

Diversity and Inclusion Research

Anthony Smith-Meyer

Unlocking the Potential of Diversity in Organisations

The Governance of Inclusion in a
Racialised World



Springer

Diversity and Inclusion Research

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Thomas Köllen, Institute of Organization and HRM, University of Bern, Bern,
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Anthony Smith-Meyer
Bereldange, Luxembourg

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The writing of this book was sparked by the deaths of African-American citizens at the hands of law enforcement officers in 2020 and the #BLM protests that followed. These victims deserve recognition, as do the millions of other victims of discrimination and abuse throughout my lifetime, but also through the centuries.

Many individuals have stood up to oppressive power at significant personal risk, often paying the price of courage through assassinations, imprisonment, or other forms of suppression. The heroes of our past are joined by the activists seeking justice and truth today, including those journalists who risk everything for the right of free speech and the right to know.

This work, practical as I have sought to make it, is my contribution to try and honour their sacrifices, as much as to help those who have the courage of their convictions to make a difference for justice: privately, professionally, and politically.

However, my special dedication of this book goes to those two persons who provided me

*with the determination to pursue this work.
My mother, Violet, who always viewed others
for the good they represented, and my father,
Anton, who never lacked courage for standing
up for what he believed was fair and right.
Without their instruction in empathy and the
pursuit of justice and purpose, this book
would not have been written.*

Anthony Smith-Meyer

Foreword

Many of us do not become aware of, let alone engaged with, the social inequalities around us until we directly experience injustice. However, other humans are on the harsh end of these inequities due to the accident of birth. Such inequities include how their pregnant mothers were treated by the healthcare system, the quality of housing available to them as children, the assumptions lecturers make about their attainment at university, or their lack of access to the social codes required to navigate higher tiers of professional occupations.

Many management students and business leaders are not taught about how such historical or current disadvantages and privileges impact business today. This book is especially for this group. It offers provocative insights and practical guidance for how those with relative structural privilege can wield their power for greater collective benefit. Readers of this book will encounter research and frameworks across disciplines such as management, law, sociology, politics, and psychology. Readers will also be exposed to the insights and experiences of employees belonging to historically marginalised communities. Of the many messages in the book, a key takeaway is that achieving equity and inclusion is not easy, ‘ordinary’, or ‘natural’. The ‘business case’ is not as simple as is often presented (i.e. ‘greater diversity = better business performance’). This book spells out the work inherent in the ‘equals’ sign. Business has responsibilities to employees and shareholders beyond a simplistic bottom line. My hope is that readers, guided by Anthony, will reap the breadth of diversity and inclusion outcomes. Such non-financial outcomes, including engagement, creativity, and innovation, are associated with higher performance and value creation.

Collaborating with Anthony on this project was a living case study of the labour (and benefits) of the ‘equals’ sign: a British female academic and consultant of Nigerian heritage in partnership with a business professional, teacher, and European male of Anglo-Scandinavian descent. Our different social positions meant we came to this project with different lived experiences. We grappled with how to surface and disrupt implicit assumptions and stereotypes rather than perpetuate and sustain them. We explored the best ways to communicate understanding for those new to equity work whilst acknowledging the impatience and pain of those who have done this work for decades. Anthony and I dealt with disagreement in the understanding and acceptance that our ultimate goals and underlying values were aligned. We learnt to

‘practise what we preach’. Our collaboration is pretty much the ‘playbook’ of our request to readers—to do the work and unleash the benefits of diversity.

Like many book projects, it is hard to quantify the intellectual, emotional, and material resources that resulted in this work. Our output is offered in the hope that its contents are deemed worthy of your time and engagement. As you read, I invite you to tune into the emotions that may surface. Where you notice discomfort, anger, or anxiety, make a note. Lean into this discomfort with curiosity—it may be your subconscious signalling a critical learning moment. When you are done reading, apply your learning by doing something different no matter how small, to champion equity and inclusion in your sphere of impact. If, when you are done with the book, you are still not sure what you can do differently, turn back to the first page and start reading again. Then, let this be your sole intention—to identify one action from this book to help create a culture of equity in the space you occupy in the world.

