

Operational Risk in DEI Adoption: Ideological Capture and Its Business Consequences

Executive Summary

Over the past two decades, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) programs have become standard practice across academic, nonprofit, and corporate institutions. Initially adopted as a legal hedge against discrimination claims, DEI soon evolved into a full-fledged internal infrastructure, complete with consultants, performance metrics, and bureaucracies designed to measure and promote workforce diversity. The assumption was that such programs would both reduce liability and improve organizational efficiency by fostering collaboration across demographic lines.

However, beneath the surface of HR compliance and corporate goodwill lies a more profound issue: DEI is not a neutral set of best practices. It is rooted in a political ideology that stems from the academic theory of social equity, developed by scholars like H. George Frederickson. This framework was deliberately embedded into public administration literature as a moral imperative, a normative goal that seeks not procedural fairness (equality), but outcome equalization (equity). Over time, this ideology expanded in scope, influencing everything from public policy to private business practices, and eventually materializing as the “E” in DEI.

The intellectual scaffolding of DEI is closely tied to what scholars like Sensoy and DiAngelo call Critical Social Justice, a worldview that sees society as structurally biased in favor of certain identity groups. On this view, American institutions, from language and values to law and science, are constructed to benefit white, male, heterosexual, Christian citizens at the expense of everyone else. DEI programs, therefore, are not merely anti-discrimination trainings; they carry an embedded imperative to reshape society through activism. Employees trained under this framework are not simply educated, they are socialized into a lifelong commitment to “challenge injustice,” often through institutional advocacy.

The result is ideological capture. Like regulatory capture, where a regulator is co-opted to serve the industry it regulates, ideological capture occurs when an institution is redirected to serve the interests of an embedded political worldview. DEI programs introduce this risk by encouraging employees to prioritize activism over excellence, identity over merit, and political alignment over institutional mission. The internal

disruption this causes has been documented in public controversies, such as the revolt at Penguin Random House over publishing Jordan Peterson, where DEI-trained staff pressured leadership to conform to ideological expectations.

Given the shifting legal and cultural climate, the continued implementation of DEI programs poses growing risk: public relations disasters, internal division, legal liability, and degradation of performance. In response, a clean departure from ideological entanglements and a return to mission-focused governance is recommended.

A mission-focused company does not take political stances or embed activism into its operations. It hires, evaluates, and promotes based solely on merit and measurable performance. This approach, rooted in equal opportunity and procedural fairness, creates a healthy work environment, avoids legal pitfalls, and enables the institution to maintain focus on its core objectives. Companies like Coinbase have adopted this approach with success, contrasting favorably with activist-entangled organizations facing internal strife.

In a competitive global economy, the institutions that will thrive are those that resist ideological drift and remain resolutely focused on their mission. The evidence is mounting: DEI may be industry standard, but it is not best practice.

Table of Contents

Executive Summary.....	1
Table of Contents	3
History: The rise and prevalence of DEI	4
Doctrine: The Ideology Behind DEI	8
Social Equity’s Academic Origins	8
The Pipeline: From Campus to Boardroom.....	11
The Critical Social Justice Framework.....	12
Control: Ideological Capture.....	16
Solution: Becoming a Mission-Focused Company	19
Conclusion.....	20
Academic and Policy Research.....	Error! Bookmark not defined.
Consulting and Compliance Insights	Error! Bookmark not defined.
About Unified Solutions America.....	Error! Bookmark not defined.
Capabilities Overview	Error! Bookmark not defined.
Contact and Engagement.....	Error! Bookmark not defined.

History: The rise and prevalence of DEI

****Note: For a more extensive history behind the critical theory movement that generated DEI as its “praxis”, or practice of the theory, see XXXXX (Wil’s History White Paper Hyperlinked)***

Over the last 15 years, the implementation of DEI (Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion) programs has emerged as a best practice across both the academic world and the private sector. There are a number of reasons for this, not the least of which is that corporations are looking for ways to indemnify themselves against liability for discriminatory practices.¹ This has led to near universal adopting of various forms of DEI training (Sensitivity training, anti-discrimination training, anti-bias training, etc) across the corporate landscape. Given the cost of discrimination lawsuits it is not surprising in the least that companies have sought out strategies to hedge against liability for discrimination. So the spread of DEI programs across the institutional landscape is understandable.

Any course of action taken in the business world needs to come equipped with a cost benefit analysis that takes into account both the immediate and long terms costs and benefits of adopting any particular course of action. As any good business owner knows, this is not merely a matter of chalking up money in and money out with respect to a given item. One needs to consider the effect of the policy on the institution as a whole, and the ability of that institution to carry out its mission. As such, when adjudicating the merits of adopting a DEI policy, one cannot merely weight the money spent for a given DEI program against the possibility of being sued for discrimination, the overall effect of DEI training on the institutional environment and the organizational culture needs to be taken into account. One reason DEI programs were thought to hedge against discrimination lawsuits is that they were taken to be indicative of a good faith attempt by an institution to make the culture of that institution hospitable to “diversity,” with the goal being to ensure that people from different groups are able to cooperate, collaborate, and work together to accomplish the mission of the company.

However, there are good reasons to believe that the implementation of DEI programs does not have the effect on institutional culture that is intended. DEI programs and trainings tend to present themselves as offering a way to remove discrimination from an institution while simultaneously making that institution more efficient. On its face, that

¹ Frank Robbin, inventing equal opportunity

looks like money well spent, and one can understand why C-suite executives would be willing to open their pocketbooks to accrue such programming in order to protect themselves from liability. However, after having carved out a niche owing to the presumed ability of various diversity trainings to ameliorate liability, the Human Resources industry began to tout diversity programs as being justified on business terms. The idea being that increase of diversity in the work force and an increase in the ability of employees to cooperate across cultural lines would lead to an increase in company efficiency and effectiveness.² This all justified a push from the Human Resources sector to increase the number of personnel managers both on compliance grounds and on business grounds.

