that one intends to use the diversity specialist role to promote diversity. According to the one staff member in the two-person diversity team:

Scimina had a great sort of...I think she knew enough to pitch that we were doing a lot in the D&I space...but we weren't really...it was mostly like Chinese New Year celebration, or a Halloween party, or some of the fun cultural events, but not really anything in terms of moving the needle on issues that I think were most relevant to those groups rather than cultural celebrations (D&I Specialist Staffer #63).

After an employee revolt (including all races) against what was considered a counter-productive initial hire, the company still erred in the other direction once more by appointing a junior who had been active in the Black ERG as the leader for D&I – after having failed in a long

search for a full-time person in the role: “we just weren't even willing to pay market [salary] for this role, or hire somebody with enough experience” (Tech Executive #64). The company’s ERGs got mired in a definitional battle. The parents ERG and the ERG for technologists from underrepresented groups (TechERG) were considered insufficiently tied to race and gender social identity concerns and should be thought of more like voluntary clubs. The unity between the coalition of underrepresented groups was temporarily harmed. Having essentially a low-paid club leader as the head of D&I meant that this person had a challenging time borrowing power from powerful coworkers in sales or engineering to accomplish new and customized diversity programs.

The third *RollInc* personnel action on diversity was to replace its head of recruitment with a highly-paid, executive-level, and highly experienced HR leader, Yeine, who was double-hatted with diversity:

So Yeine ran D&I and recruiting as well...when Yeine got there a lot definitely changed...” (Tech Executive #64).

The process of change was one that was very typical for experienced HR practitioners: targeting powerful departments for gender and racial diversification; owning the hiring process; growing the HR organization; and keeping in touch with employee’s representatives. First, the new Recruitment Chief / D&I official demonstrated their recruitment skills in underrepresented populations for technology positions and other powerful revenue-winning parts of the organization: “We hired [an African-American executive]. We hired [a White woman] to lead [a technical department]. We hired a bunch of people into marketing. We had a pretty diverse group of VPs and a pretty diverse board as well” (Tech Executive #64).

These changes sent a message that the new D&I executive was someone with influence and power, which Yeine owned themselves. Left only to wonder about how the new VP

accomplished so much so quickly, another executive speculated with a tone of being impressed: “whatever Yeine was doing...was working....I think execs were having their hands forced” (Interview #64). The careful selection of power-rich targets for D&I efforts was something that *RollInc*’s executive was able to accomplish by fully owning the hiring process. However, even D&I leaders with lower levels of official power could still find their way to similar results, as the earlier WheelCo and MatchPlat cases demonstrated.

Borrowing Power: Failure Cases (SortStart, FinWorld, and FinTech)

SortStart: Externalized Chief Diversity Officer

While the *SortStart* case demonstrated how power could be owned, the *MatchPlat* case how power could be temporarily rented to advance diversity, the *SortStart* case shows how a latent, highly-motivated ally in the workforce diversity movement could be left stranded, such that his only outlet remaining was to spend his resources on external (rather than internal) diversity initiatives. By all accounts from fellow executives and employees, the Engineering VP at SortStart was a strong believer in diversity norms. According to one African-American male coder he recruited: “I met with him and he told me: ‘Hey, diversity is really important to me,’ all this was a “stark contrast” to the coder’s immediate previous experience (Interview #31). The second Black coder described the VP as “helpful.” A fellow executive who was involved in the hiring for the first D&I position called him one of the “inside forces” with “passion” (Interview #47) who was coming together at a key moment with all the “external forces” of the 2013-2014 external social movements on tech sector diversity.

The head of engineering’s passion did not help him win an internal political struggle to define the role of Chief Diversity Officer as focused on the experience of employees – despite the organization having an “inclusion first” diversity philosophy focused on employee

experience. Even before the Chief Diversity Officer arrived, “there was a constant sort of struggle for who's in charge here, who's this person really reporting to, what are their priorities really” (Interview #43). In the end however, the HR executive who lost this battle reported that the experienced Head of Communications and Public Policy won out. He had long experience in politics: “He was very savvy, and I use that word sort of specifically. He had his own perspective on what was needed... which had its pluses and minuses...it just sort of got taken to a higher level of politicking” (Interview #47). No one beats a full-time professional practitioner at organizational politics.

When the Chief Diversity Officer arrived, and began reporting to the head of external communications, he lacked a strong relationship with two key organizations on whom he was structurally dependent: HR and line executive departments. Instead he was shunted into public roles, and thought leadership on diversity and inclusion. The HR Recruitment team was in a separate organization. Although he had 10 years’ experience in EEO compliance work, he did not appear to have the political skill to avoid heated disagreement with those on whom he would need to depend: “There were some moments when our head of diversity and our head of university recruiting had differing thoughts on what we should be doing, different views. And so there were some tensions there” (Interview #43).

In addition to negative ties with the recruitment team, the Chief Diversity Officer had no ties with the powerful Engineering Team and negative ties with the Black Employee Resource Group, which was the most active of the company’s ethnic communities (Interview #43, 44). Ahead of a company townhall meeting regarding the 2016 police homicides of Philando Castile and Alton Sterling, the Black ERG had completed careful planning for the sensitive event and a major set of memorializing art installations. The internal communications team had assumed that

the Chief Diversity Officer would have a natural role in such a townhall, because it was about a sensitive race-related societal issue and social movement. However, it was the Black ERG, having been so disappointed in the Chief Diversity Officer's work, that sidelined the (also Black) Chief Diversity Officer, granting him no role in the townhall meeting (Interview #43). The reason given was that he was judged by Black ERG leaders to be a low-performer:

he didn't know how to operate in a corporate space...And in a startup, you have to be a high performer. So he was able to coast and be a figure head, but he wasn't doing any of the actual work...He had a horrendous reputation with the taskforce because he never contributed anything (Interview #43).

All sources agreed that the Chief Diversity Officer role had been “externalized” at SortStart (Interviews #32, 43, 44, 47). The Engineering VP did not interfere in others' professionalized work. The early conversations between the technology departments and the recruiting department made it such that:

the Recruiting team could then just take that thread and run with it on their own. I'm fairly confident that they're continuing to push in that direction, expanding the set of schools we go to,...changes to our recruiting process to remove bias as much as possible (Interview #32).

Indeed, the hiring of women in data science improved dramatically, through use of a known, high-performance diversity practice. The introduction of *structured* interviews with quantitative scoring and blinding of applicant names for the coding *job auditions* dramatically improved the gender diversity recruitment results. As engineering worked directly with the recruitment team, it was unclear just what the Chief Diversity Officer was to do – and with him reporting to the communications team – the CDO's role became significantly “externalized” to focus on public relations, with nothing to do with employee experience and no contribution to tailoring diversity practices to fit the firm.

FinWorld: Externalized Chief Diversity Officer

Many D&I leaders believe that their status within the firm, and the concomitant cultural power gives them what they need to do the job when they do not own the hiring process. The startup scene in Silicon Valley is one in which the preferences of CEOs and the founding generation hold sway, such that even symbolically, people prize the ordinal number of their arrival into a high-growth firm, such was the case at FinWorld: “I joined FinWorld when there were like 70 people” (Interview #77). These early periods of time are often associated with very low specialization among the team members’ roles: “Every three to six months, my job would change” (Interview #77).

Tailoring diversity practices was a strong desire of the initial D&I leader, a White woman who had volunteered for the role, but it was elusive amidst the demand for benchmarking to legitimize new ideas. The official began comparing her work to others very frequently. “As I met more people in the industry, and I joined a roundtable with other people” (Interview #77). And she had some antipathy for things that sounded too much like what an HR professional would produce: “Most of the diversity solutions are so HR-driven and so corporate. You just have to wonder: ‘what’s the better way here’” (Interview #77)? Seeking to escape the “so HR” ways of doing diversity work, the official was nonetheless very attentive to external reference points in D&I and based her approach to ERGs after “doing a bunch of benchmarking and a ton of research on how does Intel do it...12 page doc of all the best practices that I could find online” (Interview #77). This external search fits the cosmopolitan mode (Gouldner, 1957), seeking ideas from one’s profession rather than one’s internal experiments, but is not necessarily the path to firm-specific innovation (Raffaelli & Glynn, 2014).

The official recognized a power differential but did not act upon it innovatively. “So this is a 100% influence role. I had credibility for being an old FinWorlder..., and knowing the

culture in that ...sense. So, I had a lot of relationships.” The target for deploying that cultural power was towards refinement of a low-performing legitimate diversity initiative: bias training, which was then made mandatory. Bias training is associated with even worse effects on average and feels new to people, but is based on really old disproven ideas (Frank Dobbin & Kalev, 2016b; Kalev & Dobbin, 2006). All the while, the person expressed pride in the close relationship they had with an Engineering Department leader who led recruiting. However, it is unclear that the first D&I official asked anything of him.

FinWorld continued to select diversity professionals with high cultural influence from their years of experience inside of FinWorld, but they were all low on diversity research knowledge and had no HR expertise. The high culture power choice for D&I official continued into the second generation of the role at FinWorld. The second hire was very close to the CEO (Interviews #74, #75). She too, was strongly attentive to the level of the position and making sure it was an executive-level role:

I had a pretty strong opinion that I didn’t think it should stay within campus recruiting, but it should be an elevated position, reporting either to our Head of People or to our CEO.

Having 0 years experience in HR, this 2nd powerful official likewise put emphasis on diversity training: “So we put at least 85%, I want to say it was higher, of our employees through unconscious bias training and ally skills workshops” (Interview #76). She became well-known as a trouble-shooter for thorny political issues at work, primarily involving external social movements. Said one Black employee:

“...she was able to get the CEO to tweet Black Lives Matter, to release a statement....and [White] people in the company were upset because they were like ‘why are we choosing this one?’ And the CEO defended it....And to see those two perspectives come head to head very often and to see how our head of diversity had to handle that it was almost shocking” (Interview #75)

However, these external activities did not drive diversity practice tailoring internally. Similar to other diversity specialist offices, the model at FinWorld was to have a small consultative group of “diversity business partners.” Rather than in MatchPlat, where the diversity team waited for executives to come to D&I, the culturally-powerful first and second D&I leaders at FinWorld actively sought to persuade the business leaders, yet so many were simply normatively skeptical of the value-through-diversity message. The line business executives did not believe that the D&I team’s consultation offers would add any value to their line work:

they had a whole thing in place that they could help you with that [diversity recruitment]. And they were shopping that around to different teams and some teams were like no we don't want this, I don't like this, and it feels we're lowering the bar (Interview #75).

Neither cultural capital derived from being an early hire at the firm (for the first D&I manager), nor power derived from being trusted by the CEO himself (for the second D&I executive) provided any leverage to force a line executive to accept the help placing a more diverse slate into jobs. Firms that do not tailor their initiatives can still achieve positive momentum on diversity topics through the signals their leaders send when taking a pro-diversity view is unpopular; and by sticking to the known high-performance practices, like was mostly achieved at *FinWorld*. One FinWorld executive, when asked point-blank whether he saw any innovation in FinWorld’s diversity programs said simply: “no,” but stated that it was important anyway to do good practices rather than seek to invent unproven ones.

Propositions: Borrowing Power

A great amount of practice-oriented literatures express regret that Chief Diversity Officers do not have more power (Williams & White, 2020). My findings suggest that having power can work if what they control is entry to the firm (SortStart), but not if their power is of a diffuse cultural variant (FinWorld). Chief Diversity Officers can borrow power, and I expect that

those with HR leadership backgrounds, especially in the power dynamics of having been an HR recruiter, might provide the savvy that can make the most of tight resources. As evident in Table 8, having an HR background in the experience of Chief Diversity Officers appeared to be associated, in this sample, not just with recognition of a power imbalance, but also with borrowing power behavior inside the firm. That leads us to conclude about the nature of this expertise:

- (1) Diversity specialists and CDOs with HR background are more likely to recognize their power dependence inside the organization.
- (2) Recognition of power dependence is an antecedent of borrowing power.
- (3) Political skill moderates the relationship between the diversity officer's recognition of power dependence and their successful achievement of tailored diversity practices.

5.3 EFFECTUAL AUTONOMY SEARCH

The next antecedent of tailored diversity practices to emerge from my interviews was effectuating autonomy. This construct was reported to us as involving creating a safe place within an organization for diversity-promoters to experiment, debate and learn from trial or pilot diversity-promotion efforts. Informants the worked around others to get an experiment going explained that they needed to “incubate” (Interview #64); or “pilot” (Interview #45) a new idea in a proactive effort to “make people rethink things” (Interview #57) and challenge assumptions about what makes a good D&I practice. These motivations to make a change came in multiple firm contexts as a result of conflict, but conflict is not the story we are told about how to put change on the agenda inside organizations.

Employee activism is an inherently constrained activity, combining high levels of insider expertise about the organization along with dependency upon it (Briscoe & Gupta, 2016).

Professional diversity specialists face competing impulses: “The tension between you want to be everything, but you don't want to get fired either. I've got kids to feed” (D&I Executive Interview #71). During observational ethnographic work at the 6th anniversary for a private diversity advocates network, some professionals in D&I lamented having spent time before the George Floyd protests of 2020 being “too much of a tempered radical,” silencing themselves while seeking to maintain their organizational positions (Meyerson, 2008). Indeed much of organizational behavior research recommends a careful approach. Effective individual change agents behave diplomatically through *issue selling behavior* (Dutton, Ashford, O'Neill, & Lawrence, 2001), according to the literature. Overcoming their own ambivalent feelings about having to speak up and risk being harmed by the label of being trouble-makers, change agent ambivalence is a hidden strength, allowing advocates to intuit the right language to use at the right time and in the right tone (Grant, 2013; Piderit & Ashford, 2003). They push boundaries where they can, but think carefully and remain mindful of the CEO's ideology (Briscoe et al., 2014; Gupta & Briscoe, 2020). Issue-sellers deploy legitimate ideas from the broader society (Creed & Scully, 2011; Weber & Soderstrom, 2015); in a calm manner, resisting the urge to de-regulate emotions and ‘tell it like it is’ (Grant, 2013).

By contrast, I find that innovative diversity-promoters (in MatchPlat; WheelCo, and RollInc) actually had confrontational approaches too, but they sequenced them carefully. Timid before they had local evidence, these diversity promoters were bold and confrontational after they had proven their approaches in a local experiment. When they engaged in an *effectual autonomy search*, claiming a space themselves, or when they were *granted autonomy*, they came up with tailored diversity practice approaches. Both paths worked. Having autonomous areas for experimentation provided an opportunity to test hypotheses without fear and to engage in joint

sensemaking among people with deep institutional background knowledge. These effectuators dropped ideas that failed without having suffered any reputational harm. When they moved into advocacy later on, effectuators were able to start their advocacy *after* already having local evidence (rather than evidence drawn from other companies in academic articles). On the other hand, less innovative approaches involved innovation spaces being identified, but not activated (SortStart Engineering & FinWorld's 1st D&I), or innovation space being restricted to individuals with no influence (FinCheck).

Table 10.**Effectuating Autonomy: Claiming the Space to Experiment***Employee Resource Group (ERG) Leaders' and Line Executives' Behaviors*

| Case | Employee issue selling? | Pro-diversity coalition conflicts? | Effectuate autonomy? | Tailored Practices |
|------------------|--|---|---|---------------------------|
| MatchPlat | Yes. A White woman employee trusted by CEO+1 Exec pointed out to him that his senior hires were all extrovert White men. | No. "[Exec] cared, he mentored a lot of us in the room. [Exec] was holding himself personally accountable...I think that's rare." -Black man, Employee, Black ERG Co-Founder | No. No need to effectuate it. Top-Down. "As a company we used my organizations to testbed a number of cultural things first because there happened to be a lot of takers who were interested in my org." -White man, Executive, ERG Sponsor | Yes |
| RollInc | No. | Yes. "[The 1 st D&I lead] knew enough to pitch that we were doing a lot of work in the D&I space...but we weren't really...I was bumping heads with her...so I ended up leaving the company." -Black woman, D&I specialist staff | Yes. "[1 st D&I] just kept telling us the CEO wanted OKRs from these groups...and we just kept pushing back...we're doing this on our own time and, if anything, we want to give you OKRs. -White woman, Director, TechERG Founder | Yes |
| WheelCo | No. Internal scandal drove diversity-promotion to the agenda. | Yes. "Because they were ERG leaders, I didn't know if they were activists or practitioners." -Black man, Director, 2 nd D&I Lead | Yes. "When leaders of the ERG become privy to information that might put the company at legal risk...awkward position... That's what I mean by 'stepping out of bounds.'" -Afro-Latina woman, Black ERG Co-Founder | Yes |
| SortStart | No. External scandal drove diversity-promotion to the agenda. | Yes. "He was the laziest head of diversity ever and in a startup you have to be a high performer. So he was able to coast as a figurehead, but...the actual work...that was coming from us [the ERGs], as well as the greater taskforce." -Black man, 4 th Black ERG Lead | No. "There was one person [2 nd D&I exec] who was coming into an unknown culture and being pulled in a lot of different directions. That's how I would summarize it." -White woman, Executive, 1 st D&I part-time lead | ⊖ |
| FinWorld | No. | No. "[2 nd D&I Exec] was able to get CEO to tweet black lives matter...and a lot of people within the company were upset...and the CEO defended it. That was the first time where I felt like wow, we have a CEO who's coming to bat for us." -Black woman, Employee, Black ERG participant | No. "[The 3 rd D&I Lead] put in all the processes...made us really stick to OKRs...but it was not our full time job... it was like burnout too of just doing a lot of this on top of your other job. -Black woman, Director, Black ERG Founder | ⊖ |
| FinCheck | Yes. "our CEO saw the research and he was like 'this is correlative research...other tech companies have been successful without having to prioritize it [diversity].'" | No. Avoidance. "At some point, we were like 'do we want to be a group that's also helping educate?' We've never figured out the answer...I can't give you a clear understanding of what [ERG] membership means." -Black man, Employee, ERG Co-Founder" | No. "There was no head of HR and so I was reporting to the COO, who wasn't a very present manager...It was a very 'you got to go figure this out' type of environment and it was a difficult place for me to be." -Black woman, Executive, 2 nd D&I Exec | ⊖ |

Effectuating Autonomy: Success Cases (RollInc, WheelCo)

RollInc: Direct Confrontation with Evidence

Through direct confrontations against the first D&I coordinator in HR, tech division executive Siah pushed boundaries to maintain autonomy for some experiments, with considerable discomfort: “Every step of the way, it was just a territory grab...even when things were good at the end” (Interview #71). First, HR attempted to grab the employee resource group’s territory, by standardizing their volunteer work using the same accountability forms as the company used for paid work:

“D&I kept coming to us and saying that they want to have a set of objectives and key results (OKRs) that they want to set out and accomplish every quarter for ERGs...especially if you’re asking for budget” (Interview #71).