East Midlands
UK

Doyin Atewologun

Preface

Social injustice has always exercised me. It does many people, but what have we done to confront it, fight it, rectify it? I might break people down into five categories.

1. The Oblivious: People who do not care as long as they are not on the receiving end of injustice. They are content with the status quo and do not ‘experience’ or recognise injustice within their social networks.
2. The Complacent: Individuals who acknowledge the existence of social injustice, tut and shake their head in moral indignation when it is apparent, and may speak up when provoked to proclaim their outrage.
3. The Activists: Those who actively campaign and intervene individually or as a group to fight for justice and equality.
4. The Dispossessed: Those, often minorities, subject to injustice, discrimination, and exclusion. People whose voices are often dismissed as unqualified or without merit.
5. The Cynics and Deniers: There are people, both amongst the more and less privileged, who see the world radically different from the above and deny a discrimination problem. They believe that we live in a world where success is essentially down to the individual, where privilege is earned, and that those who feel excluded only have themselves to blame.

For most of my life, I would have to admit being in the Complacent camp, with an occasional flirtation with Activism when confronted with injustice impacting my family, friends, or colleagues under my responsibility.

- When I became a father of daughters, I cared more for gender equality.
- When I discovered I had friends and family who were LGBT+ and appeared to be amongst the Dispossessed, I cared more about LGBT+.
- When I interacted with colleagues and acquaintances of colour, I challenged myself to be fair and open as with any other nationality or race. Still, racial discrimination was not something that touched me personally. I have to admit that for a greater part of my life, I existed in a bubble: a predominantly White bubble.

It is in the nature of ‘social bubbles’ that they define what we should care about. The ethics of our bubbles dictate to us what we should be outraged by. It takes shocking events, inspirational leaders, or teachers to shake us out of our ignorance or complacency.

2020 was a shocking year. Perhaps, it was the particular cocktail of Coronavirus lockdowns mixed with the horrific stories and videos of racist violence in the USA. Police killed Breonna Taylor in her bed in a mistaken raid; Ahmaud Arbery was hunted down by self-anointed vigilantes whilst out jogging; Atatiana Jefferson was shot by a police officer from outside her bedroom window because she had left her front door ajar; not least we witnessed the traumatic and slow death of George Floyd at the hands of police officers. The sense of systematic injustice and discrimination in a country that, for so many years, was looked to for leadership in the free world was palpable. Europeans looked on aghast, and when US cousins started their #BLM protests, they felt it necessary to join in any and every local protest taking place in their support—irrespective of COVID-19. It was only subsequently that more Europeans started to look over their colonial shoulders and reflect on racism in Europe.

During the past 11 years, I have had the privilege of teaching university students from the Mid-West of America who had ventured over to Europe to explore our culture. They enjoyed many of the experiences they hoped for with trips to Barcelona, Berlin, Venice, and Vienna, amongst many others. Their pictures filled their Instagram feeds whilst I taught them about international business, management, and organisational behaviour. However, my main objective with this young group of students was to demonstrate to them, to make them understand, that there are no absolute ‘truths’ in this world; there are merely many different perspectives of the ‘Facts’. In an Indian parable, we are told of the seven blind men confronted by an elephant. One feels the tail which reminds him of a rope; one feels the trunk, and he thinks of a snake; one touches the side and compares it to a wall; one the tusk which he likens to a spear; and so it goes on. In the end, they meet to describe what an elephant is like. In the words of the poet John Godfrey Saxe. It ends thus:

And so these men of Indostan
Disputed loud and long,
Each in his own opinion
Exceedingly stiff and strong,
Though each was partly in the right
And all were in the wrong!

Thus it is with our view of the world. We are raised in the shadow of conventional truth, definitions of mores and norms bounded by the social restrictions, or opportunities that encompass our ‘bubble’. As I started this book, I watched the TV series *Little Fires Everywhere*, based on Celeste Ng’s book. In it, we observe a world co-inhabited by a Black artist and single mother on the one hand, and the wife and mother of an ‘ideal’ all-American White, suburban family on the other. Would they ever understand each other?

