DISMANTLING INSTITUTIONAL RACISM THROUGH SERVANT LEADERSHIP AND EMPOWERMENT

Eric D. Waters, Ph.D.
Assistant Professor – Communication Studies/Strategic Communication
Diederich College of Communication
The Moment

We are at a crossroads...

• Corporate Social Responsibility
• Surface rhetoric or substantive action?
Agenda

Institutions
- Institutional Racism
- Institutional Theory

The Necessity of DE&I
- Business Case
- Recent Data

Leadership Skills
- Servant Leadership
- Soft Power Skills

Organizational Change
- Participation
- Empowerment
INSTITUTIONS
Institutions (Lammers & Garcia, 2014)

Established norms, beliefs, and behavior patterns that transcend organizations

- Religion
- Democracy
- White supremacy
Critical Race Theory

Developed out of legal scholarship (Bell & Freeman)

- Widely applied in education, social sciences, and communication

Racism is *permanently engrained* in American society

- Systemic power imbalance
Institutional Racism

Structures, policies, practices, and norms resulting in differential access to the goods, services, and opportunities.
Institutional Racism

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Examples:</th>
<th>Restricts access to:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Redlining</td>
<td>• Quality education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Law Enforcement</td>
<td>• Gainful employment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Hiring</td>
<td>• Career advancement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Disciplinary action</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Institutional Work (Lawrence & Suddaby, 2006)

Institutions endure over time and space

Organizations can transform or disrupt institutions
DIVERSITY, EQUITY, & INCLUSION
Definitions

Diversity
- Multiple identities represented
- “I have a seat at the table.”

Inclusion
- Perspectives of diverse team are valued
- “I belong at the table.”

Equity
- Removing barriers of bias to increase equal access
- “My seat is as big as yours.”
The Business Case for Diversity  
(Cox & Blake, 1991)
Recent Findings

Performance
- Diversity Wins (McKinsey, 2020)
- From Diversity to Inclusion (Deloitte, 2014)

Innovation
- How and Where Diversity Drives Financial Performance (HBR, 2018)
- How Diversity Can Drive Innovation (HBR, 2013)

Teamwork
- Belonging: From Comfort to Connection to Contribution (Deloitte, 2020)
- Diverse Teams Perform Better (Ernst & Young, 2013)
The Multicultural Organization  
(Cox, 1991)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Structural Integration</th>
<th>• POC representation at all levels, in all workgroups</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Informal Integration</td>
<td>• POC inclusion in social networks and activities outside of work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organizational Identification</td>
<td>• Feelings of belonging, loyalty, and commitment to organization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elimination of Bias</td>
<td>• No prejudice or discrimination based on race/ethnicity/culture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acculturation</td>
<td>• Resolution of intergroup conflict resulting from cultural difference</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

POLL QUESTION
LEADERSHIP SKILLS
Soft Power Skills

- **Emotional Intelligence**
  - Empathize

- **Creativity and Innovation**
  - Break some rules

- **Problem Solving**
  - Find common ground

- **Adaptability**
  - Be open-minded and flexible
Servant Leadership (Liden et al., 2014)

- Think “big picture”
- Provide social support (Emotional IQ)
- Prioritize employee interests and concerns
- Mentor, coach, and develop

- Do the right thing
- Encourage independence
- Be a good citizen

*Business has a responsibility to give back to the community.*
Transformational Leadership (Bass & Avolio, 1990)

**Idealized Influence**
- Be a role model!

**Inspirational Motivation**
- Don’t command, inspire!

**Intellectual Stimulation**
- Foster innovation and creativity

**Individualized Consideration**
- Treat employees as individuals
Leadership

POLL QUESTION
ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGE
Participation Change Model (Nutt 1986)

- Empower lower level employees
- Set initial conditions/guidelines
- Allow reinvention or redefinition
LEADERS AND ORGANIZATIONS DOING INSTITUTIONAL WORK
Some things are bigger than basketball. The stand taken today by the players and org shows that we’re fed up. Enough is enough. Change needs to happen. I’m incredibly proud of our guys and we stand 100% behind our players ready to assist and bring about real change.
Reed Hastings - Netflix

- Bozoma Saint John as CMO
- Susan Rice on BoD
- $100M to Black banks
- $120M to HBCUs
Alexis Ohanion - Reddit

- Steps down from BoD (replaced by Michael Seibel)
- $1M to Colin Kaepernick’s Youth Rights Camp
Organizations and Institutional Work

POLL QUESTION
TAKEAWAYS AND NEXT STEPS
Key Takeaways

When organizations diversify and act in aggregate, they can challenge institutional racism.

Transformational servant leaders are best equipped to initiate organizational change.

Non-white employees should be empowered to drive the change.
Next Steps

- What can I do?
  - www.academics4blacklives.com

- Assessment/training/coaching on **power skills, leadership, and more**
  - www.ericdwaters.com
Questions?
Let’s continue to #MaskUp, Marquette!

Make a gift, get a 3-pack of reusable masks.

Now through September 30 @ https://give.marquette.edu/special-gift-social