Siah purposely resisted imposition of the task planning framework:

“And we just kept pushing back on her...we don't really have a lot of time to run these groups. We're doing this on our own time. And, if anything, we want to give you OKRs. We want to give the co-founders OKRs. We want to give engineering OKRs” (Interview #71).

Siah, the leader of a technical division (executive), a White woman, and convenor of underrepresented employees in the technical divisions (called TechERG) corralled together the director-level and higher leaders for several pilots, many of which failed. The failed pilots were “territory grabs,” because they included encroachment into HR domains, such as new ways to improve manager feedback narratives; procedures to control the quality of manager interviews with job candidates, and even developed their own records of employee demography. In the time before RollInc had released its demography data publicly, HR resisted the employee activists’ calls to see firm demographic data. Siah and the technical department directors effectuated their own approach:

“the data science director guy, he would come in with these crazy ass spreadsheets... literally his own visual data collection of every single person in the

org, because we didn't have official...you literally just go through and be like 'that's a woman; that's a Black person'...tick it in his spreadsheet" (Interview #71).

Using their unofficial demographic information, the technical directors attempted to launch but failed to succeed in a hiring initiative targeting the most under-represented groups.

They piloted yet another initiative, a redesign of the TechERG so that it had no further burdens on low-power employees. Instead, Siah would convene the directors themselves as a task force with required attendance – with individual contributor employees invited with the express purpose of bringing up problems for directors to attempt to solve.

And the stuff that we did at RollInc was like, the most change that I've seen that was catalyzed by individual contributors, and people without power in the organization. But that was because there was a specific group of people who did have power, whose job it was, was just to listen to them and do things for them (Interview #71).

The creation of a directors-level task force that would defend non-manager employee time made a difference. Task conflicts with HR served to define the boundary of Siah's technical divisions to allow the widest possible remit for their activities, and provided knowledge about key contingencies: which tailored ideas were so tailored that they would work only in parts of the company that had promotion systems that were rank-in-person (common in technical departments, where your pay matched the complexity of your work). The same diversity initiative, they noticed, did not translate into areas that were rank-in-position (also known as "req" promotions, where advancement required one to literally have a new job).

Conflicts did not disrupt innovation, but they did destroy relationships, such that that ultimately the several ERGs gathered together to express their distrust of Scimina, the first D&I coordinator, and to demand that Scimina be replaced. The source of distrust was instructive for the theory under development here. It's instructive to know why the ERGs formed in the first

place, and what was at stake if Scimina remained in power at a company that called itself progressive:

the things that drove me to create the employee resource groups weren't to get a special Black History Month placard, it was actually to figure out why was there such a misrepresentation of communities in tech buildings versus outside of tech buildings, and what was going on in terms of wealth, and this new gold mine (Interview #67).

The D&I coordinator had to be replaced if the various employee groups were to help the company live up to its own values. A D&I coordinator who dismissed the term “under-represented” to describe ethnic minorities (Interview #67); argued in principle for adding a “White History Month” because there were other cultural celebrations at work (Interview #71) were perhaps all completely forgivable issues of ideological disagreement.

By contrast, what was non-negotiable for the employee ringleader was Scimina’s lack of creativity and the lack of focused attention to the real problems of inequality at work – and outsourcing the entire problem out to consultants:

I think it was very much the bare minimum, it was like cut and paste, if you celebrate these events it's like hat tips to those cultures, but not really empowers them, or tackles the structural system, so I don't think that was in any way. Well actually, and at the same time they had brought in a consultant that was making the rounds (Interview #67).

To “cut and paste” one’s diversity program was a core negative judgment that came up in my interviews, indicating that the extent of program tailoring is likely an important source of cynicism about (diversity-related) organizational change.

The removal of Scimina became a collective demand by employee groups:

And so at some point, the other ERG leads in an ERG lead meeting...somebody called an ERG lead meeting without Scimina. And we all got together and they said, "We can no longer just let TechERG own this battle. We all have to be able to put our names on it." And so we wrote up a letter, we put all of our names on it. I ran it through my boss [VP Engineering] who was very close with the head of HR. And he said, "See, it's not just Siah. Now they want to have a meeting with

you...And by the time he [HR Chief] came to that meeting, he had removed Scimina from her post...she was not allowed to talk to us..." (Interview #71).

With the obstruction out of the way, Siah and the group of Tech Directors had the autonomy they wanted and tested a host of new ideas – opening up a period of innovation in D&I, but binding it within the technical divisions of the firm, a safe space to test ideas.

We [TechERG] benefited from the fact that we all worked in the same org. And so if you think about ‘I want to do something different for hiring’ for my ERG, and you're the Black ERG, and you represent every org in the company, how do you actually try something and see if it works? Where do you incubate something? And so ...TechERG [w]as this like great opportunity for us to try a program in engineering, and then expand it.

WheelCo: Establishing Autonomy After Getting “Layered”

The greatest obstacle the second D&I leader faced at WheelCo was that the Chief HR Officer regularly sought to restrict the activities of the 3-person D&I office. The restrictions took three forms. First, the CHRO prohibited the D&I leader from accessing employee demographic data, a major hindrance to tracking the company’s diversity. Second, the D&I leader intervened to prevent the D&I office from receiving donations of full-time equivalent positions from other departments.

I would secure it, and she would undue it. For example, the CFO approved me for an additional \$500K and my boss took that money and used it to hire a consultant to do work completely unrelated to diversity (Interview #71).

Similarly, when the time came to choose an executive that would supervise him, the D&I leader put his own name forward to be considered for the position, but was not chosen, despite having the explicit support of several members of the Board of Directors, and having the confidence of the very high-status, world-famous crisis consultant that was advising the firm. The D&I leader was not pleased to be “layered,” but he managed his prospects for future autonomy by referring a

top candidate to the search team, which had still not filled the position after declining him for the promotion:

She was my referral. I got the referral credit and everything. I called and said, 'Hey. I just want you to know I put your hat in the ring. I didn't ask you. Let me know if they reach out.' Because I knew [HR Chief] was a racist. This was my track list: one, she's [the referral was] really good, and two, maybe her race will help her here because [HR Chief] seems to prefer certain groups over others, in terms of my observations. Because she'd say the racist things to [only] Latinos, Latino/a folks, and Black folks (Interview #71).

Having experienced that his immediate boss tended to treat Black people like himself uncivilly, the D&I leader "really had no one to report it too...the HR hotline wouldn't work because [as CHRO] she could find out who was reporting her." The D&I leader found an excellent non-Black alternative and successfully lobbied for her hiring at the firm as his own boss. The D&I leader found a way to make things better by shaping his demotion in a way that would limit harm to himself and his ideas:

It personally was hard for me...and for me internally it was difficult too...to get layered. But my approach was that I needed to be mature about this. She allowed me the aircover to do the things I wanted to do. I was able to get the space and distance in order to be okay. It was like a gentlemen's gentlemen's agreement to do no harm (Interview #71).

In the aftermath of a diversity-related internal scandal, an external crisis manager agreed with the Board of Directors that the diversity function should grow significantly beyond the 3-person team that the first D&I leader supervised. One year later, he achieved autonomy to experiment with a company-wide, inclusive manager behaviors study. He achieved this through negotiation with the new D&I executive that he had gotten hired above him. The ordeal of being micromanaged and undermined by the CHRO took its toll and soured him on the company:

This is what many other D&I leaders experience, but perhaps do not share...I've never been treated so badly in my life and endured it (Interview #71).

Achieving autonomy is not a pleasant or apolitical process if the HR leadership is hostile to the goals of the diversity program. The CHRO ultimately lost their job due to widespread employee concern that her behavior and decision making towards employees was biased by race. The D&I initial executive (a Black man) remained in place years afterward working for the Asian-American woman he had referred to the position. He received a promotion to executive rank at another firm in the same region.

MatchPlat: Inheriting Autonomy, Not Effectuating It

At MatchPlat, the official place to experiment with new ideas was the “center of excellence” (D&I Staff Interview #58), where programs were not owned by D&I, but were developed and managed in liaison relationships to the more powerful business units (D&I Staff Interviews #39, #59). The practice-tailoring ideas were not generated in this official, autonomous incubator, however. They were generated instead by normal HR staffers outside the D&I office who experimented within the autonomy they had when working with the pro-diversity Sales department. Practice tailoring was made easier when working with a department whose leader talks non-stop about needing new diversity approaches. Lobbying is no longer really necessary, and a bias towards experimental action is legitimate. A recruiter with a highly proactive personality, Enya, took advantage of the autonomy he had been granted in a fast-hiring environment where others were too busy to care about his work. He developed evidence, and thereby won over an entire global department to his new methodology for hiring.

Enya (a Mexican-American) ended up responsible for hiring a global sales team talented enough to complete a global rollout of a new software product paid feature, and also to staff up a customer relations organization that would answer the needs of a 70,000 product users at one key external client firm. Enya piloted a different approach to recruitment for two company

departments to focus them on blinded competence-based criteria. Every task was urgent. “I just inherited this organization one day. It was like crazy-town when it came to hire” (Interview #71).

The job requirements for the sales teams were Enya’s early target for change at MatchPlat, who pressed powerful hiring managers to redefine the preferred job criteria, with Enya noticing that hiring managers feared that such changes would “lower the bar.” For example, one of his liaison hiring managers preferred candidates who had previously sold software as a service (SaaS) at a major high-status software firm. The *de facto* qualification for doing the new job in high-growth MatchPlat, was to have done the job in slow-growth established firms.

However, in the company’s high-growth context, with the organization itself “super undefined...changing all the time” (Interview #71), it was more logical, Enya thought, to broaden the search to candidates who had demonstrated that they were salespersons “comfortable with ambiguity...a self-starter... highly ambiguous environments” (Interview #71) especially outside the technology sector, where labor would be supplied more cheaply. Searching for a quality of *experience in ambiguity* in addition to strong, objective, sales records, became the two guideposts for Enya’s recruitment efforts.

A good example of a quality would be like the sales organization that I was supporting at MatchPlat: it was growing really, really fast; there were a lot of changes happening; there was a lot of building. If you were looking at an employee that spent the last 10 years at, let's say Microsoft, right? Super well established, ton of structure, ton of support...there's probably a playbook for every fucking thing you can imagine.... look at your organization [as an example of traits MatchPlat needed] (Interview #57).

Enya simply adopted his own criteria and reported the results later to the hiring managers in four cities he was supporting across North America. Facing difficult decisions at high velocity, hiring

managers tended to add inefficiencies to the process to cope with their uncertainties, while Enya hoped to reduce such additional steps by being more sure of what the selection criteria should be:

One thing that hire managers love to do is they'll interview someone and [say] they're 'not sure.' They're like: 'let's throw in another interview.' And so the problem is that one creates more opportunities for bias to creep in (Interview #71).

Making a powerful opportunity out of frustrating, low-consistency hiring manager interview feedback, Enya saw the low quality interviews as an opportunity to bring about a brand new process across North America.

It was at a time it was really busy. I was like, I'm just going to wait and kind of gather data right now (Interview #71).

Gathering local information on broken processes, Enya looked for patterns in the experiences of customer service regional executives doing high-velocity hiring and interviewing.

There would be three panelists on the panel. All three of them would say something different. One person would look at something as a strength. And somebody else would look at it [the same issue] as a weakness. I'm like 'how am I getting such diametrically opposed feedback from the same [interview] panel?' It's like you all should be looking for the same thing... You need to make sure that everyone is on the same page of what we're actually testing for. Which I think is really easy, you're moving so fast and you got so many interviewers that a lot of times you can just assume that they know [what they're looking for], when they really don't (Interview #71).

Seizing the opportunity of bad performance from the chaotic hiring period, Enya negotiated a new process with the customer service executives - focusing on simpler lists of jobs requirements, specific qualities of prior experience needed - all based on what information was easy to access right away: what behaviors top-performers did currently in their current work.

You have top performers right now that don't meet the criteria that you're setting out right now. Really this stuff isn't measuring what's necessary for success... We already have people in-role. We already have people that are crushing it. Let's look at them and use them as our rubric basically. Let's look at what's here already. So qualities kind of have to match up.... It was like, new criteria. You

know what we did was instead of looking at what we wanted, it was like let's look at the top 10 performers in the org globally and figure out what makes them predisposed for success (Interview #71).

Ultimately, Enya got the customer service executives themselves to try a completely new, simpler, criteria deployment and candidate interview process, and to roll it out in a top-down fashion across the region. They legitimated Enya's approach by granting Enya a speaking slot at the quarterly customer service leaders' meeting.

What ended up happening we did a total redesign of the interview process. The steps in the process. The amount of information that we gave them to prepare for, for like presentations. The criteria, all that stuff. Completely changed it (Interview #71).

No one called HR to ask Enya's boss for permission - they simply acted (a move that would cost cause Enya some problems later).

It was like here's eight problems that I've seen in our interview process and here's three suggestions for how we can improve them....To their credit, they were like, all right, it's clear you put a lot of time and energy into this...I had the director on board. I had the senior manager on board. It was like at this point it was no longer coming from me, it was coming from their leaders. So like they were going to do it. It was more of like, here's the inform. Here's the new way that we're doing things.

Building on that success of achieving a more diverse, higher quality, and cheaper labor pool in the customer service area, Enya took a similar approach to the Sales division rapid-hiring tasks. Enya's first approach was typical issue-selling behavior towards directors in Customer Service. Later, his success made him bolder when he addressed the Sales Department, where a senior executive, Itempas, had laid the foundation for everyone to try new things on D&I.

In the finalist hiring phase for the Sales department, Enya staged deliberate confrontations with hiring managers that seemed to be slipping into old habits, linking his more confrontation approach theoretically to one rooted in stable individual differences among HR recruiters:

I think recruiters in general are people pleasers. When you think about, we deal with people all day. They don't feel comfortable...they're probably not as inherently predisposed to push back on things [as I am]. That's not really my personality. I don't want to take shit from anybody (Interview #71).

In one particularly-egregious example, a hiring manager gave vague negative feedback regarding an African-American candidate with stellar objective sales performance, and the hiring manager did not want this outlier sales high-performer included in the finalist interview pool.

Black guy, really, really, really successful salesperson. He interviewed for this brand new team that we were building. And the hiring manager, he was like 'I just have some concerns.' He was a 'no' on him. I was very surprised to see he was 'no,' because...this guy is amazing. Might be the best candidate we've seen so far. The manager was like, 'I just have some big question marks around communication.'

The matter was resolved in Enya's characteristically confrontational approach:

I was like: 'Okay, let's peel this one back a little bit: he [the African-American job candidate] was the number two rep in North America out of like 116 people in his segment. When you say he's got poor communication, I don't see how those two facts are compatible... Is it...style? Could it be that it's actually just that you're a White man from Ireland and he's a Black man from Detroit? Is that maybe the bigger issue?' Then it was like pause, and see what he says...Then, he paused and said, 'maybe you're right, let's push him forward.' We brought him on site: [he] crushed the on-site [interview and audition], [and he] ended up being the top performer on the team.

Enya was a creative, assertive and innovative problem solver in his low-level HR recruitment role. However, the receptivity he received from upper-level managers was not likely the product of his own individual personality. Instead, the situation shaped by the three top executives at MatchPlat was likely an important precursor that allowed Enya's anti-conformity to go unpunished, and to be encouraged.

Adding a highly proactive, free-thinking personality into this context where diversity experimentation is already welcome results in some attribution errors, but they are harmless. Believing it was the person (myself) rather than the situation (my boss's boss's boss's boss) that

made the achievement, might even provide significant motivational boosts encouraging future tailoring of hiring practices to meet firm needs.

The strategic impact of having a small set of clear competence-based criteria, scanning the labor pool quickly, and broadening the range to candidates from any industry or region, was to increase the diversity and decrease the cost of the entire process.

We ended up hiring people faster. They ended up being more successful in role. They ended up being cheaper. It was literally a win across the board (Interview #71).

Enya's remarks on unintended consequences is important in this regard, as there is a potential link between high-performance diversity practices that achieve greater diversity, and the persistence of between-race compensation inequality. A 'success' for diversity practice tailoring, and "success" for practice performance at increasing racial diversity can still be a "failure" with respect to compensation inequality.