The acceptance of this reasoning created a proliferation of bureaucracy dedicated to increasing the racial and ethnic diversity of private sector businesses. Many large companies created an entire internal infrastructure of executives and managers whose chief role within the company was to monitor the racial and gender makeup of the company. Human resources managers, equal employment offices, affirmative action hiring committees, diversity committees, affinity groups, and other bureaucratic units were created for the sole purpose of advancing the diversity agenda. To do this a number of procedures, processes and tracking tools were created that has as their goal the measurement of both the hiring and advancement of people that we considered to constitute “diversity.” To carry out this agenda the personal sector enlisted a number of tools similar to those that existed within the business world including: culture audits, performance evaluations, job descriptions, management reviews, best practices, attitude surveys, and the incentivizing of the hiring and advancement of “diverse” hires. Additionally, the Human Resources sector adopted and adapted a number of processes that were already used in union grievance procedures. To this end various procedures were adopted in the name of fighting discrimination: harassment training, arbitration, disciplinary committees, grievance panels, and so forth. In order to ensure they were abreast of the latest developments in the legal and corporate worlds, companies often hired firms, consultants, and attorneys (often at great cost) as a way to guarantee that they had adopted all the necessary practices.

One can see an enormous increase in the hiring of managers, officers, executives, consultants, and lawyers in order to administer the newly created required diversity apparatus. This is visualized in the following charts:³

² Frank Robbin, inventing equal opportunity

³ All the charts are from Dobbin

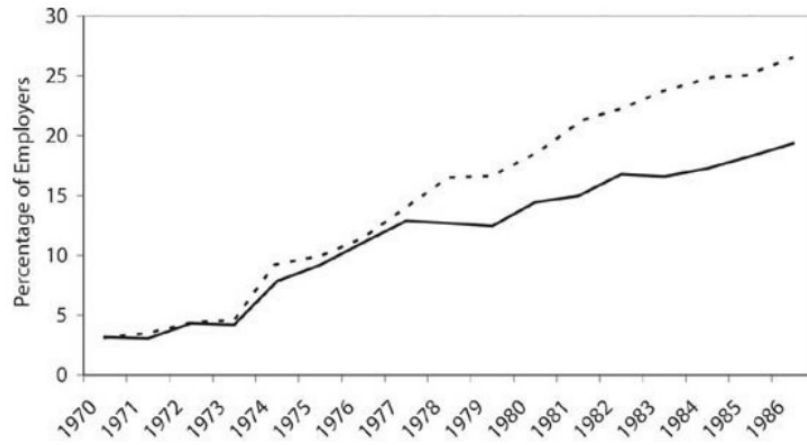


Figure 1: The Growth of equal opportunity offices and affirmative action officers from 1970-1986

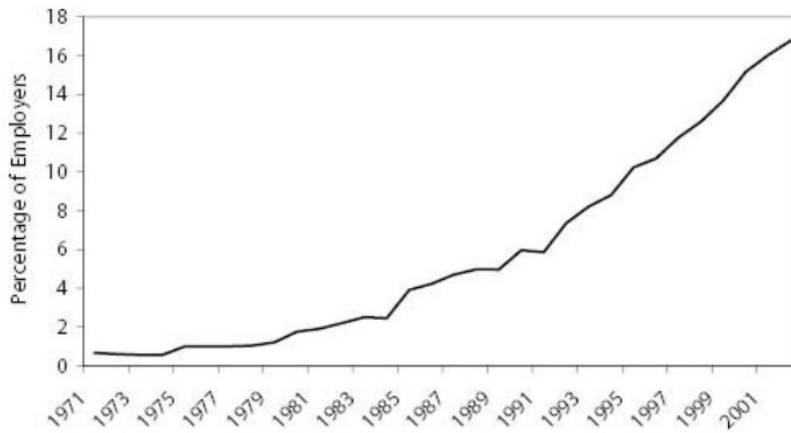


Figure 2: Growth of diversity performance evaluations for managers from 1971-2002

Figure 3: Number of employers with equal opportunity or diversity policies from 1971-2001

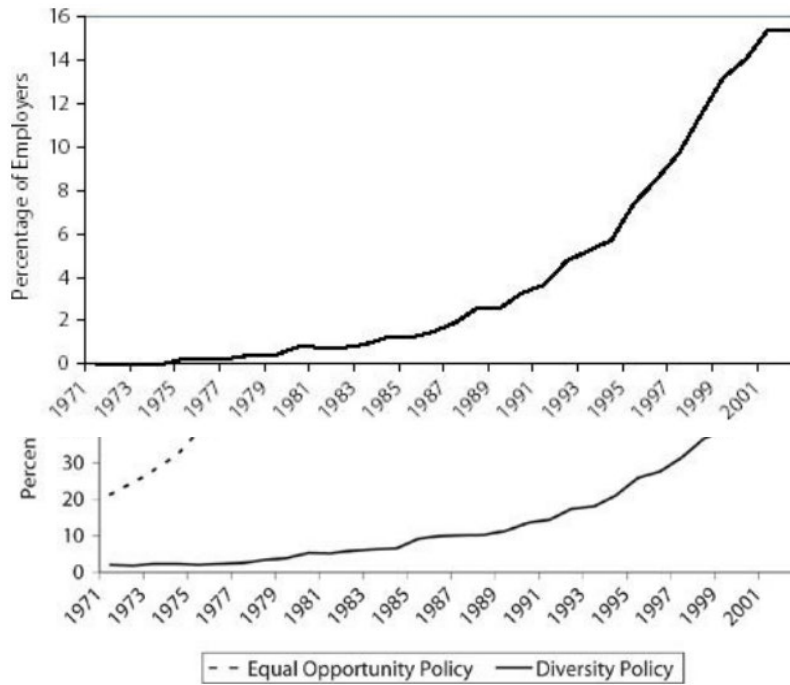


Figure 4: Number of employers with diversity task forces (1971-2001)