The events of 2020 energised me to be more active in the fight for racial equality. In doing so, I add my voice to all aspects of social injustice that my understanding of the world allows me. In her book *Caste: The Origin of Our Discontents*, Isabel Wilkerson redefines US racism in terms of a social caste system: not immediately recognised as existing in the USA, but which lies at the core of ongoing discrimination on racial, sexual, and religious grounds. According to Wilkerson, Black Americans are relentlessly identified with slaves of centuries past; slaves in turn are identified as an underclass—much like the untouchables of India. It is perhaps easier to understand how social injustice becomes so stratified and so rigid when viewed through the lens of the caste system.

If we want change, we have to become activists. To be an activist, you can join and support the efforts of activist leaders. You can speak up when in the presence of unfairness or injustice, or you can leverage your abilities and launch your own initiatives. This book is my attempt to contribute to this struggle for social justice. My objective in addressing you, the reader, is to bring you a call to action: to read, reflect, and act.

People ask me how I plead to the charge that I am (undeniably) a ‘privileged White male’ and consequently incapable of addressing what is primarily a problem facing ‘unprivileged BAME minorities’. To the former, I am guilty as charged. My youth and my career have evolved in the context of being a member of the privileged majority. Yet, my experience, traits, and interests combine to persuade me of the need to learn and adapt to the injustices and the absence of universal fairness around me. To the second, I have to disagree fundamentally. To successfully diversify and overcome discriminatory behaviours, let alone create inclusive cultures, requires (1) authentic self-awareness and openness on the part of the privileged and (2) the cultivation of trust and openness amongst those who have reason to be distrustful. The voice of the minority all too often being dismissed by the majority, my voice—that of a White peer in Western society—may be more easily heard amongst the privileged in certain countries. Additionally, my role as facilitator and bridge-builder between communities will, I hope, help all parties to embrace openness more willingly.

To this end, I bring my grey hairs of experience in a multi-cultural world, my knowledge of governance, organisational behaviour, compliance, ethics, change, and people management. In addition, I have researched, explored, and discussed racial topics with members of minority and majority communities and present what I have learned in these chapters. In particular, I am grateful and indebted to Dr Doyin Atewologun for her insight, comments, and encouragement as she has advised me on this work.

My intent with this book is to explain the challenges and some of the drivers of the issues confronting D&I and racial discrimination. I endeavour to set out the beginnings of actions that can start a process of greater inclusiveness in organisations. I do not pretend or claim to provide a handbook of ‘how to’ accomplish the vision of equality, diversity, and inclusion. What I hope is that the reader will discover some of the pertinent questions to be asked, and the concepts and governance tools available to help answer them.

In fine, my objective is to help those who want to help themselves and their organisations face up to and change their past prejudices. I hope it will form the basis of courses, articles, speeches, and webinars. I will try to convince you, the reader, that change is possible, that we can establish new norms of equality and justice across races, religions, sexual preferences, castes, and other human-made social structures, and that we can change the narrative and consequently our reality.

Nothing ventured, nothing gained.

Bereldange, Luxembourg

Anthony Smith-Meyer

Acknowledgements

The writing of this book has been what I can only, somewhat clichéd, call a journey of discovery. My starting point was governance, ethics, and culture management. My destination was a better understanding of why discriminatory behaviours remain so intractable within the walls of our institutions and social groupings; this, despite our best efforts and knowledge of organisational behaviour. Unoriginal as it may sound, the whole experience was not unlike a journey.

In the first stage, I had to understand the nature of the seas, winds, and currents that I was to traverse. I had to map the seascape of race relations, racial bias, and cultural confrontation. What questions needed answering? Where could I find the answers? I had to navigate through a lot of research. Most of it was academic or from the world of the major consulting companies and other practitioners. I consulted quite broadly. To find my way to the best and most illuminating sources, I listened to many podcasts such as Hidden Brain, Throughline, as well as many-various history and BBC, NPR, and NRK current affairs radio documentaries. The number of sources that gave shape to my musings and instincts is too many to mention here, but do take time to peruse the citations of this book. Many learned and intelligent people have considered the challenge of racial exclusion and inclusion, and I have learnt a lot from them.