SortStart: Having Autonomy, But Not Effectuating It

The SortStart and FinWorld cases demonstrates the normative complexity of "failing" at diversity practice tailoring – it isn't everything that matters. Failing to invent good practices in-house does not mean that one cannot achieve great outcomes by copying-and-pasting the evidence-based ways to improve racial and gender diversity outcomes. They do require creating a staff position to manage them, but their elements are very similar across organizations, and very effective at increasing gender and racial workforce diversity over time (Frank Dobbin & Kalev, 2016b; Kalev et al., 2006). The most popular turnkey programs (diversity consultant hires, implicit bias trainings) are both popular and counterproductive (Frank Dobbin et al., 2011). Meanwhile, there are some turnkey approaches that are shockingly effective, but are far less popular, namely: mentorship and internship programs.

At SortStart, a manager attempted to derail an HR recruiter and Black ERG co-founder, Zhakkarn, and their efforts to pilot a new mentorship program, which Zhakkarn dealt with handily in ways that redounded positively on Zhakkarn's reputation and negatively to the blocking manager's credibility. Entering fast-growing, well-funded, SortStart after experience at a more established tech company, Zhakkarn found there was wider scope for innovation and speed of decision making in general:

Big difference in terms of speed, productivity. I would say opportunities for learning. Mistakes. Lots and lots and lots and lots and lots of org changes because they're quick to iterate and fail. They fail fast, which I think is a good thing. Challenges with leadership always, because everybody's kind of a first time leader and they grow up inside of the company. So more challenges, just not more but different kinds of challenges with leadership. But full of ideas, full of resources, tons of money to throw at lots of different pet projects. Yeah. It comes with a certain vibrancy and optimism that I think is really, it's good for a company (Interview #45).

In advance of the external scandal that eventually seized the company, Zhakkarn worked directly from HR with the pro-diversity White male Engineering VP to create a new mentorship and career pipeline program in the technical divisions of the company, at a time pre-dating the Chief Diversity Officer's appointment.

When they first started doing public releases on diversity numbers, SortStart was a part of that. And when I joined, my charter was to, I supported the one specific group [Engineering VP's group] and their charter was to bring more Black people into that particular department. And so we built an entire program around that... they were comfortable putting budget behind it, they were comfortable... They gave me budget to run the program. They gave me PR resources. They gave me headcount. They did all the right things structurally to make this program a reality (Interview #45).

In other words, Zhakkarn was granted autonomy and resources from the very start. Not everything has to be done in a scrappy entrepreneurial manner – sometimes just funding programs according to an existing turnkey approach works. By taking a “grow your own” approach (Interview #45), SortStart sought out recent graduates from computer science before

they made career moves and firm-specific human capital accumulations that would shift them away from SortStart's hiring pool:

They graduate from college and then a company like I don't know, Macy's [tech team] will do a really great job at recruiting them. Well, we don't hire people from Macy's. So you've got all these Black people who are taking jobs that are presented to them. These are some of the only jobs that are presented to them. And now they're off down this path that will eventually lead to them being not qualified for our particular opportunities. Because we look for very specific people from very specific places that look a very specific way... They may do well at IT companies, but they won't do well in Silicon Valley... Not one of them has enough transferrable skills to work in our company because what they do and how they do it is different (Interview #45).

There was industry-specific social and human capital that needed cultivation at an early stage before Black computer science job candidates had made investments in other sectors such as IT consulting work or doing tech work inside big retail firms – neither of which would prepare them for Silicon Valley:

The gap isn't that they can't do it, the gap is that they've never been trained to do it... When you interview them, they don't speak the language. And you're like, 'oh,' I know in an instant, they're not going to make it..... None of these professors, none of these people running those universities have ever come to Silicon Valley to find out what we're doing. And so they're teaching the wrong stuff (Interview #45).

The new mentorship and internship program results for the technical departments were significant. The single staff person who continues to run the program even survived the 2020 pandemic-related job cuts. The investment is one that the company continues to make even amidst a downturn in the global economy. The reason is the Engineering VP's resources and their legitimate autonomy to what they like with their division of the company:

The only relationship that ever mattered to me was the very first person who supported the program [Engineering VP]. He was the person who was the executive champion. Because I was like, 'this person actually means what they say.' They mean it, they want it, they want to build it together. And I've never met a White person who had that much kind of skin in the game (Interview #45).

Zhakkarn reported to a supervisor who wanted nothing to do with the program simply because he was not a creative thinker, in her assessment. However, her external powerful ally in the Engineering Department had significantly more clout than her direct supervisor in the HR department. She easily navigated around him by doing her work in the technical divisions.

So it turned out that he became one of the people that we just navigated around and told him about the success after it was done and that he had to get on board. So that's kind of what we did. We just did it without him, without his support. And it worked, it was great. But it wasn't because of diversity [racism]. He just had a lack of vision in general...now this program is fully functional and fully supported and it's now in the archives of the Obama administration [a summit on racial diversity in the tech sector] that we did a good thing...so it's kind of like: 'You want to say no to that?' Fine with me. It doesn't matter to me – we got it done (Interview #45).

Propositions: Effectuating Autonomy

Overall, these case studies join with new research suggesting that managerial discretion, rather than being only a tool for bias, can also create space for reducing bias in certain circumstances below the level of top management teams (Abraham, 2017; Frank Dobbin et al., 2015). It is notable that finding autonomous space to test out new diversity practices is challenging in a region (San Francisco Bay) and a sector (mobile software technology) that are known for having the capacity to generate innovations. At the very least; however, if a firm cannot find time to tailor its own practices, it can focus its attention on mentorship/internship programs which advance diversity and also can be done with a single staff person in a turnkey manner.

- (4) There is a significant positive relationship between program design autonomy and diversity goal performance (whether or not the autonomy is *effectuated*, claimed, or *granted* from the top-down).

(5) For firms that furnish low levels of autonomy to practice designers, the link between autonomy and diversity outcomes is significantly moderated by the behavior of the diversity specialist, such that those effectuating autonomy where none existed will achieve more diversity than those who do not or cannot do so.

5.4 DESIGN SPRINTS

Tailoring Executives Co-Create with ‘Program Users’ under Tight Timelines

Attention is precious, and executive attention to workforce diversity is episodic, according to participants in these two studies. The question is therefore how to make use of high-level attention in a way that makes space for tailored approaches even in short timelines. The companies that did an intensive focus for a short period of time that was inclusive of the ‘program users’ ended up creating tailored approaches rather than simply hiring some turnkey-provider diversity consultant. Discussion of the authenticity of firms’ diversity efforts was a frequent discussion in the confidential social gatherings of ethnic and race-based ERGs (to which I was invited and participated in 2016-2019). Diversity practice tailoring involved going beyond having authentic expressions about societal progress (or the slow pace thereof) in the workplace. Instead, employees that burdened themselves with the additional job of practice design, together with powerful elites, successfully brought about tailored diversity practices. Those that conserved their energy or had no elite partner with whom to engage did not and could not develop tailored diversity practices.

Diversity practices are of high interest to an industry under fire. Unprompted, nearly every participant in the tech sector raised the 2013-2014 period of intense media and Reverend Jesse Jackson’s external social movement focus on tech sector’s diversity problems but judged it to be just an episode (Interviews #34, 41, 42, 48, 50, 52, 55, 58, 67, 70, 71 were especially clear). They likewise also raised two affective events that increased the likelihood of generating new diversity practices on a temporary basis of heightened executive attention to diversity: (1) the July 2014 police-involved homicides of Alton Sterling in Louisiana and Philando Castile in Minnesota (Interviews #32, 38, 39, 43, 44, 48, 55, 57, 74, 78, and 83 most clearly); and (2) the

April 2017 announcement of the (first attempted) Trump administration suspension of an Obama administration-initiated immigration policy (Interviews #4, 43, 46, 57, 62, 71, 78, and 79 most explicitly). The policy provided administrative reprieve to minor children migrants who could not consent to entering the United States without inspection, known as Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA). The spread across organizations for both events was wide both for the issue primarily shared by Black employees as well as Hispanic employees.

Racial minorities often find their participation in these groups to be emotionally meaningful; however, the literatures on diversity practices and practice innovation from networks both cast doubt on whether such ethnic group gatherings can help to tailor an organizational practice. The psychological benefits of welcoming, expressive groups are well known (Leonardelli, Pickett, & Brewer, 2010), but are such groups instrumentally *useful* for tailoring ideas? We know from network approaches that tailored ideas tend to come from those in a brokerage position between groups, rather than from full membership of one particular group (Burt, 2004; Granovetter, 1977). Network theorists would predict that ERG participants (compared to ERG-avoiders) would be disadvantaged in workplace advancement (Podolny & Baron, 1997); develop fewer tailored ideas (Burt, 2004); and therefore be less effective at organizational change initiatives, at least in established, bureaucratic firms (Battilana & Casciaro, 2012). All told, network theory is very doubtful about the use of racial and ethnic constituency groups to develop new ideas, or to execute on implementing the ideas.

By contrast, I find that firms that developed tailored diversity practices treated the creation of the practice much as they treat the development of their own new products: with the user experience actively engaged during only brief intense work sprints, while racial and ethnic issues were salient features of their environment. In the three practice innovation success cases, I

found two broad types of design sprints: (a) sequential unemotional economic exchanges (example below of RollInc's Hispanic/Latino/a ERG) and (b) synchronous program design among emotionally-bonded program designers (MatchPlat Black and Hispanic ERG experience are below). In either type, the employee resource groups (ERGs) played an innovative role in this 6-case sample. Emotional events in the political climate impacted all six of the workplaces, they were interpreted by employees in groups, but only in some of the groups at some firms did that collective emotional experience lead to design sprints and practice tailoring inside the firm.

Table 11.

Design Sprints: Creating Diversity Initiatives While Race News Salience is High
Employee Resource Group (ERG) Leaders' and Line Executives' Behaviors

| Case | ERG founders, origination, focus | Diversity practice design(ers) | Diversity practice design sprint? | Tailored Practices ? |
|-----------|--|--|---|----------------------|
| MatchPlat | Black ERG 4 founders; bottom-up; internal community coping; external recruitment | Joint 1 CEO+1 Exec 19 Directors | No → Yes (Hispanic and Black). “We went from thinking that we could solve the problem ourselves, us, as department heads to...holy smokes, we should have of course involved the constituents.” -Exec, design team member | Yes |
| | Hispanic ERG 1 founder; bottom-up; internal community; external recruitment | 10 from ERGs 1 D&I Staff | “...We used employee volunteers as well as some functional roles to execute on it...all in-house.” -Black ERG member, design team member | |
| RollInc | Black ERG 3 founders; bottom-up; internal org change & community; external Black tech community | Tit-for-Tat 2 CEO+1 Execs 1 D&I Exec | Yes (Hispanic): “We were scaling globally...we provided volunteer members who did hours of translation work for free... We need to make sure that you were respecting the dignity of the folks who were putting in the time to volunteer these [Spanish] translations...So I had an ‘in’ there with [CHRO]...we pitched our idea for a one hour learning and development time...every week...that means time off phones...one of the other wins that came out of that was... to decrease the transfer policy from 12 months to six months.” -Hispanic ERG Co-Founder | Yes |
| | Hispanic ERG 3 founders (outside SF); bottom-up; internal community & job advancement | 3 from Hisp. ERG | No (Black): “At that time [consulting co] was the ‘it’ name in D&I ...and they brought them in...I was left very much out... I wasn't invited in their room.” -Black woman, D&I team | |
| WheelCo | Black ERG 1 founder; top-down; internal community & internal org change | Joint 1 D&I Lead 2 ERG Leads | Yes (Black): “That was probably the most important thing I ever did...getting their ideas and codifying policies... We had no leaders. The ERGs were stable while the leaders weren't. -Black man, D&I Lead | Yes |
| | Hispanic ERG 1 founder; top-down; internal community & job advancement | | No (Hispanic): “So my particular ERG has always had fluctuating leadership....” -Latino man, Hispanic ERG Founder | |
| SortStart | Black ERG 2 founders; bottom-up; internal org change & community | Joint 18 Execs/Mgrs. 1 D&I Exec | No. Task force crafted new external work to fight discrimination against Black consumers, but not internal diversity issues: ““You have a black [external] issue and you don't have any black people [internally] with a seat at the table to inform what response you're doing.”” | ⊙ |
| | Hispanic ERG 1 founder; bottom-up; internal community & job advancement | 1 Crisis Consult. | -Black man, 4 th Black ERG leader | |
| FinWorld | Black ERG 1 founder; bottom-up; internal community | Solo D&I Exec only | No. ERG set limits: “Something I always said...especially around Black History Month which I came to loathe: ‘The best thing you can do for Black people at FinWorld is be really good at your job.’” -Black ERG Founder | ⊙ |
| | | | | |
| FinCheck | Black ERG 1 founder; bottom-up; social chatroom | Solo Consultant | No. “FinCheck kind of looked for who is...well respected in the industry: ‘Let's talk to them,’ because that [firm] was already chosen by the time I got into the project.” -Black Employee Chatroom Founder | ⊙ |

Design Sprint Success Cases: MatchPlat, RollInc, and WheelCo

MatchPlat: The Social Exchange Path (Emotional)

In the section on the first construct, borrowing power, I detailed the experience of an executive's awakening to racial justice and gender fairness issues, which, once informed, he simply "would not stop talking about" (Interview #61). Because of his passion, the senior executive, Itempas, contributed substantial financial resources as well as organizational autonomy that many colleagues used to incubate ideas. There was one more resource; however, that Itempas secured in heaps precisely because of his frequent emotional pro-diversity messaging: minority employee discretionary time and energy.

Minority employees throughout the company – globally – were strongly drawn to Itempas. In our research interview, the senior executive spoke of his "personal mission" to "rectify" that past behavior of "unconscious trespasses," with the fervor of a convert to a new faith (Interview #61) – views that he did not, according to witnesses, keep to himself - ever.

Itempas would say that at all-hands [meetings]: 'I hired a team of people...I didn't have any women on my team' It was really inspiring to see his journey (Former Employee #48).

Itempas is super charismatic, very well-respected, known as a leader, compassionate, gets shit done (Current Employee #51).

Itempas cared...So I feel like he Itempas felt personally accountable, which I think is rare... I'll forever be grateful to Itempas for that (Former Employee #49).

The above employees were among the least cynical I spoke to MatchPlat, but the executive's admirers extended even to the most cynical – victims of (what was hinted at to be) racially-motivated physical violence in the workplace that resulted in a legal settlement and departure of a high-performing, but abused African-American male employee, Terry (pseudonym). Having entered the firm "on fire for the company," he was willing to brush past small "micro-aggression" racial taunts in the effort to not disturb team dynamics, such as when upon winning a

coveted prize for top performance in the hemisphere, colleagues awarded him “the Carlton Award,” and enjoyed the [humorous to them] fact that he was simultaneously a (low racial status) African-American and also a (high social capital status) elite preparatory school graduate (Interview #50). Terry’s patience remained intact. It wore thin only later on, in the aftermath of an undisclosed and macro racist attack at work for which two White colleagues were investigated and then fired by the company (Interview #50). Even Terry spoke fondly of executive Itempas, on whose watch this all occurred, while blaming his own mid-level bosses:

This is the best executive I've ever had the opportunity to work under. And I would say unfortunately as you went further down the chain, not necessarily all the employees reflected the openness and the brilliance of your Itempases so to speak...(Terry, Interview #50)

Practically, this tailoring resource – critical minority “user feedback” – is what drove an important course correction, and creation of a highly-tailored diversity practice that inspired minority employees throughout the firm.

No matter how enlightened, ally Executive #61 still fell back on a traditional top-down decision implementation pattern.

It was not as clear in the moment obviously. But we went from thinking that we could solve the problem ourselves, us, as department heads to... holy smokes, we should have of course involved the constituents who were trying to work alongside of in this case (Itempas, Executive #61).

It did not take long for the executive to change his approach. Having embedded himself as the official executive liaison to the Black employee resource group. Having thereby increased his number of Black colleagues and friends he was personally close to “by 5x, maybe more” (Interview #61) Itempas had fostered a group that was both deeply admiring of him and willing to volunteer.

A total of about 10-12 employee volunteers and D&I staffers began a “program team,” an association of many individuals who all took credit for the efforts, showing truth in President Kennedy’s assessment that success “has many fathers, but failure is an orphan.”

I was part of the program team at LinkedIn that created what we call the [tailored] program, as was [Employee #52]...you should talk to him (Former Employee #57).

And I built that program (Former Employee #52).

Yeah. Her name is Enefah...she was the one...she developed the program and ran it by Itempas. They’re still doing it...I had the opportunity and privilege of being a part of the first cohort. (Former Employee #48)

The new participatory approach proved helpful. The network of highly energized followers, in addition to the grateful professional D&I specialists had input into the design. Itempas was met with widespread volunteerism precisely because people believed in his motives – again – with even the victims of anti-Black racial attacks under his ultimate leadership voicing full-throated support for him as an inspiring leader.

The result of an intense project design sprint team effort was a cohort-based leadership development program, targeted specifically at how things really work at the evolving high-growth firm, and exclusively set up for the benefit of Black and Latino/a/Hispanic high-potential employees. The result: this program had about a “50% promotion rate” coming out of it (Interviews #39, 48 and 52). The program was tested first in the sales department twice, and then began pilots in the other 2 major departments. The 6-month relationship-building component partnering executives with non-manager minorities in a practical job crafting project. It helped the employees incubate concrete ideas of their own and then provided them a White ally executive network that defended their strategic initiatives from poachers and credit-stealers. The in-house

provision of strong bonds with senior-level allies left the program graduates with “an incredible internal network,” (Interview #52), but the benefits were not simply direct.