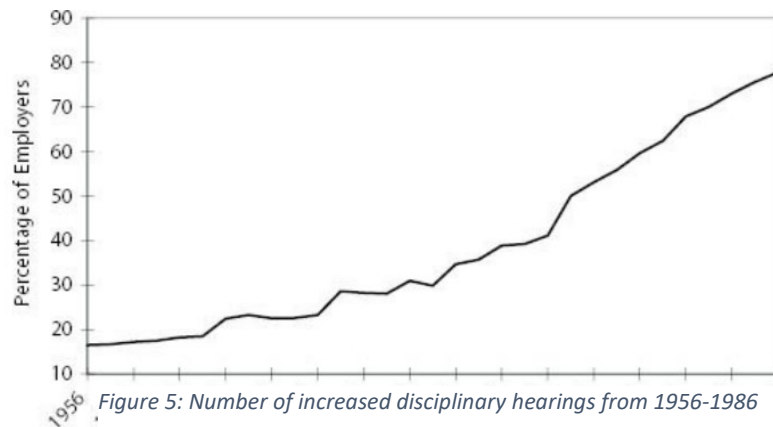


Figure 5: Number of increased disciplinary hearings from 1956-1986

While this admittedly brief account is not an exhaustive of the history of diversity training and does not include every practice, process, or procedure used in the administering of diversity programs, it does give us a clear snapshot of the depth and breadth of the bureaucracy that was created in the name of workforce diversity. According to McKinsey spending on DEI efforts by companies in the United States was “estimated at \$7.5 billion and is projected to more than double by 2026.”⁴ All of this means there are an enormous amount of resources put to use in the service of infusing DEI in the corporate world.

Given the startling amount of resources poured into workforce diversity initiative and the various DEI trainings that accompany them, we need to determine whether or not the benefits of such programming justifies the cost.

Doctrine: The Ideology Behind DEI

There is a tendency on the part of corporate executives to see DEI as something akin to a mild annoyance relating to legal compliance; a necessary intervention required to avoid lawsuits and entanglement with civil rights compliance officers of the federal government. This is not the case. DEI is actually a cluster of ideas that comes loaded with the ideology of a social and political movement that has its own goals, objectives, and agenda. In order to understand this it is necessary to look at the peer-reviewed literature on public administration, and the academic literature on Social Justice. Once we do that the ideological commitments that underly DEI will become clear and we will be better able to adjudicate the usefulness of DEI programs and trainings.

Social Equity’s Academic Origins

Writing in the journal *Public Administration and Social Equity* H. George Frederickson, one of the leading scholars in the field of public administration, discussed how he had developed a theory of “social equity” to serve as the “third pillar” of public administration. Frederickson’s goal was to make social equity a principle that was the equal to economy and efficiency in terms of principles to which public administration should adhere.⁵ Frederickson proceeded to work with Phil Rutledge to embed his idea of equity in the public administration literature through the National Academy of Public Administration:

⁴ <https://www.mckinsey.com/about-us/new-at-mckinsey-blog/most-diversity-initiatives-fall-short-but-success-is-within-reach-with-these-five-factors>

⁵ George Frederickson, *Public Administration and Social Equity*, *Public Administration Review*, Vol. 50, No. 2 (Mar. - Apr., 1990), pp. 228

“George knew how to harness the power of organizations to promote ideas and embed them in the discipline. Social equity is a beneficiary of his wizardry. Partnering with Phil Rutledge, the then most persuasive advocate for social equity, they leveraged the intellectual domain of NAPA to twist arms and persuade the field’s luminaries that social equity should be embedded in the canon and that NAPA should be at the forefront.

*With nudging, prodding, and help from many, the duo succeeded. NAPA’s definition is now the one that prevails. **It operationalizes social equity and expresses a moral imperative**”⁶*

This first thing to recognize here is that this is a normative imperative that is being embedded in the public administration literature. The point here cannot be overstated: Frederickson was seeking to make a political and normative judgement one of the pillars to which public administration as a whole must adhere; regardless of the stated goals of the organization in question. The key is to note that Frederiksons work *operationalizes* social equity and the moral imperative that comes with it; and this means social equity comes to us with a moral imperative for action embedded within it. The normative principle Frederikson sought to instill as a “third pillar” in the public administration literature was the principle of equity defined as “Adjusting shares so that citizen A is made equal to citizen B.”⁷ Notice that this principle of equity is not equivalent to the principle of *equality*, and the 1981 *ASPA Professional Standards and Ethic Workbook and Study Guide for Public Administration* makes this point explicitly.⁸

To wit, equality is concerned with procedural fairness and closely associated with what is commonly thought of as equal opportunity: the notion that each person must be held to the same standards, and that each case must be adjudicated on the merits. Equality is the principle that ensures that people are treated fairly and without regard to such things as race, gender, religion, sex, and so fourth. Equity is a much different principle altogether as its goal is “Adjusting shares so that citizen A is made equal to citizen B,”⁹ and thus is concerned with equalizing outcomes. The picture that emerges then is that where equality is concerned with equality of opportunity, equity is concerned with equality of outcomes in the relevant domain. So while the concepts of equity and equality are not equivalent, with equity going much further than equality.