At a second stage, I consulted and discussed my plans and conclusions with friends and colleagues from the academic and professional worlds of human resources, diversity and inclusion management, governance, and ethics management. During the pandemic, we came together across frontiers via private online video conferences to discuss and debate. Their reflections and comments have influenced my ‘take’ and presentations on all aspects of the obstacles we encountered along the way. We had a lot of fun, and I was both encouraged and delighted by the continued interest in this work shown by my partners in this regard. I would particularly mention and thank Sue Egan, Zarine Jacob, Sally March, Julie Nazerali, Michael Shackleton, Turid Solvang, Michèle Sormani-Nielsen, Fritha Sutherland, Carsten Tams, Gudrun Timm, Rachel Treece, Ludo Van der Heyden, and Sharon Ward. Some conversations may have been one-to-one, others as part of our little troop, but each in their way have influenced my choice of topics or approach in writing about them. I am deeply grateful for their interest and contribution.

Finally, I had to bring my conclusions and manuscript safely into harbour. This was the piloting stage where the efforts of Dr Doyin Atewologun as colleague, advisor, and consulting editor have been so valuable to me. In addition to sharing her works and thoughts on the subject, Doyin has encouraged me to challenge both myself and the subject matter. More frequently than I like to admit, Doyin pointed out passages where my own assumptions of ‘normality’ required deeper thought and explanation and steered me clear of the more obvious remaining rocks of prejudice and reefs of stereotype that might have remained in my path. With Doyin’s help, I have managed to improve the completeness of my work, brought more of my own experience to the surface, and clarified and explored notions that have added to the value that I hope this book represents. Before this collaboration, we did not know each other. I am grateful to Doyin for her constructive wisdom and agility as a discussion partner. I hope for, and look forward to, the continuation of our cooperation on future projects.

About the Author



Anthony Smith-Meyer, IoD.Dipl, is a specialist within governance, compliance, and topics relating to organisational behaviour. Currently, he is the Executive Director of the Institute for Financial Integrity and Sustainability in Luxembourg and is founder of a not-for-profit idea-creation and collaboration network known as theGovernanceProject.org. Previously a member of the Group Executive Committee of Compliance and Control at BNP Paribas, Anthony has been extensively involved with compliance and ethics matters since 2003, as Division and later Group Head of Compliance at Fortis Bank. Anthony holds the UK Institute of Directors Diploma in Corporate Direction, is a Certified Director of the Institut Luxembourgeois des Administrateurs (ILA), and is an independent lecturer, trainer, coach, and advisor in matters relating to corporate governance and compliance. He has authored the book *Surviving Organisational Behaviour*, was founder and editor-in-chief of the *Journal of Business Compliance*, and regularly authors articles on ESG topics. This book, themed on the governance of inclusion in a racialised world, is only his latest venture in this sphere.

Anthony has been a regular faculty member of ILA courses on company direction since 2012, as well as for the European Confederation of Director's Associations (EcoDa) in Brussels. He has served as Adjunct Professor and lecturer of International Business and Management at the European Campus of Miami University of Ohio for over a decade.

Anthony's career spans over three decades working for UK, N. American, Scandinavian, Benelux, and French institutions in a wide range of activities including relationship-driven banking, as well as product area trading room activities, structured, asset, and project finance. His work reflects a combination of practical experience with academic acumen that provides lucidity to the subjects he addresses, blending clarity to complex matters and a practical approach to the identification of solutions.

About the Consulting Editor: Dr Doyin Atewologun



Doyin is a psychologist, scholar practitioner, a regular media contributor, and multi-award winner in recognition of her innovative methodologies and pioneering work in promoting inclusion and excellence in organisations. She is Dean of the Rhodes Scholarships at Oxford University and concurrently Director of Delta Alpha Psi, a niche leadership and inclusion consultancy. Doyin was previously Director of the Gender, Leadership and Inclusion Centre at Cranfield School of Management and Reader (Full Professor). Doyin has worked with many of the FTSE 100, United Nations agencies, legal and other professional services firms, and the UK Civil Service, and she adopts an evidence-based approach when working with business leaders to advance inclusion. Doyin is a member of the Health and Wellbeing Response Taskforce for COVID-19 NHS staff and Inclusion Adviser on Regional Talent Boards for the NHS as well as the Academic Adviser on the Parker Steering Committee led by Sir John Parker into ethnic diversity on FTSE350 boards.