The program’s continuation appears to have indirect impact on the impressions it leaves with non-participant minorities at the firm. The continued follow-up behaviors by executives’ years after their cohort matching inspires confidence that the company’s diversity commitments are sincere. The following comments are from non-beneficiary observers of the program:

I think that really does take it to a whole other level up, because I mean you are investing in your employees... the recruitment pieces kind of funnel into the whole company, but for development really, I don't see that as much as other companies (Interview #56).

It’s really investing in our employees, saying we want to create the next leaders of the organization, so let's invest in our talent and make sure we're doing that, right? And whether they're staying at MatchPlat or going off somewhere else, we're helping invest in your development, so you're going to be great no matter where you're at, right (Interview #39)?

Especially for Latinos, and especially for Blacks, like there’s just not a ton of folks...and so, it was inspiring to see my organization focus on that (Interview #55).

Much like general attention to diversity issues, the program itself is built in an episodic rhythm.

It is intensely demanding of executive time, but only in brief periods.

RollInc: The Economic Exchange Path (Unemotional)

Forging an elite bond of trust across hierarchical levels required a public solidarity signal and social trust-filled exchanges at MatchPlat. But quiet instrumental exchanges at WheelCo and RollInc were an alternate pathway to the sprint behavior. At WheelCo and RollInc cases, the new practices developed in a tit-for-tat pattern more common to models of economic rather than social exchange. In fact, the job demands on a voluntary Hispanic group became a serious concern that an enterprising labor attorney, in a non-startup context, might consider wage theft. During the period of RollInc’s second D&I leader, who had been the first Black ERG leader, the

eventual founder of the company's Hispanic ERG started work at an office in the eastern United States, disconnected from the intense headquarters fights about diversity norms that had preceded her arrival to the firm. Noticing during orientation that there were official ERGs for women and Black employees, but not yet Hispanics, the new hire decided to try to reach out to the second D&I leader to begin creation of a new ERG. With the ERG leadership key nodes in place at headquarters, the Pacific Northwest, the east coast, and the Southern U.S. offices all on a workplace Slack channel, the Hispanic ERG launched officially with a focus on efforts to do educational programming examining the "real story" of Cinco de Mayo - a holiday whose U.S.-based customs of drinking had led to concerns about inappropriate ethnic jokes in the workplace (Interviews #62, 65, and 66). The team also began work to project plan the company's first official all-office recognitions of Hispanic Heritage Month in the fall and looked for ways that the ERG could help the company.

RollInc's experience of hyper growth was with a mobile application that was growing its user base city-by-city, with assessments growing that the Spanish-speaking markets inside the United States and abroad in Latin America would be major firm opportunities. Meanwhile, the Hispanic/Latino/a ERG's membership base was highest in the places with customer support roles inhabited by Latino/a/Hispanic employees: the Southern office. One of the first programs the ERG launched to demonstrate its sensitivity to business needs was the all-volunteer "translation workshops" program.

So, before the app had been localized into Spanish, we actually decided to come together as community members who work at RollInc and speak Spanish to start creating the voice of RollInc in Spanish. And-... Like trying to capture...like a certain tone. So, the RollInc tone in the RollInc brand is really huge. We didn't want that to get lost in translation, literally. So, we would convert into Spanish in a way that we felt was authentic to the voice we were carrying in English (Interview #62).

Had RollInc hired an external translator, the tacit knowledge of the company's brand might have been lost. Yet, some ERG Slack channel members expressed concern about wage theft in their new volunteerism:

Members who did hours of translation work for free...how much of this should be volunteering, and how much should it be that you need to hire someone to do this? Having those conversations was crucial” (Interview #66)

At this stage, the People Department (HR) had taken note of the very low employee engagement scores for Hispanic/Latino/a employees in call centers and also took notice of the high volunteerism from Hispanic/Latino/a employees (Interviews #62, 65, and 66). This set the stage for economic exchange. The opening gift of job crafting to include voluntary translation work implicitly demanded reciprocity. Appropriate reciprocity could have been hard to price, however with some ERG members of the view that what was at stake was fundamental dignity:

So I could talk to my VP [of diversity] and my CPO [chief people officer]...We need to make sure that you were respecting the dignity of the folks who were putting in the time to volunteer” (Interview #66).

A more developed, experienced HR team (compared to its earlier conflictual history of the TechERG one year previously) and a powerful executive diversity executive jointly found a bargain that worked for the Hispanic call center employees.

HR first converted the job of the Southern office's Hispanic/Latino/a leader's translational side work into a full-time position: “And so what was really cool was I was able to tie my role, my actual job, to my ERG work. It was very synchronous. I look back on that time and I feel so blessed. It was also, like, the most challenging timing of my life.” The ERG leader who had spearheaded Spanish branding helped to “build the Spanish safety world” and then transitioned into a supervisory role where she monitored process improvement for Spanish language customer care and emergency safety needs for app users. HR included language

differential pay in the new role, enhancing the economic status of future hires in a growing department in the Southern office.

In addition to a very practical organizational change that enhanced Spanish-language customer experience, the HR team and the customer service organization were receptive to a test of an HR practice customization that disproportionately benefited their Hispanic employees.

In the first ever ERG lead Roundtable with the execs, we pitched our idea for a one-hour learning & development time, that every individual contributor would get every week. So, that ended up being a \$1.4 million investment that the company made, because that means time off-the-phones (Interview #66).

Coming in the wake of a job crafting sprint that enhanced the company brand during a strategic global expansion, the HR team and customer organization accepted the pilot. The training time pilot was more than a pay-back for past volunteerism, because it also answered an HR challenge: low employee engagement scores in surveys for Southern office call center workers, who were mostly Hispanic:

You're kind of caged in there. It can be really isolating...and that's the problem that we solved for (Interview #66).

The experience of Latino/a/Hispanic customer service workers improved quickly: "So by the next round of feedback, the engagement scores went up." Extensive benchmarking of practices with friends across the tech sector occurred after the practice was adopted, and appeared to confirm the uniqueness of this practice at RollInc:

No other company that we did research on that we found that rolled out a learning and development program for their call center associates, like no one else had done that (Interview #66).

The pilot program endured.

The HR team also approved a change in policy that had the practical effect of increasing

Hispanic/Latino/a promotions into higher-status roles in the rapidly-expanding firm. Promotions

are more difficult in that section of the company, where one's pay rank was determined by the job requisition rather than by the person's own skill advancement (the latter was common for knowledge workers in the technology organization). The policy change allowed for more job mobility among the customer service team members after they had completed their learning and development human capital increases:

So if you're an internal employee, you have to be in your role for 12 months typically before you can even be eligible to apply for a new role (Interview #66).

In this growing company context, there were lots of new job requisitions being announced, but the internal labor market had been frozen, had restricted competition from internal job candidates who had invested in improved skills. So, the company reduced this 12-month barrier considerably. Unlike the previous change, this one was short-lived (one-year) as the company's HR team's effectiveness at external recruiting improved over time:

Right. So a year after, they bumped it back up to 12 months, they were like, Hey, we've reached a cadence of hiring that are really happy with, we've seen X number of internal promotions that we're really happy with and we're actually reaching the scale that we're good, and we actually need to slow down. So they like pumped it back up to 12 months (Interview #66).

Scaling ventures is a fraught process, for individual contributors that are seeking to impact their organization. But they do represent a window of opportunity that ERG members can find rewarding if they design sprint themselves to exhaustion:

And like we got internal growth and lots of people got promotions and really great titles. And then part of that was holding people accountable...Now how do we make sure that the Latino/a folks are getting a chance? How do we make sure that the Black community is getting a chance (Interview #66).

The geographically-dispersed RollInc Hispanic/Latino/a ERG founders had intended to “build a family” according to all three co-founders (Interviews # 62, 65, and 66). The company's Southern office had scaled from 100 people to become an office of 900 people over the course of the first two years of the ERG's launch. The best way for ERG leaders, who were brokers, to

deliver their in-group bonding goals was to deploy their ties to management to deliver economic benefits to their ERG constituents. The non-intermediated relationship between the Hispanic/Latino/a co-founders and the top D&I officials led to them achieving results without yet having any official executive liaison helping them.

Design Sprint Failure Cases: SortStart, FinWorld, and FinCheck

Centralized D&I as Scapegoat or Pocketed Gifts

In the non-tailoring firms, the diversity-promotion coalition engaged in either (a) diversity work centralization, or (b) attempted an economic exchange that was not reciprocated. Both approaches made tailoring difficult to achieve, and made turnkey approaches likely. These cases began with similar official structures: the existence of D&I managers, line executives, and ERGs. However, when it came time for diversity strategizing, the work was either so centralized as to set up a D&I manager as scapegoat (SortStart & FinWorld) or the attempt at a sequential negotiation through volunteerism was initiated by the D&I manager and ERG leaders and never reciprocated by the senior executives (FinCheck). Through both paths, the early history of these cases involved less experimentation during the founding period of the diversity efforts in a fast-growth company. No tailored diversity practices were delivered in these three cases during the course of study period (2013-2019).

SortStart: Centralized D&I as Public Scapegoat

Executive attention, like in all other cases, was hard to maintain on social change work, despite strong motivation to do so from the top-down by leadership. SortStart's founder prided himself on a sense of corporate social responsibility (CSR). They were among the first among their group of fast-growth technology companies in the San Francisco Bay Area to create an executive position for CSR.

Even in the values-based organizations, if you're in a startup mode, there's so many competing priorities for resources and attention and focus that it could be a challenge to maintain that focus (Interview #47).

To help alleviate the focus problem, SortStart's Chief People Officer and CSR executive began planning for a new specialization: a director-level Chief Diversity Officer role.

And then the CPO, who was my boss, was working very closely with the head of engineering who cared a lot about diversity and inclusion, just trying to figure out how we could shape a role that was specifically looking at that (Interview #47).

The CSR Director and their boss decided (they thought) that the role would need to address both internal diversity issues (minority employee demography, fair practices, and retention of minorities through inclusive culture) along with external diversity issues (the experience of minorities who use the business-to-consumer, B2C, mobile technology platform).

We knew we needed someone who could deal with the complexities of both the horrific numbers within tech of people of color working there, but also these issues within our platform, which really ends up having to deal with product and technology and engineering."

Minority employees believed that the two issues were linked: "When you have a bunch of white people build the product, of course they're not going to know that X matters in a X process. They don't ever have to think of that (Interview #47).

Ultimately, however, observers agreed that the D&I position had become public-facing to the extreme, or as they often put it: "externalized" or "externally-focused" (Interviews #32, 43, 44, 45, 46, and 47). Sources disagreed strongly about how much to blame the new D&I executive for job performance in an externalized role.

So normally diversity and inclusion has three pillars. There's the diversity part, which is the hiring, there's the inclusion part, which is the internal culture. And then there's the third part, which is external engagement... So it could lean more toward...for SortStart we had this very public kind of crisis around discrimination...So the task force that we have [was] for our external engagement efforts (Interview #44).

So he knew about internal diversity, but really [external] diversity was something he had zero expertise on...didn't know how to scale product solutions that would inhibit discriminatory interactions (Interview #43).

Even before that [the public crisis], just how SortStart was...what resources they were going to be putting into it, who was really in charge, who has a say and all of that...the focus got very externalized very quickly (Interview #47).

The company ended up hiring a first D&I leader whose experience involved internal diversity issues in the sub-field of EEO compliance. Both person-role misfit and external scandal timing played a part in the increasing imbalance of the first D&I executive's focus.

Although they were not consulting with each other on the topic, minority employees tended to agree with the executive viewpoint on this - that the role should have both components. Decisions on D&I role design, to whom the D&I leader would report, proved critical for the handling of the forthcoming diversity scandal. The company's first D&I leader reported to the executive responsible for external communications - the gatekeepers for the company's external image, just ahead of a public relations crisis.

The company kept changing, the sort of guidepost kept changing. We had a new executive come in, who was in charge of all government affairs and communication...And it ended up with that person, so our new diversity and inclusion hire ended up reporting to him (Interview #47).

The first D&I leader's day to day work became focused on external activities – even lobbying work with public officials:

There's the platform, government affairs, public pledges and signing onto things, panels, interactions with getting awards - like there's that one award I think it's called the HRC [Human Rights Campaign] has a list of companies that are aligned to its gay, lesbian rights...[he accepted SortStart's equality award from HRC] (Interview #47).

The crisis began and impacted organizational design, with the job of the D&I leader increasingly focused on what he knew the least about: external communications and product topics. While engaging a live, public Q&A, the Chief Diversity Officer responded:

...[in] the normal corporate response where you're just like: 'Yeah, we're absolutely investigating this blah blah blah.'

Negative public reaction to the dismissive corporate tone was swift:

People were accusing the company of racism on the platform or allowing racism on the platform (Interview #47).

This was particularly troubling for two groups: the firm's founder had explicitly set out to be a "mission driven" company, and was surprised by the experiences of their Black product users: "it just exploded from there" (Interview #43). The company decided to send their D&I leader, an African-American, to this external, live, public event.

Minority ERG employees theorized that the product discrimination problems likely stemmed from the lack of diversity inside the organization:

The internal diversity is what informed the platform issues. If you have a team of all-White engineers and product specialists, of course they're not going to think through racism as they're building their products. So, it's a vicious circle (Interview #43).

The Ironically Exclusive Task Force About Inclusion

Executives took a different tact, focusing intently on the technical product fixes related to combatting anti-Black racism on the platform. The external nature of the stimulus prompted the company's CEO to form a diversity task force that focused on the external issues:

We had this very public kind of crisis around discrimination on the platform that affected the product. So the task force...it obviously was more product based (Interview #44).

The Black ERG was very concerned that the existing task force approach included exactly one Black person (the D&I executive) for an issue that revolved completely around anti-

Black racism, rooted in the lack of diversity at the company. One Black ERG member described the linkage of the internal and diversity topics as portrayed by executives as:

It's chicken or the egg...that's what they played it as (Interview #43)

The fourth Black ERG leader, Kurue, faulted this overly-complex, non-sequential thinking as the core of the company's public failure. With respect to internal diversity, Kurue contended that "No, no, no, we need to fix this," the internal [diversity] problem first, "and then go there" to the external social platform issues. The company's Black employees were increasingly vocal, partially because of intense pressure from their communities and personal networks:

We had started to receive all this inbound from our friends like, 'Why do you work for a racist company? Do something' (Interview #43).

The employees were especially concerned that the task force had a seniority-based entry requirement. The Black people in the company noticed, for example, that the company's entire headquarters press team had only one Black employee. Despite having relevant minority press contacts, the lack of the ERG member's seniority was a problem:

They [Black employees] were pushed out because they [executives] were like, 'Well, we only want senior people working on this' (Interview #43).

Things came to a head in the presence of the firm's external crisis manager, who met with Black employees in the presence of the company's Head of Policy:

We were mad. The company had a Black issue and does not have more than one Black person with a seat at the table to inform what response we're doing (Interview #43).

The employees demanded that the task force add employees with "deep communications expertise" and deep "recruitment expertise" with both of these skill sets "informed by the Black experience" (Interview #43). After this meeting with the Black ERG, the executives-only task force opened up its TF membership requirements. The task force admitted three Black

employees: two employees from HR recruiting, and the other employee from the communications and policy team, on the recommendation of the Head of Public Policy, who is White.

Even as a Black professional with credentials, with expertise, you have to lean on White people...in order for White people within the organization to consider your ideas valid (Interview #43).

Drawing on their functional expertise in recruiting and in press relations and their personal knowledge concerning Black Americas, the three junior members of the task force went on to provide input that was better received by executives than the ideas from the Chief Diversity Officer (Interviews #43, 44, and 47). When the press controversy subsided, the disbanding task force had a long list of innovations to external diversity (product policies) and made one process change (goal setting) related to its internal diversity.

The company also made structural changes in the organization, hiring a 3-person team to join the Chief Diversity Officer full-time in the growing firm. The company instituted the usual “diversity business partner” model with one team supporting each business executive’s diversity programs and another team supporting company-wide programs such as the 13 different identities with official Employee Resource Group designations, including dozens of ERG chapters abroad. Each staff member on the diversity team had a portfolio of liaison relationships with business leaders. The business partner work was “traditionally around a lot of hiring” for each supported business team – all of which was “best practice” (Interview #44). With the D&I team now focused on internal issues post-crisis but being in a structure separate from the recruiting function, careful diplomacy was required, but it was not what was modelled.

There were some moments where our head of university recruiting and our head of diversity had differing thoughts on what we should be doing...If you're a diversity person and you're trying to tell recruiters what to do...sometimes it's not really well received (Interview #44).

The structural position of each role had been decided, and there was no appetite to change the organizational chart at the end of the press scrutiny.

Rather than pushing for an organizational design change to co-locate the D&I function and the recruitment function inside the HR organization, instead:

“...we [D&I office] had recruiting have very specific diversity goals. So you're measured on your [early stage] sourcing and you're measured on your [finalist] hires and that worked really well because then we can, as a diversity team...now you have a diversity metric that your own individual performance is tied to...And that seemed to work fairly well” (Interview #44).

In the years since, the company has gone further down this path, making its goals public and widely publicizing its targeted recruitment and internship programs at Historically Black colleges and universities and Hispanic-serving institutions (Interview #45). These are evidence-supported diversity efforts that are largely turnkey approaches implemented by the career services teams at colleges, and public affairs teams publicizing their efforts.

Employee activism burned brightly during the external crisis, because the company had a set of participatory channels that connected executives to employee viewpoints, but this is distinct from a design sprint. The Engineering VP ended up providing an invitation for Black employees to introduce Black Lives Matter into legitimate discourse at the company in a public setting. However, the firm did not invite the same employees to co-create any enduring institution at the firm, because it was considered to be already handled via specialization, in its creation of a specialized D&I role to set goals, and in the Engineering VP's own mentoring/internship program coordinator position.