With this vision of equity in view “Researchers, especially in public policy fields, began to analyze variations in the distribution of public service by income, race, neighborhood,

⁶ Melvin J. Dubnick, Mary E. Guy, Donald F. Kettl, Pan Suk Kim, Rosemary O’Leary, *A Tribute to H. George Fredrickson*, Perspectives on Public Management and Governance, 2021, p. 8

⁷ Ibid 229

⁸ Ibid 229

⁹ Ibid 229

and eventually by gender.¹⁰ Owing to a commitment to a new concept of social equity the theorists working in public administration sought to ameliorate inequalities along a number of different lines with respect to the distribution of social services. However, the scope of social equity began to widen dramatically in at least three ways. First the number of variables that fall under the rubric of social equity has drastically increased since 1968. When Frederickson formulated social equity it was primarily concerned with removing discrimination along the lines of race, sex, and class from the administration of public services. Since then “the focus has expanded beyond that to gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender, family issues, child custody, environmental, organizational, economic, and social justice, as well as intergenerational issues and those yet to be defined.”¹¹ This represents an enormous expansion of the issues to which the social equity lens is applied, and results in the social equity lens becoming a lens through which almost every single issue is adjudicated.

The second way the scope of social equity was expanded was to extend the applicability of the concept beyond the administration of public services, and to make social equity a goal of the services being administered. This would mean to make social equity the standard by which the policy creation, administrative procedures, best practices, and outcomes of public services are judged. “When H. George Frederickson first coined the term, social equity had to do with the fairness of the organization, its management, and its delivery of public services. Now ensconced in the canon, the term’s meaning has broadened to encompass the policy formulation and rulemaking aspect as well as outcomes.”¹²

The final way that social equity expanded was by its movement from the public governmental realm and into the private business sphere. As we saw, social equity began as a concept that was applied at the level of public administration and was generally concerned with the administration of services administered by the government. Since 1968, the idea of social equity migrated to the world of non-profits and NGO’s who provided public services through government grants, and from there made its way into the corporate world as the “E” in DEI.

The expansion of the scope of social equity from the 70s through the 2000s and the proliferation of DEI programs of various sorts that followed in the 2010s, was at least in part the product of politically motivated work in academic circles which focused on various forms of social inequality. It is important to note that H. George Frederickson was operating in the Academic world, not the business world, when he began his work on social equity. This is important because it was during the 1960s that certain leftist

¹⁰ Ibid 229

¹¹ Mary E. Guy, Sean A. McCandless, Social Equity: Its Legacy, Its Promise. *Public Administration Review*, Vol. 72, Iss. S1, pp. S11.

¹² Ibid S11

intellectuals sought to make use of the academic world (and the Universities in particular) as a vehicle for social change that aligned with leftist principles. As the American Philosopher John Searle remarked in 1993: “During the 1960s a fairly sizable number of leftist intellectuals became convinced that the best arena of social change was culture—that high culture in general, and university departments of literature in particular, could become important weapons in the struggle to overcome racism, imperialism, etc.”¹³

It is important to lay out how the academic literature gave rise to programs in business schools and the public administration literature that demanded the business world adopt Social Equity as an actionable moral imperative.

The Pipeline: From Campus to Boardroom

Beginning in the 1960s there was a politicization of a great number of academic disciplines, including the discipline of public administration. The way this usually proceeded was by making curricular changes in the name of “diversity” or “multiculturalism” in which the content of the courses would be in part governed by certain leftist political goals and principles. This is why “many of the multiculturalist proposals for curricular reform involve a subtle redefinition of the idea of an academic subject from that of a domain to be studied to that of a cause to be advanced.”¹⁴ In such cases the goal of the discipline changes; rather than seeking to objectively study relevant topics within a certain discipline the multicultural reformers seek to use that discipline as a vehicle for advancing their political cause. The result of this shift in thinking was that politically motivated academics formulated a series of theories which they used to justify using social institutions (including universities, k-12 schools, government agencies, NGO’s, Cultural institutions, accreditation agencies, and corporations) to advance certain leftist political causes.

To the person who is unfamiliar with the current state of the academic world this might sound like something of a conspiracy theory, but this is the state of affairs of things according to the most well received and prestigious publications of academics themselves. To take just one example, in *The Critical Turn in Education*, a book published by Routledge (the most prestigious academic publisher in the western world) Isaac Gottesman writes:

*“To the question: ‘Where did all the sixties radicals go?’, the most accurate answer,” noted Paul Buhle (1991) in his classic *Marxism in the United States*, “would be: neither to religious cults nor yuppiedom, but to the classroom”. After the fall of the New Left arose a new left, an Academic Left. For many of these young scholars, Marxist thought,*

¹³ Searle Crisis American education p. 1993

¹⁴ Rationality realism Searle

and particularly what some refer to as Western Marxism or neo-Marxism, and what I will refer to as the critical Marxist tradition, was an intellectual anchor. As participants in the radical politics of the sixties entered graduate school and moved into faculty positions and started publishing, the critical turn began to change scholarship throughout the humanities and social sciences.”¹⁵

These politically motivated social theorists would spend decades theorizing about how a more just (by their lights) world could be created. In doing so they formulated a set of ideas about how society functioned which they hoped to use in order to transform society in order to align it with their particular normative conception of society. the result was the creation of a worldview and ideology that has come to be known in the academic world as Critical Social Justice, and in the culture as “wokeness.” Since universities are the bodies which provide credentialing services used in numerous industries, the politics of the Universities made their way into various social institutions including government, non-profits, NGO’s, and the corporate entities in the business world.