Doyin was recognised in *People Management* magazine's Top 20 Diversity and Inclusion 'Power List' for 2020. She won Inspiring Board Leader of the Year at the Precious Awards in 2019 and has won numerous other awards for excellence in academic publications. Doyin has extensive experience in coaching, executive education, programme design, and research advising and has over 35 scholarly and professional publications. Doyin is Honorary Fellow at Trinity College, Oxford University, and has held visiting faculty positions at Queen Mary, University of

London; Lagos Business School, Nigeria; and the University of Pretoria, South Africa.

Doyin has addressed global audiences and has been invited to industry judging panels to amplify underrepresented talent and help identify and evaluate outstanding work in academic publications with practical evidence-based impact.

Introduction

We need this debate.

In my foreword, I explain my reasons for writing this book. That is as it may be, but the topic that we will explore, the questions we will try to answer, and the solutions we are going to suggest are not for my benefit—they are to serve you, the reader. If you have picked up this book, it is because you recognise there is an issue that requires resolution. You acknowledge that there is prejudice, bias, and discrimination in society, your organisation, and your personal life. You may be a company director or executive, a manager, an academic, a student, a member of a community discriminated against, or a relative, friend, or colleague of one. Still, you have not yet found the answer as to how to help turn things around. You have listened to the good intentions expressed by political, civil, and business leaders, yet understood that words are not enough, that training and policy documents alone do not change behaviours.

Too many management executives struggle to understand the nature of the equity, diversity, and inclusion ('D&I') debate, both in terms of its impact and intractability. Indeed, the very notions of equity (generally concerned with fairness in outcome), as opposed to equality (the provision of a level playing field), can lead to a confusing distraction. If we add the notion of belonging, then many individuals less schooled in social sciences and psychology begin, themselves, to be on the outside of the debate: excluded by jargon and specialist terminology. That is why I have decided to use the term "Diversity and Inclusion" as the reference term in this book. The proverbial nut we are trying to crack is D&I; equality is part of the solution, whilst equity and belonging form part of the desired outcomes.

This book seeks to explain why majorities dismiss exclusion as the fault of the excluded, and how prejudice and bias can lead to self-defeating defensive behaviours by those who feel their impact, in turn aggravating racial divisions at work and within society. Using a mixture of applied academic theory, practical examples, and experience from the real world, we will explore the issue of D&I from four angles.

Part I Why diversity and inclusion matters. We have to understand what discrimination looks like, and what the consequences of exclusion are. How do we define, even discover, what systematic or institutional discrimination is? Why, when the

evidence shows that reasons for investing in diversity and inclusion are significant, both from a moral and economic perspective, is this path so often rejected by the community we live in?

Part II The forces of exclusion and isolation. Having established the dysfunctional impact of socially led prejudice and bias in Part one, we will examine the drivers of our individual destructive behaviours. The natural instincts that drive us apart are strong, as the trail of failed D&I programmes throughout decades can testify to. We shall try to understand why our traditional risk management approaches struggle against the emotive fears and hopes that trigger discrimination and exclusion.

Part III The imperative conditions of change. We will discover the three essential implementation conditions necessary for sustainable culture change within an organisation. The path that leads to continuous learning and improvement is paved with the power of leadership, an organisational culture of trust, and a living dialogue within the firm.

Part IV The organisation of the cultural transformation process redefines the mission and scope of governance. From the positioning of the D&I function and ensuring a dynamic social capital within the firm to the measurement of cultural change, governance frameworks need careful engineering. We explore the best practice standards of the governance of D&I and review brief case studies of how two major corporations (Microsoft and EY USA) have approached D&I to learn from their examples. Finally, we will review established industry standards of best practice and evaluate their impact on the design of D&I programmes.

The task of addressing all of these aspects is enormous. Some may describe this work as a book of two halves, or two books in one binder. The first deals with the drivers and outcomes of inter-relationship dynamics. The second addresses the needs of the business practitioner looking for answers and solutions. The organisation seeking to find the appropriate response to the D&I challenge needs to understand both these elements to succeed.