FinCheck: Centralized D&I as Pocketed Gift

Those diversity advocates that bring forth local data, from experiments within their company, do better convincing others of their pro-diversity views, in the experience of these case

studies. However, that assumes that no one would stop one's experiment in the middle of implementation due to a fundamental disagreement about norms. At FinCheck, the D&I deputy executive, T'Vril, had been optimistic upon entering the firm that there would be openness to new ideas. The company had just hired its first D&I executive. The deputy, T'Vril had been attracted to the firm because of the first executive's experimental approach:

[He said] 'We want to try some things, pilot some things before we achieve it...we don't want to say anything publicly, first we want to learn some things, try some things, and see what works for us' (Interview #84).

Despite hearing all the right things, and himself prioritizing a need for experimentation to develop a diversity and inclusion approach, six weeks later, T'Vril's boss was fired (would not disclose); the Deputy T'Vril became the 2nd diversity executive and began reporting both to the Chief Operating Officer and the company's founder CEO.

Over the course of months, T'Vril sought to get specific about the types of initiatives they might pilot, and found one that the CEO truly admired. T'Vril advanced a unique collaboration relevant to the core product of the company and connected to the theme of financial empowerment in a series of events that expanded the business's reach in minority communities with financial technology.

And so I knew that the scope of the role of the diversity strategy would touch entrepreneurship. And I was really interested in that. So it was cool. (Interview #84).

The conversations with African-American venture capitalists went well and the company was able to help expand their electronic financial connections with exiting Black-owned startup businesses.

As conversations about goals continued, however, the founder CEO admitted that he was simply not interested in diversity-promotion inside his own firm per se.

...he cared about you having a positive experience and being supported once you're in the door, that's inclusion, but the 'd' part [diversity] was always where we struggled...The diversity part...our CEO saw the research and he said 'this is correlative research, it's not saying that diversity *causes* the business performance or stronger team [performance]...not to mention other tech companies have been successful without having to prioritize it [diversity]' (Interview #84).

In *FinCheck*, a private firm, a D&I leader poised to nurture new ideas and approaches was thwarted from doing the second half of her work: internal diversity-promotion for demographic workforce diversity. Both the CEO and their T'Vril were prepared to challenge orthodox wisdom about what counts as a "diversity" practice. T'Vril and the CEO both thought that entrepreneurial empowerment across race lines could be a new category of diversity program, for example, making the potential for an (intellectually) adversarial collaboration. But this potential was thwarted by a basic normative conflict. The most basic normative issue was whether or not it was desirable to seek more demographic diversity in the firm's workforce.

The business case for diversity, a frame that had been assumed to be a shared understanding proved to be one on which the two parties had "a complete misalignment" (Interview #84). It revealed something about the widely-diffusing role of Chief Diversity Officer, that such officials might often be "in the business of changing hearts and minds" of the very CEOs that hire them during intense salient diversity news events (Interview #84). In this case, the senior-most diversity official remaining at the company, T'Vril, felt that such persuasion efforts about initial normative principles was "not my ministry" (Interview #84). T'Vril departed the region and began a new firm focused on advising startup firms that do want to begin their work with both diversity and inclusion, rather than only one concept (inclusion) without the other (race/ethnicity diversity).

Propositions for Design Sprints

Research that is most doubtful about the likelihood of innovation from groups is all about network flows of ideas (“pipes”) rather than network connections power (“bonds”) (Borgatti & Halgin, 2011). In normal times, the flows perspective holds true, with networks of pipes benefiting those who are temporary visitors to, rather than full members inside of cliques. However, in special times, such as intense diversity press scandals 2013-2017, more recent research on networks of bonds during organizational change are more applicable. Tight bonds of reciprocity – whether they contain emotional substance (Ibarra, 1993), or not, are important for determining what ideas get acted upon and how tailored the approaches are to the needs of minority employees, who are but one constituency under CEO leadership that is salient to them only occasionally (Battilana & Casciaro, 2013; Borgatti & Halgin, 2011). This all assumes a basic level of normative agreement about the desirability of diversity-promotion, or at least a elite executive non-objection to the idea. I therefore advance the following propositions for network theory and organizational change that is related to contentious topics (like gender and racial equal employment outcomes):

- (6) Design sprint behavior will relate positively and significantly to practice tailoring perception.
- (7) The positive relationship between design sprint behavior and practice tailoring will be partially explained (statistically mediated) by high levels of economic exchange between ERGs and executives.
- (8) The positive relationship between design sprint behavior and practice tailoring will be also be partially explained (statistically mediated) by high levels of social exchange between ERGs and executives.

(9) Employee Resource Group design sprint collaborations with Executives will relate positively to a societal attention variable: the popularity of news items related to racial or ethnic discrimination (an attentional munificence measure).

CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSION (STUDY 2)

6.1 A Framework for Tailoring Diversity Practices

The purpose of Study 2 was to learn the antecedents of tailored diversity practices (versus turnkey approaches). This inductive study into tailoring antecedents resulted in three constructs (see **Figure 2**): (a) borrowing power; (b) effectuating autonomy; and (c) design sprints. Coping with power imbalances, examining the means available to proceed with experiments, and being mindful of limits to executive time helped make these diversity-promoters achieve a more tailored approach.

6.2 Conclusions of Study 2

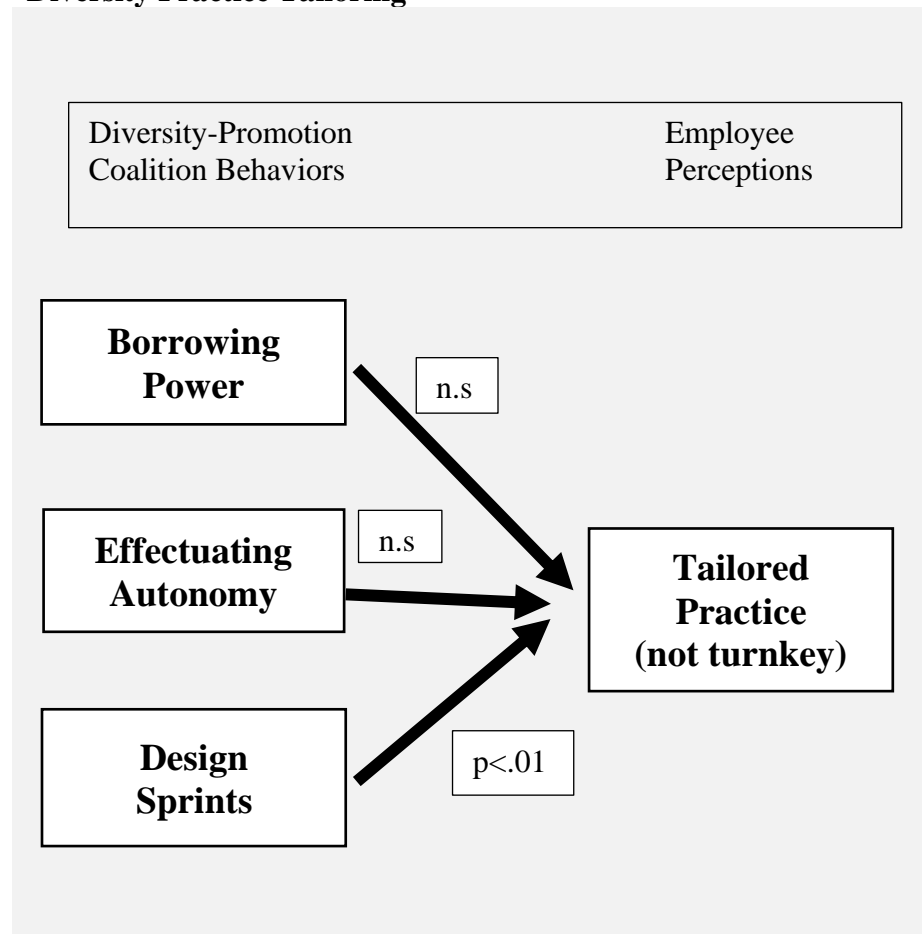
Time considerations infused this study of diversity practice design process. There are after all “only so many things you can focus on” at one time when leading a fast-growth company (Interview #34). The same is true, however, for those who are not leaders, but followers of an ethnic/racial minority background. Their discretionary time, sometimes deployed at work in Employee Resource Groups, is sometimes tapped wisely in the three antecedent behaviors, and at other times is wasted in a way that generates cynical attributions (Study 1). Diversity practices will always be subject to some cynical scrutiny, as pressures to inflate corporate diversity commitment are likely unavoidable. But when the issue is salient, as practice design moves quickly to either a tailored or turnkey approach, researchers would do well to recognize that the nature of program design itself might impact the ‘why’ attributions employees make about D&I efforts (Nishii et al., 2008). Enacted diversity practices are received, interpreted, and even inhabited by company employees (Hallett & Ventresca, 2006).

In the next investigation (Study 3), I will take this inductively-generated framework and test it deductively in multiple independent samples. This work will contribute to the study of not only the presence or absence of Chief Diversity Officers (Frank Dobbin & Kalev, 2015); or the presence or absence of employee resource groups (Frank Dobbin & Kalev, 2016b); but what the people inside these inhabited institutions actually do when societal events pull them together or push them apart (Hallett & Ventresca, 2006).

CHAPTER 7: THEORY TESTING

The above field research has led me to believe that tailored diversity practices relate to decreases in employee cynicism regarding diversity practices at work (Chapter 7). Design sprints appear to be a necessary component of the tailoring, but its perceptual factor structure with the other two constructs needs formal investigation. The research question is: what are the antecedents and outcomes of diversity practice tailoring?

Figure 2.
Diversity Practice Tailoring



7.1 Content Validity Analyses: Purpose

The purpose of the final studies was to create a valid measure for the employee perception that their workplaces' practices are tailored, as well as three other valid measures of theorized antecedents to that tailoring perception. These four measures began with *content validity* analyses (Section 3). The final confirmatory research approach deals with validating the antecedent constructs as well (Section 4). The perception that a diversity program is *not* copied from a template, but is instead *tailored* for the organization proved reliable, and demonstrated convergent, and discriminant validity. However, among the three antecedents of the tailoring judgement, only the process of having a *design sprint* proved valid as a *perception*. The other two measures (effectuating autonomy nor borrowing power) were not consistently perceived across human subject groups. The paper provides partial confirmation and partial disconfirmation of the earlier theory-building work on practice tailoring. Through multiple regression analysis, I explored whether the cause of the disconfirmation was an issue of insider status: the proximity that the audience had to the internal workings of diversity program design. Unfortunately, that line of inquiry was not supported by regression analyses. I confirmed that the perceived organizational practice tailoring (POPT) construct is distinct from very similar *organizational support*, *supervisor support*, and related constructs and that POPT negatively predicts cynicism and employee turnover intentions.

There are two parts to this content study effort. First, *definitional correspondence* (aka *content adequacy*), important to measurement work, establishes with subject pools that the items measure what they purport to measure (Colquitt, Sabey, Rodell, & Hill, 2019). All four of the new constructs generated in the qualitative studies require scrutiny to ensure that the inductively-generated definitions do not only appear in analysis of interviews, but instead can be generalized

in broader populations. Second is *definitional distinctiveness*, to justify that an existing measure does not already have content that covers the exact same material, contributing to the proliferation of new constructions in the field. It is worth scrutinizing whether the definitions of new constructs, as experienced by naïve raters, is fundamentally different from the inductively-generated ideas in the qualitative studies above.

7.2 Methods

These analyses followed the content validation recommendations of Colquitt et al. (2019), which provided strict evaluation criteria for both definitional *correspondence* and definitional *distinctiveness* for scholars who are using the Hinkin and Tracey (1999) approach to establish content validity for new measures.

7.2.1 Item Generation

Items were created from the themes in the qualitative analyses (an inductive approach) and also from the guidance of theory (a deductive approach). Inductively, the items were generated in the previous studies to capture the three antecedents. These included 36 total items, 12 for each of the three antecedent constructs generated inductively from data in interviews and reflections thereon. Deductively, an examination of the institutional theory literature helped establish two new guideposts for the tailoring dependent variable. From a previous dichotomous theory of tailoring, in Raffaelli and Glynn (2014), the two subdimensions of tailoring – making the organization look innovative among peer organizations (the differentiation factor – 12 initial items); and making the employee feel that things were tinkered with to fit local circumstances (the customization factor – 12 initial items) were deductive approaches. The studies began with a total of 60 items.

7.2.2 Honed Construct Definitions

Some wording changes were adopted because pilot discussions with naïve subjects indicated that “renting” power was less tractable than “borrowing” power. Having items, it remained important to know what to compare each item to. Clear definitions served as guideposts to learn if any items generated were capturing the theorized content. In the content studies of four variables, the definitions shared with raters were:

- **Borrowing Power:** creators of the focal program use their relationships with powerful executives in order to get the program going.
- **Effectuating Autonomy:** program creators finding the autonomy for themselves to try out a variety of different approaches, working on behalf of the organization.
- **Design Sprinting:** the creators of the program worked in an intense, quick collaboration with a design team to set up this program, often creating flat teams across hierarchies for the project. These antecedents then in turn are hypothesized to predict:
- **Tailoring:** A Tailored Program: a workplace initiative that is customized, 'built to order' using the particular skills of the organization to serve the specific needs of the organization. In addition, two sub-dimension definitions were shared:
 - A workplace initiative is a customized program if it is created locally, 'built to order' to fit the local situation.
 - A workplace initiative is differentiating if, compared to programs at other organizations, it seems like it is 'unique.'

Table 12.*Overview of Analytic Strategy*

| Step | Objective | Data Collection / Sample | Main Findings |
|---|---|--|---|
| Theoretical induction from data in qualitative study, deduction from literature | Develop items for 3 antecedent constructs and 1 focal <i>tailoring</i> measure. Learn whether the definitions ascribed were agreed by raters. | Interviews (n=80) Rafaelli & Glynn (2014) | 4 construct definitions 36 items for antecedents 24 items for dependent measure |
| Analysis of Means, reliabilities | Learn if raters judged the definitional correspondence of “unintended” scales higher or lower than the “intended” scales” | Sample 1 (tailoring): n = 168 Sample 2 (antecedents): n = 194 | Item content examined in more depth. Item reductions considered based on mean scores. |
| Exploratory Factor Analysis | Learn the initial factor structure. Being item reduction. | Sample 1 (tailoring): n=168 Sample 2 (3 antecedents): n= 194 | Item reductions proposed based on both means and factor loadings: <i>tailoring</i> : 24 → 8 items <i>antecedents</i> : 36 → 14 Model structures confirmed for POPT. |
| Confirmatory Factor Analysis | Test the hypothesized factor structure. Establish a measurement model for SEM. | Sample 3 (tailoring & antecedents): n=400 | Model structure firmly disconfirmed for two antecedents to POPT: effectuating autonomy and borrowing power. Mediation model tested the link between 3 antecedents’, their effects on cynicism and turnover intentions, including indirect effects through the perception of tailoring . |
| Structural Equation Modeling | Test the hypothesized role of <i>tailoring</i> as mediator of <i>cynicism</i> . Validate the discriminant validity of <i>tailoring</i> ’s antecedents. | Sample 3 (<i>tailoring & antecedents & cynicism & turnover intentions</i>): n=400 | Design sprints proved to be consistently and positively linked to tailoring, and negatively linked to cynicism (as hypothesized). Neither of the other two antecedents from the theory-building phase had similar significant results. |

7.2.3 Participant Samples (x3)*Two Exploratory Samples*

Participant Sample 1: Online sample of 168 working adults. Subjects were recruited from the Prolific online platform (app.prolific.co). 170 subject positions were advertised using the IRB-approved recruitment text and 168 participants responded with completed surveys: 73 women, 91 men, and 4 nonbinary. The median age was 31 years. The sample was 70% White. Subjects were paid \$3.65 per completed survey.

Participant Sample 2: Online Sample of 193 working adults. The sample consisted of 100 men and 93 women. Two hundred available slots were posted to the Prolific platform, with 193 people completing surveys. The median age was 37. The sample was 79% White.

One Confirmatory Sample

Participant Sample 3: Online Sample of 498 working adults. The sample's median age was 33 years ($M = 35.23$). To maximize the chance of obtaining Black and Latino/a categorical variable moderation results, I recruited a sample of 485 Black and Latino/a working age adults in a quick \$0.37 pre-screen survey. The yield on that initial screening was hopeful, but the final sample of Black respondents (90) and Latino/a respondents (58) means that the hoped-for category moderation conditions have not been met for SEM, unless sample-splitting is endorsed.

Table 13.

Sample 3 (CFA) Demography, by Race/Ethnicity

| <i>Race & Ethnicity</i> | <i>n</i> |
|---|----------|
| Black | 90 |
| Hispanic, Latino/a | 58 |
| White or European | 344 |
| Asian | 1 |
| Middle Eastern / North African | 2 |
| Biracial or Multi-racial, please specify below. | 2 |
| Other, please specify below. | 1 |

7.2.4 Procedures

Evaluation of Item Mean Scores, by Orbiting Construct

Following the approach recommended by Hinkin & Tracey (1999), each construct was presented with both the 24 “intended” definitional correspondence items along with the remaining 19 “unintended items” (6 from perceived organizational support, 6 from organizational identification, and 4 attention check items – in the case of *tailoring*). Using a scale

ranging from (1) “extremely bad measure” for the concept to (7) “extremely good measure” for the concept recommended by Colquitt et al (2019), the subjects were asked to indicate the extent to which each item was consistent with each of the two definitions that make up the deductive facets of tailoring, without resort to double-barreling questions for the unified construct. This procedure was done with respect to the following orbiting construct scales (Table 3).