Given the enormous complexity of the academic literature, it would be impossible to give a thorough explanation of all the theories, ideas, concepts, and debates that occurred during the development of Critical Social Justice. What we do need is a brief explanation of the view so we can see the moral imperatives of Critical Social Justice that are being infused into the business world under the banner of DEI. So what follows is a description of the final product as it is stated by two of its foremost theorists, Ozlem Sensoy and Robin Diangelo.

“A critical approach to social justice refers to specific theoretical perspectives that recognize that society is stratified (i.e., divided and unequal) in significant and far-reaching ways along social group lines that include race, class, gender, sexuality, and ability. Critical social justice recognizes inequality as deeply embedded in the fabric of society (i.e., as structural), and actively seeks to change this.”¹⁶

The Critical Social Justice Framework

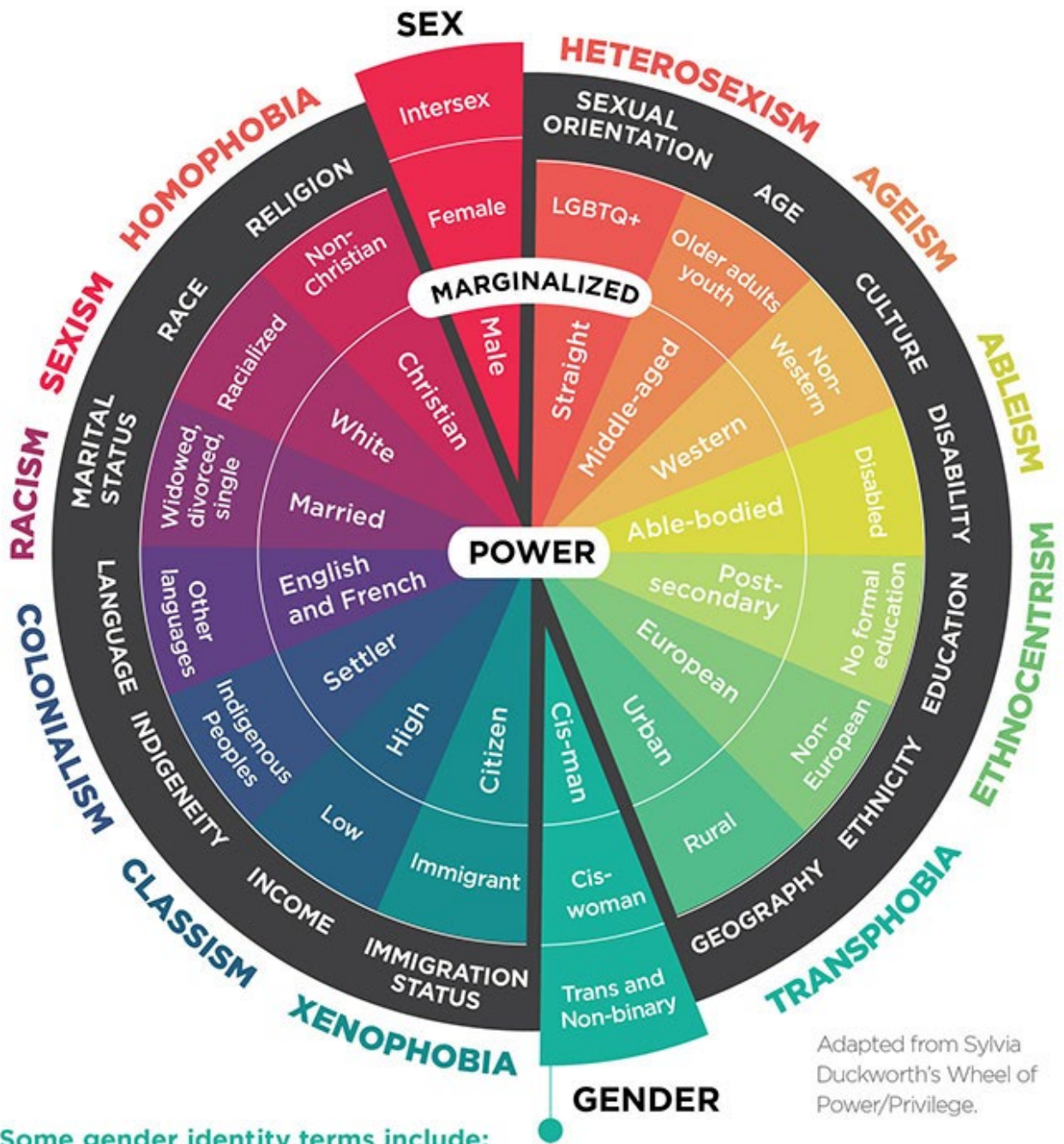
What this means, put simply, is that society is created in order to sort people into groups and then creates a social hierarchy that privileges certain groups at the expense of other groups. According to Critical Social Justice the biases, bigotries, and assumptions which “privilege” straight white males are embedded into American society at every level. They are embedded in everything: education, language, institutions, morality, economics, infrastructure, government, values, and so fourth. On this view there is an interlocking set of social systems privilege or oppress people depending on their race,

¹⁵ Gottesman p.1

¹⁶ Sensoy Deangelo

class, gender, sexuality, and ability. According to this view society is designed to “center” the interests of White, straight, heterosexual, Christian, able-bodied males at the expense of everyone else. According to this view racism, sexism, homophobia, misogyny, transphobia, white privilege, and other sorts of injustice are baked into the fabric of society. These “isms” and “phobias” are embedded in rules, norms, values, and social expectations of society as well as all the formal institutions, laws, and rules that govern how society functions.

The Canadian Institutes of Health Research, an agency funded by the Canadian Government, diagrams the situation as follows:



Adapted from Sylvia Duckworth's Wheel of Power/Privilege.