This book was inspired by the #BLM movement of 2020. Consequently, the more significant part of my research references the plight of Black communities in the face of discrimination. This emphasis is not to undervalue the challenges facing Asian, ethnic, religious, or other communities that form part of the 'outgroup' to any dominant society. The principles discussed and presented here are relevant to the inclusion of any minority facing the prejudice of an 'ingroup'. The topic is not exclusively one of Black inclusion in White society. Still, in our racialised world, it is one that appears most prevalent in the face of political correctness and social taboos.

At the end of our story, we shall hopefully understand how the time for being a bystander in the D&I debate is over and how the changing expectations of tomorrow's consumers are writing a message on the wall, telling of the necessity

for change we ignore at our peril. This book is a contribution to the critical conversation on how to make those changes within organisations.

The Constant Struggle

Difference is the essence of humanity. Difference is an accident of birth, and it should therefore never be the source of hatred or conflict. Therein lies a most fundamental principle of peace: respect for diversity.

John Hume, Nobel Peace Prize 1998

John Hume was considered one of the principal architects of the Good Friday Agreement that brought an end to hostilities between Nationalist Catholic and Unionist Protestant forces in Northern Ireland. His focus was on religious differences, but his truth was universal. Differences are the essence of humanity—it is what makes us unique and what makes getting to know one another new and exciting. He secured peace in Northern Ireland through mutual respect, understanding, and a process of reconciliation. These words contain lessons we need to learn.

Left to our own devices and in a safe environment, our social instincts are to get to know the stranger standing next to us. Through our interaction, we discern the signals that indicate we are in the presence of a friend or foe. More often than not, we pursue a path of friendship based on the discovery of commonalities between us, thereby satisfying both our curiosity and mutual desire for safety. Ironically, it is only upon the introduction of social groupings and established institutions intended to provide predictable security that our behaviours change. No longer responsible for ensuring our own security, we rely on strength in numbers, or the law courts to protect us and our property. We choose to rely on the rule of law to provide future stability and predictable outcomes for our investments.

If our civil establishments are open and optimistic, we may welcome and integrate newcomers. In the words of the President of the EU Commission, Ursula von der Leyen, the aspiration is that ‘The rule of law protects the people from the rule of the powerful’.¹ If society is fearful and defensive, the law’s purpose quickly becomes one of protecting privilege and buffering against any competition. In his book *The Tyranny of Merit*, Professor Michael Sandel convincingly argues that the rule of law functions to protect the status of the wealthy and powerful by creating a ‘merit aristocracy’. Merit becomes a byword for traits and qualifications that perpetuate the status quo and defends privilege against new challengers who, in truth, might be more deserving.

Populism is the political expression of the protection of privilege and the exclusion of anything or anyone who might challenge our comfort zone. The more our societies shrink into narrow interest groups, the greater the inclination to see ‘others’ as a threat to be confronted and suppressed. The tools in this struggle are stereotype,

¹Tweeted by @vonderleyen at 12:48pm on 30 September 2020 on Twitter.

bias, and prejudice. Throughout history, our societies have swung between optimism and pessimism, confidence, and fear, leading to sporadic periods of negativity in the form of nationalism or populism. So far in the twenty-first century, we have been in the grip of regional wars, international terrorism, irrational exuberance, financial crisis, austerity, global pandemics, and a looming climate crisis. People have been fearful, and populism has gained traction by identifying ‘external threats’. In the Muslim world, the threat has been Western permissiveness; in the Christian world, it has been Islamic fundamentalism; in the USA, it has been the declining dominance of White citizens relative to People of Colour; in Europe, it has been the arrival of a mixture of economic migrants and Middle and Near Eastern war refugees. Populism has proffered ‘easy’ solutions and ‘obvious’ enemies. The majorities who elect them to power behave in ways that rationalise and justify their choice, including the deliberate denial of rights to minorities.

Turning the Tide

Suppose fear, ignorance, and discomfort in the face of change are the main drivers of creating divides between cultures and peoples. In that case, we also know that we can redefine and correct such destructive and potentially dangerous conflicts by addressing them. Such behaviour between nations ignites wars. In urban centres, it produces riots. In our organisations, it pushes away talent and potential, and diminishes value creation.