Table 14.

Illustrative Example of Means and Factor Loadings Analysis for one of the constructs.

| Rating Statement: A <i>workplace initiative</i> is a <u>customized</u> program if it is created locally, 'built to order' to fit the local situation . | | | | | |
|---|------|---------------------|-----|-----|-----|
| Items | | EFA Factor Loadings | | | |
| Intended Items – Tailoring Customization (CU) | | Means | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| CU01. This program was definitely modified to fit the unique situation here at this organization. | 6.30 | | .72 | | |
| CU2. This program very clearly came from people focused here on this organization's situation. | 5.89 | | .76 | | .18 |
| CU3. This program was created with the people here at this organization in mind. | 6.03 | | .76 | | .22 |
| CU4. This program certainly deals with this organization's special circumstances. | 5.80 | | .72 | | .24 |
| CU5. This program could only have been designed by people who know a lot about this exact | 6.00 | .19 | .67 | | .28 |
| CU6. This program definitely fits with this organization's precise conditions. | 5.74 | | .60 | | .27 |
| CU7. This program has specific content that must have been provided by employees that work here at this organization. | 5.76 | | .62 | | .40 |
| CU8. This program applies to the exact situation here at this organization. | 5.88 | | .63 | | |
| CU9. This program was started by people who know what employees need here at this organization. | 5.78 | | .71 | | .24 |
| CU10. This program was definitely created "in-house" here within this organization. | 6.12 | | .66 | | .26 |
| CU11. This program is so specific that it would be very hard to manufacture it again at a different organization. | 5.55 | .15 | .41 | | .58 |
| CU12. This program was adjusted to make it into something that fit this organization. | 6.09 | | .60 | | .24 |
| Unintended Items – | | | | | |
| DF13. This program is different from programs at other organizations. | 5.37 | | .36 | | .65 |
| DF14. This program is dissimilar from the typical sort of program found at other organizations. | 4.94 | | .21 | | .67 |
| DF15. This program is implemented very differently than programs like it at other organizations. | 5.23 | .17 | .32 | | .68 |
| DF16. This program is unique, compared to programs at other organizations. | 5.49 | | .37 | | .58 |
| DF17. Employees at other organizations probably would be surprised by the differences between their organization's program and this organization's program. | 4.85 | | .29 | | .74 |
| DF18. This program would require a lot of changes before it could be adopted by other organizations. | 4.95 | .15 | .23 | | .65 |
| DF19. This program could only have been carried out here inside this organization. | 5.61 | | .57 | | .34 |
| DF20. The developers of this program likely made changes to it to make this program fit this organization's culture. | 5.96 | | .76 | | .20 |
| DF21. This program is deeply embedded in the culture of this organization. | 5.16 | .17 | .46 | | .24 |
| DF22. This program could only have been made for this distinct organization. | 5.88 | | .59 | | .29 |
| DF23. This program is so peculiar that it would be hard for people at other organizations to really understand it. | 4.83 | | .29 | | .65 |
| DF24. This program has rare elements that other organizations would probably not have in their program. | 5.46 | | .45 | | .57 |
| POS25. This organization takes pride in my accomplishments. | 2.43 | | .87 | | |
| POS26. This organization really cares about my well-being. | 2.86 | | .86 | | |
| POS27. This organization values my contributions to its well-being. | 2.67 | | .86 | | |
| POS28. This organization strongly considers my goals and values. | 3.10 | | .83 | | |
| POS29. This organization shows little concern for me. | 6.14 | | .40 | .24 | |
| POS30. This organization is willing to help me if I need a special favor. | 2.58 | | .74 | | |
| OI31. This organization takes pride in my accomplishments. | 2.60 | | .78 | | |
| OI32. This organization really cares about my well-being. | 2.23 | | .77 | | |
| OI33. This organization values my contributions to its well-being. | 2.18 | | .79 | | |
| OI34. This organization strongly considers my goals and values. | 2.53 | | .83 | | |
| OI35. This organization shows little concern for me. | 2.58 | | .90 | | |
| OI36. This organization is willing to help me if I need a special favor. | 2.08 | | .73 | | |

The choice of perceived organizational support, organizational identification, participative leadership and supportive leadership all have theoretical links that deserve scrutiny.

Table 15.

Focal Construct and Orbiting Scales

| Focal Construct | Orbiting Construct #1 | Orbiting Construct #2 | Potential Concept Overlap |
|---|--------------------------|-------------------------------|--|
| Tailoring <i>customization</i> <i>differentiation</i> | Perceived Org Support | Organizational Identification | Tailoring is about the perception that the organization is doing something atypical in its change efforts. This could also mean support for employees or mutual identification of member to the organization. |
| Borrowing Power | | | |
| Effectuating Autonomy | Participative Leadership | Supervisor Support | The antecedents to tailoring all involve a temporary flattening of hierarchies – either to seek delegation from the bottom up, seize autonomy from the bottom outwards, or collaborate quickly and intensely with executives in a design sprint. Participative and supportive leader constructs feature these similar kinds of hierarchy-bending behavior. |
| Design Sprints | | | |

Exploratory Factor Analyses

Dependent Measure (EFA Sample 1). An EFA was conducted with maximum-likelihood estimation and an orthogonal rotation (varimax) to examine the initial factor structure. In the process, 16 items for *tailoring* were dropped. The reduced *tailoring* scale consisted of 8 items ($\alpha = .88$). The scale's distinctiveness and definitional content adequacy are discussed below with the others (See **Table 16** below). The measure was deduction driven and was formed by the merger of the the two separately tested facets: customization and differentiation. After running the factor analysis again, the chosen eight items loaded on the same factor. This is still a

structure to be examined again in a confirmatory approach, which is a better setting for a theory-driven factor analysis.

Antecedent Measures (EFA Sample 2). For the three antecedents, an EFA was conducted with maximum-likelihood estimation and an orthogonal rotation (varimax) to examine the factor loadings, including the focal and orbiting constructs. In the process, 22 items were dropped. I then factor analyzed the remaining 14 items for measuring the constructs. The resulting factor structure looked similar when the chosen items were inducted from the analysis of means and loadings. The reduced *borrowing power scale* consisted of five items ($\alpha = .70$); the *effectuating autonomy scale* had four items ($\alpha = .72$); and the *design sprints* scale consisted of five items with reliability ($\alpha = .79$).

7.3 Content Validity Assessment

Purpose

For distinctiveness, scholars need to examine how raters grade items that were not intended to fit the given definition compared to those that items that were intentionally paired with the definition (Hinkin & Tracey, 1999). Choosing what to compare for distinctiveness analyses involved constructs similar enough to be within the set of lawful relationships reasonably hypothesized (the nomological network), in this case positive hypothesized relationships.

Procedures

Colquitt and colleagues advanced two indexes that have been normed across 119 organizational behavior constructs: the *Hinkin Tracey correspondence* (HTC) and the *Hinkin Tracey distinctiveness* (HTD) measures. For correspondence, researchers begin with the mean rating that an item measures a given definition. In the 7-point scale used here (1 = extremely bad

measure of the definition above, 7 = extremely good measure of the definition above). An HTC value simply divides the mean rating by the number of anchors, seven in our case, and the index would take the value of 1 if every rater gave it a “7” in this study. The scale will have an average rating level for its fit to the definition provided.

$$htc = \text{mean definition correspondence rating} / \# \text{ anchors}$$

The htc value can then be compared to the normalizing tables that rank one’s htc measure to those found in 119 other new constructions to see how it compares as a percentile rank from 0th to 99th in meeting raters’ expectations of correspondence to a given definition. The htc values in the norming study ranged from .60 to .96 (mean = .78, median = .88, sd = .06), with “very strong” constructs definitional correspondence (.91 and above) being at the 80th-99th percentile.

For distinctiveness, the distinction between the “intended” high-scoring items (the ones generated for the study) and the “unintended” high-scorers is an important indicator of whether or not the descriptions in the definitions are actually different from other scales that are within the same set of concepts. The Colquitt et al (2019) index calculation is:

$$htd = \text{average of (“intended” – “unintended}_i\text{” ratings)} / (\# \text{ anchors} - 1)$$

It ensures that there is a single index that is above zero only when the intended group of items gets higher scores from raters than the unintended items. Helpfully, the paper also provides the norms for this figure, with “strong” (60th – 79th percentile) and “very strong” (80th – 99th percentile) ratings defined as .27-.34 and .35+. These are the standards by which to judge the success of the content validation effort: finding item that correspond to the desired definitions. Taking the *effectuating autonomy* construct as an example, its items’ means were 6.52 for the correspondence ratings of 193 people judging out of total of 7 points. Meanwhile, while raters were judging the definition text for *effectuating autonomy*, they also rated the fit of our

“unintended” *participatory leadership scale* (mean = 4.70) and the *supervisor support scale* (mean = 4.06). The *htd* is given by: $[(6.52-4.70)+(6.52-4.06)]/2 / (7-1)$, or 0.36.

Table 16.

| <i>Hinkin-Tracey Indexes: Based on Comparisons to Orbiting Constructs</i> | | | |
|---|------------------------|---|--|
| | | <i>correspondence</i> (<i>htc</i>) | <i>distinctiveness</i> (<i>htd</i>) |
| Tailoring | <i>Customization</i> | .88 “strong” | .55 “very strong” |
| | <i>Differentiation</i> | .88 “strong” | .55 “very strong” |
| Borrowing Power | | .91 “very strong” | .26 “moderate” |
| Effectuating Autonomy | | .93 “very strong” | .36 “very strong” |
| Design Sprints | | .85 “moderate” | .37 “very strong” |

Results

The results of the Hinkin-Tracey correspondence indexes and distinctiveness indexes, in Table 3 present an overall encouraging picture for item quality control for the three antecedents scales and the two facets of tailoring. Combined with their reliabilities range ($.70 < \alpha < .79$), there was enough ground to seek to move to the specific testing domain of not just tailoring, but *diversity practice tailoring*.

7.4 Confirmatory Approaches

Purpose

The earlier phases of this worked developed, through exploratory methods, a generic questionnaire about *any* type of workplace program. That is, for any domain where organizations face some scrutiny about their commitment to normative pressure, there could be a version of the POPT scale. In this confirmatory analysis, the text “diversity program” was piped into the scale, making this the “POPT-D” variant. The final phase of this work is to use confirmatory approaches to test the entire model generated in the studies before. I hypothesized that employee tailoring perceptions are directly predicted by three antecedent program creator behaviors: *borrowing power*, *effectuating autonomy*, and *design sprints*. Perceptions of these behaviors are thought to have an indirect effect on an important work-related attitude: cynicism about

organizational change. These antecedents' effects are mediated, I propose, by the gestalt *tailoring* perception of employees.

7.4.1 Methods

Confirmatory CFA and SEM

Because this a theory-driven variable choice, in a domain of self-reported items across all observed variables, a confirmatory approach, including a CFA measurement model and a structural equation model (SEM) are appealing (Aguinis, 2004; Judd, Jessor, & Donovan, 1986). The assumption of normality could not be supported, under the Henze-Zirkler test for multivariate normality. Therefore, rather than the standard maximum-likelihood “ML” estimation, I used the means-adjusted “MLM” estimation in the *lavaan* software package version 0.6-8 in R (Rosseel, 2012; Zhou & Shao, 2014).

The non-normality proved important to the interpretation of the standardized factor loadings. The perceived tailoring data did not impact the unstandardized factor loading estimates (“B”). However the impact of not modeling for non-normality was important for the standardized (“betas”). In fact, the loadings imply that each one-point increase in the latent perception that a diversity program has been tailor-made would result in a more than 1 point increase in *each item* for the measurement survey, an improbable hypothesis (See **Table 17** below). By contrast, the revised estimation using MLM resulted in factor loadings that match what I expected to confirm, that each item would have loadings over .70, but that these would not exceed 1.00 (See **Table 18**). This substantiates the need for an adjusted MLM approach and an SEM model to mitigate common method bias from self-reporting on all measures (Judd et al., 1986).

Table 17.

POPT: Standardized and Unstandardized Loadings for CFA, Reliabilities, Means, Standard Deviations, and Standard Errors Assuming Data is Normally-Distributed

| Observed POPT variable | Latent construct | α | M | SD | β | B | SE |
|---|------------------|----------|------|------|---------|------|-----|
| “This diversity program was (is)...” | | | | | | | |
| modified to fit the unique situation here at this organization | Customization | .85 | 4.94 | 1.70 | 1.37 | 1 | |
| created with the people here at this organization in mind | Customization | | 5.22 | 1.55 | 1.04 | .80 | .05 |
| created "in-house" here within this organization | Customization | | 4.82 | 1.81 | .99 | .76 | .06 |
| adjusted to make it into something that fit this organization | Customization | | 5.14 | 1.50 | 1.08 | .85 | .05 |
| different from programs at other organizations | Differentiation | .92 | 4.29 | 1.62 | 1.39 | 1 | |
| implemented very differently than programs like it at other organizations | Differentiation | | 4.10 | 1.67 | 1.40 | 1.01 | .05 |
| is unique, compared to programs at other organizations | Differentiation | | 4.34 | 1.76 | 1.59 | 1.15 | .05 |
| has rare elements that other organizations would probably not have | Differentiation | | 4.06 | 1.70 | 1.41 | 1.01 | .05 |

Note. $N = 498$. POPT = Perceived Organizational Practice Tailoring. All factor coefficients are significant at the $p < .001$ level.

β = Standardized coefficients.

Table 18.

POPT: Standardized and Unstandardized Loadings for CFA, Reliabilities, Means, Standard Deviations, and Standard Errors Means-Adjusted Maximum-likelihood Estimation

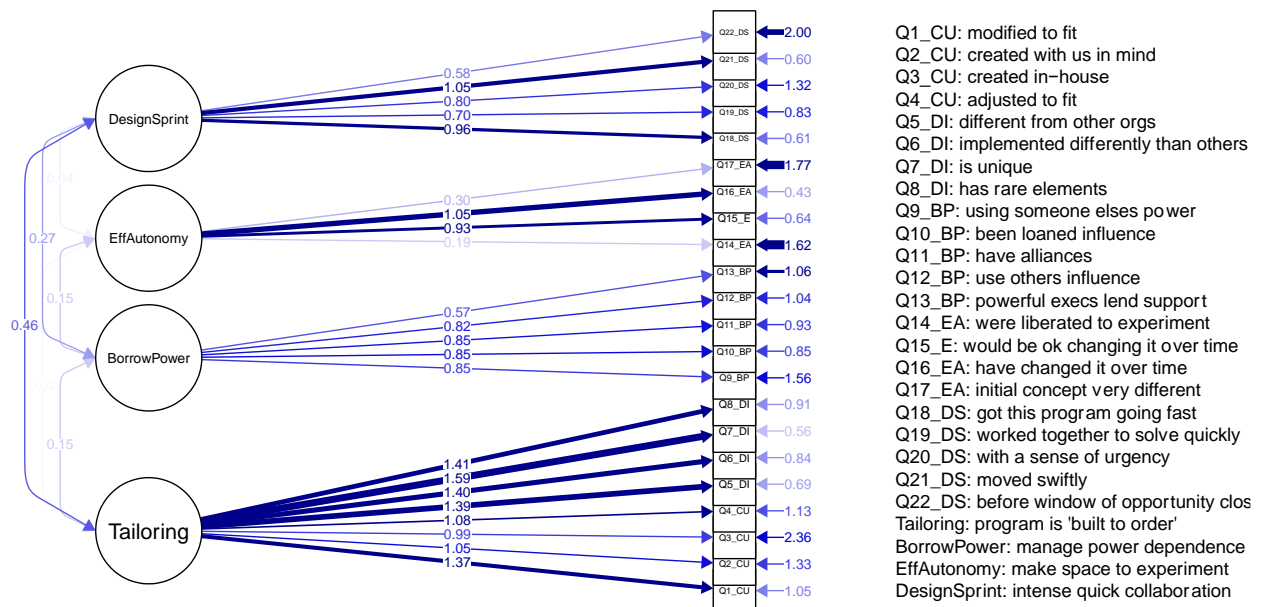
| Observed POPT variable | Latent construct | α | M | SD | β | B | SE |
|---|------------------|----------|------|------|------------|------|-----|
| “This diversity program was (is)...” | | | | | | | |
| modified to fit the unique situation here at this organization | Customization | .85 | 4.94 | 1.70 | .89 | 1 | |
| created with the people here at this organization in mind | Customization | | 5.22 | 1.55 | .79 | .76 | .04 |
| created "in-house" here within this organization | Customization | | 4.82 | 1.81 | .64 | .72 | .06 |
| adjusted to make it into something that fit this organization | Customization | | 5.14 | 1.50 | .85 | .79 | .04 |
| different from programs at other organizations | Differentiation | .92 | 4.29 | 1.62 | .87 | 1.02 | .04 |
| implemented very differently than programs like it at other organizations | Differentiation | | 4.10 | 1.67 | .86 | 1.02 | .05 |
| is unique, compared to programs at other organizations | Differentiation | | 4.34 | 1.76 | .93 | 1.16 | .05 |
| has rare elements that other organizations would probably not have | Differentiation | | 4.06 | 1.70 | .84 | 1.03 | .05 |

Note. $N = 498$. POPT = Perceived Organizational Practice Tailoring. All factor coefficients are significant at the $p < .001$ level.

β = Standardized coefficients.

Given the non-normality of these data, the most critical test statistic for goodness of fit is the Satorra-Bentler test, which works on the basis of the chi-squared test, but adjusted for means that are skewed (Satorra & Bentler, 2001).