Some gender identity terms include:

Agender	Genderfluid	Gender neutral	Transgender man
Bigender	Genderqueer	Non-binary	Transgender woman

As odd as this sounds, it is the default view of many of our most prestigious institutions. The following Graphic, created by The Smithsonian National Museum of African American History and Culture¹⁷ states that such things as politeness, individualism, the nuclear family, being on time, the scientific method, objectivity and rationality, delayed gratification, and planning for the future are all things that are assumptions of white culture. Here is the graphic:

In short, every single aspect of western civilization in general, and American society in particular is taken to be an expression of the interests of straight, white, Christian, able-bodied, heterosexual males. As such, all of these social expectations, including being on time, politeness, rationality, objectivity, planning for the future, having a family, and everything else is taken to be complicit in oppressing anyone who is not a straight white male. Again, Please note that the aforementioned graphic was created and distributed by the Smithsonian Institution: one of the largest and most prestigious museum, research, and education institutions in the United States.

Please notice that in the definition of Critical Social Justice provided above that we are told, *“Critical social justice recognizes inequality as deeply embedded in the fabric of society (i.e., as structural),*

TALKING ABOUT RACE | NMAAHC

ASPECTS & ASSUMPTIONS OF WHITENESS & WHITE CULTURE IN THE UNITED STATES

White dominant culture, or **whiteness**, refers to the ways white people and their traditions, attitudes and ways of life have been normalized over time and are now considered standard practices in the United States. And since white people still hold most of the institutional power in America, we have all internalized some aspects of white culture — including people of color.

- Rugged Individualism**
 - The individual is the primary unit
 - Self-reliance
 - Independence & autonomy highly valued + rewarded
 - Individuals assumed to be in control of their environment, *“You get what you deserve”*
- Family Structure**
 - The nuclear family: father, mother, 2.3 children is the ideal social unit
 - Husband is breadwinner and head of household
 - Wife is homemaker and subordinate to the husband
 - Children should have own rooms, be independent
- Emphasis on Scientific Method**
 - Objective, rational linear thinking
 - Cause and effect relationships
 - Quantitative emphasis
- History**
 - Based on Northern European immigrants’ experience in the United States
 - Heavy focus on the British Empire
 - The primacy of Western (Greek, Roman) and Judeo-Christian tradition
- Protestant Work Ethic**
 - Hard work is the key to success
 - Work before play
 - “If you didn’t meet your goals, you didn’t work hard enough”
- Religion**
 - Christianity is the norm
 - Anything other than Judeo – Christian tradition is foreign
 - No tolerance for deviation from single god concept
- Status, Power & Authority**
 - Wealth = worth
 - Your job is who you are
 - Respect authority
 - Heavy value on ownership of goods, space, property
- Future Orientation**
 - Plan for future
 - Delayed gratification
 - Progress is always best
 - “Tomorrow will be better”
- Time**
 - Follow rigid time schedules
 - Time viewed as a commodity
- Aesthetics**
 - Based on European culture
 - Steak and potatoes; “bland is best”
 - Woman’s beauty based on blonde, thin – “Barbie”
 - Man’s attractiveness based on economic status, power, intellect
- Holidays**
 - Based on Christian religions
 - Based on white history & male leaders
- Justice**
 - Based on English common law
 - Protect property & entitlements
 - Intent counts
- Competition**
 - Be #1
 - Win at all costs
 - Winner/loser dichotomy
 - Action Orientation
 - Master and control nature
 - Must always “do something” about a situation
 - Aggressiveness and Extroversion
 - Decision-Making
 - Majority rules (when Whites have power)
- Communication**
 - “The King’s English” rules
 - Written tradition
 - Avoid conflict, intimacy
 - Don’t show emotion
 - Don’t discuss personal life
 - Be polite

¹⁷ <https://www.newsweek.com/smithsonian-race-guidelines-rational-thinking-hard-work-are-white-values-1518333>

*and actively seeks to change this.*¹⁸ That final phrase “actively seeks to change this” is very important. As we will see, the goal of DEI is not merely to make people aware that discrimination is wrong, but actually contains an imperative to engage in social activism on behalf of Critical Social Justice. The result is that DEI programs do not merely pass along information, they train social activists to advocate for courses of action that advance the cause of Critical Social Justice. When a DEI trainer comes into an organization they are not merely providing information about what counts as discrimination, they are training the employees to advocate for the cause of Critical Social Justice and this results in what is called “ideological capture.”

Control: Ideological Capture

To have a better understanding of ideological capture, we must first have a brief discussion about what used to be called “regulatory capture.” Using Wikipedia as a quick source, regulatory capture can be defined for us as “a form of corruption of authority that occurs when a political entity, policymaker, or regulator is co-opted to serve the commercial, ideological, or political interests of a minor constituency, such as a particular geographic area, industry, profession, or ideological group.”¹⁹

In other words, regulatory capture is when an agency involved in writing or enforcing government regulations in an even handed way, is co-opted in the service of benefiting the interests of the group which has hijacked the regulator. An example of this might be if a special interest group which lobbies for the interests of the television industry was able to take over the Federal Communications Commission, and re-writes the laws so they no longer protect the consumer and instead benefit the television industry at the expense of consumers.

I would like to borrow this concept, but expand it beyond the scope of regulatory agencies. I will use the term “Ideological Capture” to name this concept.

Ideological capture is when an ideological group takes over an institution and redirects the goals, mission, and resources of that institution toward serving the interests of the ideological group who has taken over that institution. This is how I define “ideological capture.”

Here are two examples of “ideological capture.”