Executives and board members have only a minor ability to influence behaviours in broader society, although they have some. However, within their organisations, it is entirely within their powers to create a safe environment for experimentation and trust to develop between majority and minority groupings. Companies can establish frameworks that encourage openness and constructive dialogue to help all employees understand the impact of their conscious and unconscious behaviours. We can recruit leaders who focus on a new future and do not base discussion on past and present differences. We can enable managers and employees to tackle uncomfortable subjects better and include minorities in the everyday business of pursuing the corporate mission. It requires commitment, endeavour, and courage. By the time we end this book, I hope you will find the inspiration, the motivation, the tools, and the conviction to make the change.

As Archbishop Desmond Tutu of South Africa is reputed to have said:

Do your little bit of good where you are;
it's those little bits of good put together that overwhelm the world.

Sidenote on Terminology

In researching the subject of racial discrimination, diversity, and inclusion, I have discovered that the topic is replete with jargon. Like much academic language, constant references to concepts and specialised conditions render the argumentation and logic difficult for the layperson to follow. In this context, I identify company directors, executives, managers, and employees as laypeople. In addition to academic and consultancy jargon, there is the additional risk of changing associations with much of the language used. For example, the working title for this book was ‘Governance of D&I in the Age of #BLM’. At the time, BLM meant ‘Black Lives Matter’—it was a humanitarian issue. To be woke meant to be aware of social justice matters. A footballer ‘taking the knee’ before a game was a gesture of solidarity with colleagues across sport experiencing racial harassment. In the relatively short time frame from initiating the book project to its completion, that same footballer is derided by his own fans for supporting #BLM, in turn labelled by the social media as a Marxist attempt to destroy the police. To be woke is increasingly interpreted to be vandals of national pride rather than truth and justice-seekers. In the struggle for cultural control, language and terminology have been weaponised.

Even the name of the issue at hand is a goalpost on the move. Is inclusion more critical than diversity? Should we then refer to an inclusion and diversity policy? Is equity considered central to the debate? We may then refer to EDI. What then of equality? Can we achieve equitable outcomes without ensuring equality of opportunity for all first? Is D&I too technical or process-oriented a description? DIB adds the concept of belonging to the equation. In naming our subject, we must consider what messages it conveys. To an audience of academics engaged in organisational behaviour, the inclusion of equity and belonging can lead to lengthy and thought-provoking debates; to board members focused on non-financial reporting and practical solutions, it may merely serve to be a distraction from the objective at hand. For the purposes of this book, I shall use the term D&I, but this is not to deny the importance of equality, equity, and belonging, all of which I discuss in the book.

The world of prejudice, bias, and discrimination is replete with generalisations and presumption. Leaders not immersed in the subject of diversity and inclusion are quick to adopt suggested sound bites crafted by wordsmiths from their policy or public relations departments. However, words matter, and the use of phrases that appear to the orator as elegant or well-meant might hide nuanced offence. What

exactly is meant by minority ethnic? Some categorisation is helpful if only to make policy development possible, but it is not accidental that in this book, I do not reference the 'BAME community'—at the very least, this particular round hole must be acknowledged to be an aggregation of a number of communities in the plural.

I apply several descriptives to reference those impacted positively or negatively by racial discrimination. My inspiration for writing the book originated in the events leading to the resurgence of #BLM in the summer of 2020. Much of the available research focuses on the US experience of being a member of the Black Asian or other Minority Ethnic communities. However, the message I seek to convey is broader than the US BAME population. It applies to discriminatory relationships between Asians in Asia, Indigenous Peoples in Latin America, and all Ethnic Minorities across the world, including Romanis in the EU and the Sami in Norway. It also extends to all those discriminated against due to the strength of their faith or any aspect that identifies them as 'other'. In certain countries that would include members of the lower echelons of a caste system, or simply members of society considered as less worthy by a privileged, elitist establishment. Words like the 'unprivileged', 'minorities', the 'outgroup', or the 'excluded', 'disadvantaged', and even the 'suppressed' will be found in the text. Some are chosen to accentuate a divergence of social standing or power; others, frankly, avoid the repetitive use of common phrases. Sometimes, I want the word to shock. I do not wish to upset or harm anyone. If this proves to be the case, I apologise in advance.

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