Figure 3. Confirmed factor structure for *Tailoring* questionnaire



7.4.2 Confirmatory Approaches: Process Antecedents to Tailoring

Moving from data to theory (induction) in a process theory, the propositions below were very salient matters to employees who had high levels of information about how their workplace diversity programs came into being. By comparison, this online sample is likely naïve to the inner workings of how an organization chooses its diversity approach. It is therefore a strict test of the propositions derived from the earlier interviews and field work. The scale was not normally distributed, according to the Henze-Zirkler test of normality.

The five-item *borrowing power* sub-scale remained reliable across samples with ($\alpha = .74$), as did the 5-item scale for design sprints ($\alpha = .74$). Effectuating autonomy, generated in the theory-building in this dissertation, did not hold as a consistent perception across samples. It was unreliable ($\alpha = .50$), compared to other measures of effectuation (Chandler, DeTienne, McKelvie, & Mumford, 2011). Part of the issue could be an insider-versus-outsider phenomenon. While doing interviews with people who were themselves creating and implementing diversity programs, they had salient access to what design work was proceeding behind-the-scenes. To test this idea, I attempted an interaction with the variable “D&I Pro,” to see if there is a difference between how non-insiders perceive the antecedents versus the general population of workers.

The reliability and confirmatory factor structure appear to have considerable room for improvement for *effectuating autonomy* (See **Table 19** below). The implication of the standardized (“beta” column) loadings are that an increase in one unit of the latent variable for effectuating autonomy would likely yield just a 20% increase in half of its items. Measurement modification indices suggest a theoretically attractive idea: that “borrowing power” is substantially the same latent idea as “effectuating autonomy.” Indeed, the reason that the

interview respondents had to borrow the power of others is precisely because they did not have power and were of a resourceful, proactive type. In this domain, the hypothesized strong links that the CFA measurement indices suggest between the two constructs is logical. Likewise, the fit statistics for the 3-factor model that the inductive research generated poor fit across all major indices, including the one that is most important for non-normal data: the Satorra-Bentler statistic ($p < .001$). All told, while it is important to test the a priori model in full, it is doubtful that this resolve at a 3-factor structure for antecedents to tailoring. A two-factor structure is more likely, firmly disconfirming my hypothesis about the structure of these tailoring antecedents.

Conceptually, there is at least one more possibility: constrained access by the typical employee to the resourceful effectuation behavior of diversity program creators and volunteers. It seems that the average employee, not deeply involved in diversity program planning (unlike my interview subjects), still has access to latent views on how power is borrowed and how collaborations with powerful executives take place. These could be more salient than the issue of whether or not a program creator themselves seized some autonomy to complete their designs.

Table 19.*Tailoring Antecedents:**Standardized and Unstandardized Loadings for CFA, Reliabilities, Means, Standard Deviations, and Standard Errors**Means-Adjusted Maximum-likelihood Estimation*

| Observed Antecedent Variable | Latent construct | α | M | SD | β | B | SE |
|--|------------------|----------|------|------|---------|------|------|
| “The people who created this diversity program...” | | | | | | | |
| are using someone else’s power to get this program going | Borrow Power | .74 | 4.51 | 1.52 | .56 | .85 | |
| have been loaned some influence in the organization | Borrow Power | | 5.07 | 1.25 | .68 | .85 | .12 |
| have alliances with powerful people in this organization | Borrow Power | | 5.28 | 1.28 | .66 | .86 | .12 |
| use others’ influence to carry out the program | Borrow Power | | 5.16 | 1.28 | .63 | .82 | .10 |
| powerful executives lend their support to this program | Borrow Power | | 5.70 | 1.31 | .48 | .57 | .11 |
| were liberated to try different things out | Effect Autonomy | .50 | 5.15 | 1.28 | .15 | .19 | |
| would be okay changing the program over time | Effect Autonomy | | 5.66 | 1.25 | .76 | .94 | 2.14 |
| have themselves changed this program over time | Effect Autonomy | | 5.52 | 1.24 | .85 | 1.05 | 2.34 |
| initial conceptions were different than the final program design | Effect Autonomy | | 3.83 | 1.39 | .22 | .30 | .71 |
| got this program going fast | Design Sprint | .74 | 5.15 | 1.23 | .77 | .96 | |
| worked together to solve problems quickly | Design Sprint | | 5.47 | 1.15 | .61 | .70 | .07 |
| did so with a sense of urgency | Design Sprint | | 4.84 | 1.40 | .57 | .80 | .08 |
| moved swiftly to do so | Design Sprint | | 5.07 | 1.30 | .80 | 1.05 | .07 |
| finished it before the window of opportunity closed | Design Sprint | | 4.97 | 1.53 | .38 | .58 | .09 |

Note. $N = 498$. For Borrowing Power and Design Sprints, all factor coefficients are significant at the $p < .001$ level. However, for Effectuating Autonomy, $p < .02$ β = Standardized coefficients.

7.4.3 Confirmatory Approaches: Entire Questionnaire for Perceived Organizational Practice Tailoring

I conducted a confirmatory factor analysis using lavaan version 0.6-8 in R (CITE) with means-adjusted maximum likelihood estimation to assess the discriminant validity of the four constructs (See Table 20 below). Results indicated not a great fit of the four-factor model distinguishing perceived tailoring, borrowed power, effectuating autonomy, and design sprints ($\chi^2=834.75$, $df = 203$, $p<.01$, $CFI = .82$, $RMSEA = .09$, $SRMR = .11$). I constructed other nested models that had a range of one to three factors to compare with the four-factor model's fit. These included comparisons to several alternative models: (1) a one-factor model that combined all variables ($\chi^2=2104.55$, $df = 209$, $p<.001$, $CFI = .62$, $RMSEA = .14$, $SRMR = .12$); (2) a two-factor model with one factor for tailoring and a second factor that combined borrowing power, effectuating autonomy, and design sprints ($\chi^2=1253.30$, $df = 208$, $p<.001$, $CFI = .71$, $RMSEA = .12$, $SRMR = .10$); (3) a three-factor model with effectuating autonomy combined in one factor with design sprints, while tailoring and borrowing power remained in separate factors ($\chi^2=957.62$, $df = 206$, $p<.001$, $CFI = .79$, $RMSEA = .10$, $SRMR = .09$); (4) a three-factor model with borrowing power combined in a factor with effectuating autonomy with separate factors for tailoring and design sprints ($\chi^2=1008.17$, $df = 206$, $p<.001$, $CFI = .77$, $RMSEA = .11$, $SRMR = .11$), (4) a three-factor model with a shared factor for borrowing power and design sprints and two separate factors for tailoring and effectual autonomy ($\chi^2 = 1142.68$, $df = 206$, $p<.001$, $CFI = .74$, $RMSEA = .11$, $SRMR = .12$). The four-factor solution proved the best fit of these options.

Table 20.*Confirmatory Factor Analysis of Proposed Antecedents to Tailoring Perception (MLM-Satorra-Bentler)*

| No. factors | Model description | χ^2 | df | CFI | RMSEA | SRMR | SBTS-adj χ^2 p-value |
|-------------|---|----------|-----|-----|-------|------|------------------------------|
| 5 | Customization, differentiation, borrowing power, effectuating autonomy, and design sprints loaded on separate factors. | 703.69 | 199 | .89 | .07 | .10 | 528.58 p<.001 |
| 4 | Perceived organizational practice tailoring (customization and differentiation perceptions), borrowing power, effectuating autonomy, and design sprints loaded on separate factors. | 1077.47 | 203 | .82 | .10 | .11 | 811.44 p<.001 |
| 3 | Effectuating autonomy and design springs were loaded on a single factor. | 1628.83 | 206 | .78 | .10 | .10 | 958.40 p<.001 |
| 3 | Effectuating autonomy and borrowing power were loaded on a single factor. | 1333.18 | 206 | .76 | .11 | .11 | 1003.55 p<.001 |
| 3 | Borrowing power and design sprints were loaded on a single factor. | 1448.32 | 206 | .74 | .11 | .12 | 1111.12 p<.001 |
| 3 | Perceived organizational practice tailoring and borrowing power loaded on a single factor. | 1491.76 | 206 | .73 | .12 | .13 | 1155.27 p<.001 |
| 3 | Perceived organizational practice tailoring and effectuating autonomy loaded on a single factor. | 1258.99 | 206 | .78 | .10 | .09 | 944.12 p<.001 |
| 3 | Perceived organizational practice tailoring and design springs loaded on a single factor. | 1510.99 | 206 | .73 | .12 | .12 | 1147.30 p<.001 |
| 2 | Borrowing power, effectuating autonomy, and design sprints loaded on a single factor. | 1628.76 | 208 | .70 | .12 | .11 | 1248.16 p<.001 |
| 1 | Perceived organizational practice tailoring, borrowing power, effectuating autonomy, and design sprints all loaded on a single factor. | 2075.66 | 209 | .61 | .14 | .12 | 1603.29 p<.001 |

Table 21.

Correlations with constructs that share the “organizational support” reciprocity nomological network

| | M | SD | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 |
|--------------------------|-------|-------|-----------------|---------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|---------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| 1. Turnover Intentions | 2.53 | 1.19 | $\alpha = 0.80$ | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 2. Turnover (Y/N) | | | 0.20** | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 3. CWBs | 1.44 | 0.47 | 0.43** | 0.03 | $\alpha = 0.75$ | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 4. Cynicism | 3.05 | 1.13 | 0.47** | 0.01 | 0.43** | $\alpha = 0.91$ | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 5. POPT | 4.59 | 1.34 | -0.27** | -0.03 | -0.17** | -0.35** | $\alpha = 0.92$ | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 6. Tailored (Y/N) | | | -0.22** | -0.09 | -0.12** | -0.24** | 0.65** | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 7. Borrowing Power | 5.13 | 0.92 | -0.01 | 0.02 | -0.05 | -0.03 | 0.12** | 0.03 | $\alpha = 0.92$ | | | | | | | | | | |
| 8. Effectuate Autonomy | 5.03 | 0.81 | 0.04 | 0.03 | -0.06 | 0.02 | 0.22** | 0.18** | 0.17** | $\alpha = 0.50$ | | | | | | | | | |
| 9. Design Sprints | 5.08 | 0.93 | -0.23** | -0.06 | -0.20** | -0.25** | 0.40** | 0.19** | 0.25** | 0.14** | $\alpha = 0.74$ | | | | | | | | |
| 10. Citizenship Fatigue | 3.88 | 1.58 | 0.50** | 0.09* | 0.38** | 0.46** | -0.24** | -0.12* | -0.03 | 0.08 | -0.18** | $\alpha = 0.92$ | | | | | | | |
| 11. Org Identification | 4.46 | 1.52 | -0.52** | -0.12* | -0.37** | -0.35** | 0.43** | 0.27** | 0.10* | 0.02 | 0.33** | -0.33** | $\alpha = 0.91$ | | | | | | |
| 12. Affective Commit. | 4.63 | 1.57 | -0.63** | -0.13** | -0.48** | -0.45** | 0.46** | 0.30** | 0.10* | 0.07 | 0.35** | -0.46** | 0.84** | $\alpha = 0.91$ | | | | | |
| 13. Org Support | 4.85 | 1.43 | -0.63** | -0.14** | -0.48** | -0.52** | 0.45** | 0.30** | 0.03 | 0.06 | 0.31** | -0.53** | 0.75** | 0.84** | $\alpha = 0.93$ | | | | |
| 14. Supervisor Support | 5.28 | 1.21 | -0.53** | -0.12** | -0.43** | -0.47** | 0.41** | 0.28** | 0.03 | 0.15** | 0.29** | -0.49** | 0.59** | 0.69** | 0.80** | $\alpha = 0.92$ | | | |
| 15. Participatory Leader | 5.12 | 1.13 | -0.47** | -0.14** | -0.38** | -0.47** | 0.39** | 0.26** | 0.02 | 0.15** | 0.28** | -0.45** | 0.52** | 0.59** | 0.71** | 0.87** | $\alpha = 0.87$ | | |
| 16. Ostracism | 1.86 | 0.94 | 0.37** | -0.03 | 0.39** | 0.43** | -0.14** | -0.12** | -0.12* | -0.15** | -0.14** | 0.36** | -0.25** | -0.42** | -0.43** | -0.48** | -0.42** | $\alpha = 0.93$ | |
| 17. Subjective Stress | 3.59 | 0.88 | -0.34** | -0.03 | -0.25** | -0.22** | 0.28** | 0.15** | 0.02 | -0.05 | 0.19** | -0.61** | 0.30** | 0.34** | 0.40** | 0.38** | 0.35** | -0.21** | $\alpha = 0.87$ |
| 18. Age | 35.16 | 10.12 | -0.07 | 0.05 | -0.19** | -0.05 | -0.10* | -0.03 | 0.20** | -0.03 | -0.05 | -0.06 | -0.03 | 0.03 | -0.02 | -0.03 | 0.00 | -0.06 | 0.04 |
| 19. Income | 7.55 | 1.55 | -0.06 | 0.05 | 0.00 | -0.01 | 0.01 | 0.03 | 0.10* | -0.07 | 0.01 | 0.02 | 0.10* | 0.08 | 0.07 | 0.06 | 0.05 | -0.08 | -0.07 |
| 20. Class Identity | 2.98 | 0.65 | -0.10* | -0.01 | -0.11* | -0.07 | 0.03 | 0.07 | 0.04 | -0.06 | 0.07 | -0.05 | 0.27** | 0.23** | 0.22** | 0.19** | 0.17** | -0.13** | 0.01 |
| 21. Black | | | -0.04 | 0.07 | -0.11* | -0.10* | 0.23** | 0.13** | -0.02 | -0.10* | 0.13** | -0.14** | 0.14** | 0.10* | 0.16** | 0.11* | 0.09 | 0.07 | 0.14** |
| 22. Hispanic Latino/a | | | 0.06 | -0.01 | 0.13** | 0.07 | -0.04 | -0.04 | -0.02 | -0.08 | -0.05 | 0.06 | -0.05 | -0.06 | -0.09 | -0.11 | -0.11* | 0.06 | -0.04 |
| 23. White | | | -0.02 | -0.04 | -0.01 | 0.03 | -0.17** | -0.09* | 0.04 | 0.12** | -0.08 | 0.06 | -0.08 | -0.01 | -0.06 | -0.01 | 0.00 | -0.12** | -0.09 |
| 24. Orientat. Bisexual | | | 0.11* | 0.01 | 0.07 | 0.06 | -0.09 | -0.09* | -0.05 | 0.03 | -0.09 | 0.14** | -0.02 | -0.04 | -0.03 | -0.02 | 0.01 | 0.02 | -0.13** |
| 25. Orientat. Hetero | | | -0.10* | -0.03 | -0.05 | -0.03 | 0.07 | 0.06 | 0.04 | -0.06 | 0.06 | -0.15** | 0.11* | 0.10* | 0.09 | 0.06 | 0.03 | -0.08 | 0.11* |
| 26. Orientat. Gay/Les. | | | 0.04 | -0.01 | -0.03 | 0.04 | -0.09** | -0.03 | -0.07 | 0.01 | -0.01 | 0.06 | -0.10* | -0.08 | -0.06 | -0.03 | -0.04 | 0.09 | -0.03 |
| 27. Disability | | | 0.16** | -0.01 | 0.12** | 0.04 | 0.00 | -0.05 | -0.02 | 0.09 | -0.09* | 0.12** | -0.06 | -0.07 | -0.04 | -0.06 | -0.04 | 0.12* | -0.17** |
| 28. Extroversion | 3.17 | 1.02 | 0.08 | 0.10* | 0.09* | 0.05 | -0.08 | -0.09* | -0.05 | -0.03 | -0.07 | 0.09* | -0.26** | -0.27** | -0.23** | -0.17** | -0.14** | 0.15** | -0.11* |
| 29. D&I Pro | | | -0.13** | 0.00 | -0.11* | -0.08 | 0.31** | 0.14** | 0.09 | -0.04 | 0.25** | -0.21** | 0.33** | 0.29** | 0.28** | 0.23** | 0.19** | -0.03 | 0.21** |
| 30. Edu: No BA | | | 0.04 | 0.02 | 0.08 | 0.00 | -0.05 | -0.03 | -0.06 | -0.02 | 0.01 | 0.04 | -0.14** | -0.14** | -0.10* | -0.11* | -0.10* | 0.05 | -0.01 |
| 31. H. Quality | | | -0.13** | -0.10* | -0.05 | -0.07 | 0.20** | 0.13** | 0.02 | -0.15** | 0.11* | -0.14** | 0.16** | 0.13** | 0.15** | 0.12** | 0.13** | 0.01 | 0.14** |
| 32. Remote | | | 0.00 | -0.05 | 0.02 | 0.08 | -0.19** | -0.10* | -0.11* | -0.02 | -0.11* | 0.09* | -0.10* | -0.08 | -0.05 | 0.00 | -0.01 | 0.05 | -0.13** |
| 33. Asynchronous | | | 0.00 | -0.07 | -0.04 | -0.01 | 0.21** | 0.13** | 0.16** | 0.07 | 0.13** | -0.08 | 0.08 | 0.08 | 0.07 | 0.08 | 0.11* | -0.05 | 0.10* |
| 34. South USA | | | 0.06 | 0.00 | 0.02 | -0.09 | -0.04 | 0.00 | -0.05 | 0.01 | -0.06 | 0.05 | -0.07 | -0.09* | -0.05 | -0.06 | -0.01 | 0.01 | -0.05 |
| 35. Office work | | | -0.13** | -0.03 | -0.06 | -0.12* | 0.08 | 0.11* | 0.03 | 0.01 | 0.10* | -0.07 | 0.09* | 0.12** | 0.11* | 0.07 | 0.07 | -0.11* | 0.08 |
| 36. Mandatory | 0.04 | 0.50 | .06 | 0.00 | -0.01 | -0.05 | -0.31** | -0.20** | -0.03 | 0.00 | -0.17** | -0.11** | -0.23** | -0.21** | -0.25** | -0.16** | -0.12** | -0.02 | -0.15** |