¹⁸ Sensoy Deangelo

¹⁹ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Regulatory_capture

1. Political conservatives take over a local newspaper and change that news paper so that it no longer reports the news, but rather engages in political propaganda on behalf of political conservatism.
2. An art school has as its goal to teach students the fundamental of visual art. Progressives take it over, exclude conservatives, and transform the school into a place where all that is taught is how to infuse art with leftist ideology, and how to make leftist propaganda.

In short, ideological capture is what occurs when an institution has been taken over by people with a particular ideological axe to grind who then hijack the mission, goals, policies, methods and resources of that institution in order to align with and propagate their ideology.

In looking at the genesis of DEI programs, and the ideology that serves as its intellectual backbone, we can see that the implementation of DEI programs in an organization or institutions opens up that institution to ideological capture. Since DEI comes loaded with the political ideology of Critical Social Justice, bringing DEI into an organization and adopting DEI programs amounts to bringing in and adopting the political ideology and worldview of Critical Social Justice. Two of the chief architects of Critical Social Justice, Ozlem Sensoy and Robin Diangelo write that *“Those who claim to be for social justice must be engaged in self-reflection about their own socialization into these groups (their “positionality”) and must strategically act from that awareness in ways that challenge social injustice,”* and that this commitment to Social Justice *“requires a commitment to an ongoing and lifelong process.”*²⁰ A careful read of this reveals that Critical Social Justice, and the DEI programs based on it, require a lifelong commitment to social action in the name of Critical Social Justice.

What this means is that what DEI programs are in fact doing is training employees to become social and political activists in the name of Critical Social Justice. We cannot dwell too much on the fact the DEI programs and trainings build on Critical Social Justice have as their goal the creation of political activists who will advocate for the advancing of Critical Social Justice. When these sorts of training occur within an organization the result is that the employees begin to look for way to advance Critical Social Justice in the workplace. After all, since the training they received was done at work it will seem obvious to them that advocacy for Critical Social Justice in the way they were trained to by their at-work DEI training is not only appropriate but welcome. If the university which credentialed the employees taught them that Critical Social Justice is a cause that ought to be advanced and the workplace paid for DEI trainers to teach employees to be social activists, then employees will believe that social activism is welcome in the workplace.

²⁰ Sensoy Diangelo

This has a number of deleterious downstream effects.

When the employees of an organization are trained to do social advocacy by their workplace, the goals of the institutions become politicized as employees become more concerned with social justice. Over time the employees will begin to make various social justice causes part of their mission within the organization. In doing so they will begin to reorient the processes, procedures, aims, policies, and goals of the institution towards advancing social justice. This will include diverting resources way from the most profitable projects and toward projects which are seen to advance social justice leaving less resources dedicated to mission critical tasks. The managers and HR department will begin to make advancing social justice a goal of the hiring process, which will result in seeking to use the hiring process to make up for past discrimination by hiring people because they are from “oppressed” groups rather than because they are the most qualified. Rather than hiring the most excellent candidates, merely passable candidates will be hired. The advancing of employees will become politicized and HR manager will begin to look for way to make up for historic discrimination by advancing member of historically marginalized groups. They will do this by taking into account such things as race, gender, sex, religion, and so on rather than focusing who is the most competent and meritorious candidate for advancement. Excellence and competence take a backseat to such things as race, sex, and gender, and having the correct stances on social justice issues will become a litmus test for promotion. The result will be under-resourced and under-performing employees trying to do mission critical tasks that ought to be done by excellent employees with full resources. This leads to increased mistakes, compounding errors, and widespread inefficiency resulting in a degrading of institutional capability and capacity.

Worse yet, employees who have been trained by DEI will become activists and will begin demanding that the organization take stances on various social and political issues that are orthogonal to the stated mission of the organization. Employees who have been given workplace DEI training that teaches them to advocate for Critical Social Justice will operate under the assumption that such advocacy is both welcome and necessary. There will be fights about which stances to take, and about which social justice issues to focus on as employees advocate for various different causes.

It is precisely this dynamic that lead to the staff at Penguin Random House to have a standoff with management over the publication of a book by the Psychologist Jordan B. Peterson.²¹ In that case employees revolted because they did not approve of the politics of Dr. Peterson, and wanted the work published by Penguin Random House to reflect the Critical Social Justice politics of the employees. This culminated in an employee

²¹ <https://www.vice.com/en/article/penguin-random-house-staff-confront-publisher-about-new-jordan-peterson-book/>

town hall in which employees were crying, and others were complaining about how publishing Jordan Peterson might impact their non-binary friends.²² The employees themselves said their actions were the result of trainings given to them by Penguin Random House: “***The company since June has been doing all these anti-racist and allyship things and them publishing Peterson’s book completely goes against this. It just makes all of their previous efforts seem completely performative.***”²³

Simply put, employees that have been trained in DEI programs will begin to do what they have been trained by the DEI program to do: they will become social justice activists and will be looking for ways to use their positions in the organization to advance the cause of social justice, and in the process direct precious time, attention, and resources away from mission critical tasks.

Solution: Becoming a Mission-Focused Company

Given the rise to prominence of DEI program over the last 20 years, it is now often considered industry standard to bring in DEI training as a way to mitigate risk and to reduce employee tensions. This is a mistake. Given the ways that civil right law has changed over the last few months, and given the shifts in the culture over the last three years it would be an egregious mistake to bring in any kind of training that requires a lifelong commitment to a particular political ideology. Attaching a company brand to an ideology that is on its way out and is quickly losing popularity is a public relations nightmare waiting to happen. It has become clear that DEI training is more likely to result in employee unrest, wasted resources, inefficient employee performance, and a misallocation of time and attention in addition to the high cost of hiring DEI managers and trainers.

For this reason executive seeking to maintain a top-performing company would be wise to divest themselves of DEI trainings and programs, and instead to adopt the policy of being a mission focused company in which all hiring, compensation, advancement, and resource allocation is done for the sole purpose of advancing and accomplishing the mission of the organization.