Table 21. (continued)

| | 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 | 25 | 26 | 27 | 28 | 29 | 30 | 31 | 32 | 33 | 34 | 35 |
|--------------------------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|-------|-------|-----------------|---------|---------|---------|---------|-------|-------|-------|
| 1. Turnover Intentions | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 2. Turnover (Y/N) | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 3. CWBs | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 4. Cynicism | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 5. POPT | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 6. Tailored (Y/N) | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 7. Borrowing Power | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 8. Effectuate Autonomy | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 9. Design Sprints | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 10. Citizenship Fatigue | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 11. Org Identification | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 12. Affective Commit. | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 13. Org Support | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 14. Supervisor Support | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 15. Participatory Leader | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 16. Ostracism | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 17. Subjective Stress | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 18. Age | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 19. Income | 0.14** | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 20. Class Identity | 0.07 | 0.52** | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 21. Black | -0.08 | -0.11* | -0.06 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 22. Hispanic Latino/a | -0.11* | -0.02 | -0.10* | -0.17** | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 23. White | 0.16** | 0.11* | 0.12** | -0.70** | -0.55** | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 24. Orientat. Bisexual | -0.19** | -0.07 | -0.09 | -0.05 | 0.09 | -0.03 | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 25. Orientat. Hetero | 0.12** | 0.16** | 0.13** | 0.08 | -0.05 | -0.03 | -0.71** | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 26. Orientat. Gay/Les. | 0.05 | -0.05 | -0.06 | -0.07 | -0.01 | 0.06 | -0.06 | -0.49** | | | | | | | | | | |
| 27. Disability | -0.06 | -0.12** | -0.09* | -0.03 | 0.05 | -0.02 | 0.21** | -0.22** | -0.02 | | | | | | | | | |
| 28. Extroversion | -0.04 | -0.04 | -0.21** | -0.01 | -0.04 | 0.03 | -0.05 | 0.00 | 0.02 | -0.04 | $\alpha = 0.82$ | | | | | | | |
| 29. D&I Pro | -0.05 | 0.09* | 0.09 | 0.25** | -0.10* | -0.14 | -0.04 | 0.10* | -0.08 | -0.06 | -0.06 | | | | | | | |
| 30. Edu: No BA | -0.14** | -0.25** | -0.30** | -0.08 | 0.09* | -0.02** | 0.18** | -0.14** | 0.00 | 0.11* | 0.05 | -0.13** | | | | | | |
| 31. H. Quality | -0.03 | 0.05 | 0.10* | 0.17** | -0.06 | -0.08 | -0.04 | 0.06 | -0.03 | -0.01 | -0.07 | 0.27** | -0.11* | | | | | |
| 32. Remote | 0.02 | 0.11* | 0.07 | -0.07 | -0.03 | 0.09 | -0.01 | 0.04 | -0.02 | 0.03 | 0.09* | -0.13** | -0.06 | -0.10* | | | | |
| 33. Asynchronous | -0.03 | 0.03 | 0.03 | 0.09 | -0.08 | -0.03 | -0.05 | 0.02 | 0.04 | -0.02 | -0.11* | 0.06 | -0.11* | 0.10* | -0.32** | | | |
| 34. South USA | 0.07 | -0.10* | -0.05 | 0.03 | -0.01 | -0.03 | -0.04 | 0.00 | 0.07 | 0.07 | 0.07 | -0.09* | 0.03 | -0.08 | 0.03 | -0.01 | | |
| 35. Office work | -0.02 | 0.08 | 0.07 | -0.03 | -0.01 | 0.04 | -0.09* | 0.05 | -0.02 | -0.05 | -0.01 | 0.00 | -0.13** | 0.02 | -0.09* | 0.02 | 0.02 | |
| 36. Mandatory | 0.08 | -0.11* | -0.15** | -0.21** | -0.05 | 0.21** | 0.01 | -0.03 | 0.11* | -0.03 | 0.13** | -0.26** | 0.08 | -0.20** | -0.09* | -0.05 | 0.09* | -0.07 |

Table 22.

Regression Testing the Proposed Model that Effectuating Autonomy, Design Springs, and Borrowing Power Influence Cynicism and Turnover Intentions through the mediator of Tailored Diversity Programs

| Tailored Programs | Cynicism | | | | | | Turnover Intentions | | | | | | |
|---|-----------------|---------|---------|------------------|---------|---------|---------------------|--------------------|---------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| | Baseline Models | | | Tailoring Models | | | | | | | | | |
| Variables | Model 1 | Model 2 | Model 3 | Model 4 | Model 5 | Model 6 | Model 7 | Model 8 | Model 9 | Model 10 | Model 11 | Model 12 | Model 13 |
| Basic Control variables | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Gender | -.18 | -.16 | -.21* | -.18 | -.17 | -.18 | -.15 | -.16 | -.19 | -.16 | -.10 | -.10 | -.18 |
| Age | .00 | .00 | .00 | .00 | .00 | .00 | .00 | .00 | .00 | .00 | .00 | .00 | .00 |
| Race (Hispanic vs. Black) | .17 | .14 | .13 | .12 | .08 | -.34 | .08 | .05 | .00 | -.01 | -.05 | -.06 | -.34 |
| Race (White vs. Black & Hispanic) | .02 | .01 | .00 | -.01 | -.03 | -.05 | -.02 | -.03 | -.03 | -.03 | -.03 | -.04 | -.05 |
| Extroversion | .06 | .04 | .02 | .02 | .01 | .02 | .09 | .04 | .04 | .03 | .03 | .03 | .02 |
| Disability | .19 | .12 | .09 | .03 | .05 | .05 | .63** | .45* | .44* | .40* | .39* | .40* | .05 |
| Education | -.14 | -.16 | -.12 | -.07 | -.06 | -.07 | -.02 | -.07 | -.06 | -.03 | .00 | .00 | -.07 |
| Sexual orientation (Hetero) | .04 | .05 | .05 | .05 | .04 | .04 | -.03 | -.02 | .00 | .00 | -.02 | -.02 | .04 |
| Southern USA | | -.23* | -.24* | -.26 | -.24** | -.25** | | .03 | .01 | .00 | .09 | .09 | -.25** |
| Office Work Type | | -.27 | -.22 | -.17 | -.17 | -.16 | | -.31* | -.30* | -.26 | -.21 | -.21 | -.16 |
| Income | | .00 | -.01 | -.01 | .00 | .00 | | -.04 | -.04 | -.05 | -.04 | -.04 | .00 |
| Class ID | | .03 | -.05 | -.02 | -.03 | -.03 | | -.04 | -.04 | -.02 | -.01 | -.02 | -.03 |
| Work Stress | | -.19** | .19 | .21** | .26** | .26** | | -.34** | .02 | .04 | -.03 | -.01 | .26** |
| Diversity Program Design Control Variables | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Synchronous “live” | | | .15 | .17 | .23* | .23* | | | .12 | .12 | .07 | .10 | .23* |
| Remote “virtual” | | | .21* | .19 | .13 | .13 | | | -.07 | -.08 | -.14 | -.16 | .13 |
| Mandatory | | | .17 | .14 | .04 | .05 | | | -.02 | -.05 | -.10 | -.13 | .05 |
| Citizenship Fatigue | | | .42 | .41** | .40** | .39** | | | .38** | .38 | .24** | .25** | .39** |
| Program Quality (Kalev et al.) | | | .01 | .02 | .09 | .10 | | | -.20 | -.20 | -.21 | -.18 | .10 |
| D&I Professional | | | | .38** | .48** | .48** | | | .11 | .18 | .06 | .11 | .48** |
| Main effect variables | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Effectuating Autonomy | | | | .05 | .14* | .14* | | | .00 | -.02 | .02 | .14* | |
| Design Springs | | | | -.22** | -.14** | -.13* | | | | -.18** | -.11* | -.09 | -.13 |
| Borrowing Power | | | | .03 | .02 | .02 | | | | .09 | .08 | .08 | .02 |
| Mediator | | | | | | | Mediators | | | | | | |
| Tailoring | | | | | -.24** | -.37 | | Cynicism Tailoring | | | .33** | .30** | -.09* |
| Moderators | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Tailored X Race Moderators | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Hispanic vs. Black | | | | | | -.34 | | | | | | | -.05 |
| White vs. Black & Hispanic | | | | | | -.05 | | | | | | | .02 |
| R ² | .05 | .08 | .32** | .34** | .39** | .39** | .07 | .14** | .32** | .33** | .40** | .41** | .41** |
| ΔR ² | | .036 | .233 | .023 | .048 | | | .071 | .178 | .017 | .068 | .006 | |

Note. N=498.

** p < .01

*p < .05

7.5 Structural Model

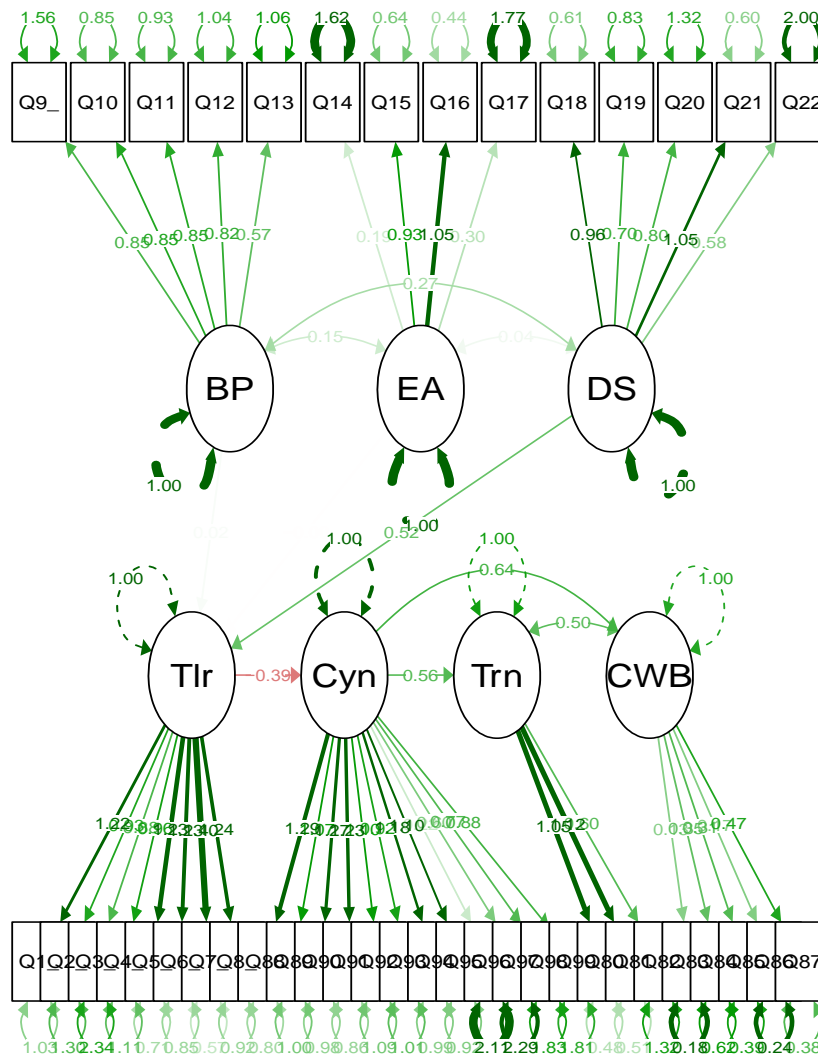
Feasibility: OLS Regression

The hypothesized core of the structural model is a link between the three antecedents, *tailoring*, cynicism, and turnover. The provisional support in the OLS model was tested in a structural equation approach, to cope with data non-normality using maximum likelihood estimate. The results are in Figure 4, below.

Figure 4.

Structural Equation Model showing that Design Sprints are the primary antecedent to Tailoring, and Tailoring mediates the connection between sprinting, employee cynicism.

Reduced cynicism about organizational change predicts lower turnover and fewer counter-productive work behaviors.



7.6 CONCLUSIONS

The study of workplace diversity and institutional theory usually takes an instrumental approach, assessing the benefits and drawbacks of existing workplace diversity programs for hoped-for desegregation outcomes (Frank Dobbin & Kalev, 2015, 2016b, 2019; Frank Dobbin, Kalev, Deutsch, Gonsalves, & Kim, 2020; Kalev et al., 2006; Leslie, 2019; Nishii et al., 2018). However, institutional programs and templates for such programs do not govern themselves. People design programs. As they do so, designers and implementers are subject to social evaluations by their workforce (Nishii et al., 2008). In these studies, I have uncovered that employees see taskforces (design sprints) when they are truly intense efforts on diversity. They begin to perceive the results of those processes as more customized and differentiated – even when controlling for the quality of the program.

Outside observers are the ultimate arbiters of whether an organization succeeds at or fails to meet its social norm obligations. Among the largest protest movements in U.S. history, the Black Lives Matter movement has sparked global solidarity movements and an expansion in its scope (Buchanan, Bui, & Patel, 2020). The movement's (perhaps unintended) target for social change has also spread beyond government-run police and corrections organizations. Employers of all types – public, private, and charity – are making diversity-related organizational changes that outsiders will ultimately judge. Across the social sciences, many scholars have studied the emergence of this social movement and its predecessors. Political scientists highlight the role of external societal attention, predicting correctly that public support for the Black Lives Matter movement would decline as media attention to police brutality declines (Hayes & Lawless, 2018; Hill, Lo, Vavreck, & Zaller, 2013; D. Thomas & Horowitz, 2020). Sociologists have similarly

focused on outsiders – activists who strategize how to use direct action to embarrass those organizations that defect from the spreading social norms (King & Soule, 2007; Luders, 2006).

Though many scholarly accounts have focused on the role of outsiders, organizations are quickly adding new insider diversity-promotion positions. Furthermore, these paid professionals are surrounded by pro-diversity employee volunteers – people with separate day jobs that commit additional time to organizational change about diversity. This is unique to places with intense normative pressure in society. When banks created chief risk officers after broad-based societal blame for financial crises, and oil companies created environmental sustainability managers after oil spills, those professionals did not necessarily have the same level of intense social evaluation *inside the firm* as that experienced by the chief diversity officers in the 6 companies studied here.

What this collection of studies has shown is that one such social evaluation – whether an initiative is doing anything customized or differentiated - matters for key outcomes: cynicism about organizational change. Cynicism is a possible hindrance to strategic outcomes precisely because it is demobilizing. Insiders – volunteers and professionals – all face a dilemma: they have private information about how the organization really performs on social goals. They also count on the organization for their livelihoods (Briscoe & Gupta, 2016). "...You want to be everything, but you don't want to get fired either. I've got kids to feed" (D&I Executive Interview #71). Indeed much of organizational behavior research recommends a careful approach (Grant, 2013). Organizational change agents, and the executives seeking to manage them, should take care not to play things so safe that their work is viewed as just another institutional template – a “turnkey” practice will only serve to entrench, rather than disrupt, cynicism about organizational change.

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APPENDIX: INTERVIEW GUIDE

Introduction

- A. Researcher Background: CU Boulder PhD student in organizational behavior and entrepreneurship interested in how diversity initiatives begin and how they change over time.
- B. Information Privacy: The dissertation case studies will use pseudonyms for company names and personal names to preserve the confidentiality of each informant.
- C. Describe Involvement:
 - a. Usually each interview takes 45 minutes.
 - b. Request availability later on to verify details in the chronology
 - c. Request applicable (internal archives) program mission statements or designs
- D. Permission to Record Interview

Chronology-Building

- E. Entry into Field of Work
 - a. How did you come to this career field?
- F. Entry into Diversity Volunteerism / Profession?
 - a. How did you come to this profession OR How did you come to participate in the Employee Resources Group?
 - b. Was this your first time doing this sort of thing (diversity volunteerism / work)?
- G. How did things evolve?
 - a. What happened?
 - b. Then what happened?
 - c. What happened after that?
 - d. Were there any other key milestones?

If Chronology-Building Is Interrupted, Return to Chronology Using These Questions

- H. Interaction Patterns
 - a. While participating in the ERG (OR working on diversity full-time), what did people ask you to do? When was that?
 - b. Who was asking? When was that?
 - c. What was the context in which you were most often asked to do that? When was that?
 - d. While participating in the ERG (OR working on diversity full-time), what did you ask others to do? When was that?
 - e. Who did you ask? When was that?
 - f. What was the context in which you were most often asking someone to do that?

I. Strategizing

- a. How did your team (OR resource group) decide what to do and what to avoid doing?
 - i. What did you ultimately decide? When was that?
 - ii. Who was in favor? Who was opposed? Why? When was that?

J. Organizing

- a. How were these efforts organized?
 - i. Roles: Who did what? When was that?
 - ii. Means: Were there other ways considered? When was that?

K. Ecosystem

- a. What was going on at the time of this diversity effort?
 - i. Inside the company? When was that?
 - ii. Outside the company? When was that?

L. Innovation

- a. Did anything surprise you (good or bad) about the diversity efforts?
 - i. What seemed new?

Concluding Thoughts

M. Insight

- a. What do you wish that people knew about this kind of effort, OR this kind of role? [ALWAYS save this question for last. Participants want to evaluate rather than just report.]

N. Thanks

O. Request for other sources (snowball upward: start with lowest level informants and work up)