A mission focused company does not take stands on social and political issues, nor does it take stock of the political views of its employees when making personnel decisions or resource allocation decisions. A mission focused company measures

²² <https://www.vice.com/en/article/penguin-random-house-staff-confront-publisher-about-new-jordan-peterson-book/>

²³ <https://www.vice.com/en/article/penguin-random-house-staff-confront-publisher-about-new-jordan-peterson-book/>

carefully the performance of its employees and then makes all decisions based on the merits of the employee. These decisions are blind to the personal characteristics of the employee and take no stock of the race, sex, creed, ethnicity, and religion of the employee. Such companies are equal opportunity employers who hire and advance employees entire based on their merit and performance, both of which are carefully measured according to objective standards. This focus on merit and the fact that such practices are discrimination free and measured carefully are what inoculate the company from discrimination lawsuits.

Employees to not thrive in highly politicized and divisive environments where they are required to focus on politically divisive issues. A mission focused company that focuses solely on matters pertaining to the explicitly stated mission of the company is in fact the healthiest place for employees to work because it allows them to leave disagreements at the door and instead focus on working as a team to solve problems directly related to the company mission. The activist company approach has resulted in internal divisions in places like Penguin Random House where disagreement over political issues created employee strife and controversy that spilled into the public. On the other hand, mission focused companies like Coinbase have not experienced such internal strife and have been better for it.

Conclusion

The forward-thinking executive who wants their organization to thrive has to make a firm decision about the direction of their organization. Given the highly competitive global business environment the companies that succeed will be the companies that are best able to maximize the effectiveness and efficiency of their employees. The way to do this is by being mission-focused and resisting the pressure to adopt ideological DEI programs that lead to division, strife inefficiency, and ideological capture.

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Consulting and Compliance Insights

This white paper may reference proprietary insights, internal diagnostic heuristics, or developing models in use by Unified Solutions America and its affiliates. While formalized frameworks may be referenced, any conceptual tools cited herein should be treated as preliminary guidance rather than a substitute for comprehensive advisory engagement.

Where applicable:

- Distinctions are made between original consulting materials and publicly available research or datasets.
- References to third-party benchmarks, assessment tools, or published metrics are appropriately cited.
- Observations or models derived from client engagements are anonymized and generalized unless otherwise disclosed.
- AI tools were consulted in the preliminary structural development / coding design logic of Unified Solutions Materials and Scorecard processes.

All frameworks and methodologies remain subject to refinement as Unified Solutions America's fieldwork, compliance architecture, and strategic insights continue to expand.

About Unified Solutions America

Unified Solutions for America is a pioneering consulting firm dedicated to transforming the landscape of schools and businesses by eliminating DEI policies. Our mission is to create environments that prioritize individual merit and foster true equality. By partnering with organizations, we aim to dismantle policies that hinder progress and innovation, ensuring that every individual is judged by their contributions and capabilities.

DEI initiatives often shift focus from growth and value creation to internal misalignment. At Unified Dynamics, we guide organizations to focus on mission success, customer value, and team cohesion through business best practices, academic rigor, and military Special Operations processes.

We help organizations break free from divisive DEI programs and return to a culture of merit, performance, and unity by quantifying negative impacts and providing actionable alternative strategies.

Founded by business leaders, academics, and military Special Operations experts united by frustration with inefficient DEI initiatives and a vision for better organizational alignment.

At Unified Solutions for America, we are committed to integrity, transparency, and excellence in every aspect of our work. Our mission is driven by a passion for empowering organizations to foster environments free from divisive DEI policies. We believe in promoting unity and collaboration, ensuring that every client receives tailored solutions to achieve their goals effectively.

Capabilities Overview

Unified Solutions America partners with forward-looking organizations to identify and resolve the hidden costs of performance dilution, cultural fragmentation, and legal risk introduced by ideology-based policies. Our three-phase model: **Assess, Implement, Educate**, translates insight into durable results.

Phase I: Assess – Diagnostic Process

- **Title VII Legal Exposure Audit**
Identify high-risk policies and practices through a comprehensive legal and HR audit aligned with current precedent and litigation trends.

- **Cultural Cohesion Assessment**
Evaluate trust, cohesion, and merit signals within teams to diagnose areas of ideological drift or morale degradation.
- **Performance Dilution Review**
Analyze internal recognition, promotion, and compensation patterns to flag breakdowns in performance alignment.

Phase II: Implement – Tailored Correction

- **Policy Restructuring & Governance Design**
Rewrite problematic DEI-linked policies and build performance-driven alternatives that comply with law and support output-based culture.
- **Merit-Based Framework Deployment**
Install frameworks that reinforce trust, shared mission, and clear standards across hiring, evaluation, and promotion tracks.
- **Leadership Integration & Change Management**
Equip executives and HR leaders to champion institutional integrity through communication and operational rollout strategies.

Phase III: Educate – Cultural Continuity

- **Annual Leadership & Compliance Training**
Deliver custom training programs that reinforce earned trust, Title VII compliance, and shared mission over ideological conformity.
- **Manager Toolkit Workshops**
Provide mid-level leaders with practical tools to restore feedback loops, improve retention, and sustain performance alignment.
- **Cultural Renewal Playbooks**
Offer company-specific guides and annual refresh modules to ensure lasting gains from the initial implementation.

Contact and Engagement

At **Unified Solutions America**, we help organizations untangle cultural confusion, mitigate legal and performance risks, and rebuild high-trust, mission-driven teams. If your organization is facing uncertainty around DEI policies, internal cohesion, or leadership alignment, now is the time to act.

- **Connect With Us:**

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