

BARRIERS AND BOOSTS: USING INEQUITY FRAMES THEORY TO EXPAND UNDERSTANDING OF MECHANISMS OF RACE AND GENDER INEQUITY

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Inequity can be framed in terms of disadvantage or advantage, with different consequences for how people understand the inequity. Here we ask, how do scholars conceptualize race and gender inequity in organizations? Using the perspective of inequity frames theory, our review reveals a chronic disadvantage lens in existing scholarship: race and gender inequity are overwhelmingly described as being caused by disadvantage. In turn, we find that scholars of such demographic inequity in organizations often focus solely on disadvantaging mechanisms, such as prejudice and stereotypes, belonging threats, and structural barriers. Nevertheless, our review of disparate literatures on attractiveness, nepotism, and social class (which use an advantage lens) demonstrates how specific and distinct advantaging mechanisms – including helping behaviors, permissiveness, and structural advantages – also create inequity. Such advantage mechanisms are largely missing in race and gender inequity literatures, despite the likelihood that such mechanisms contribute to, and ultimately allow the persistence of, race and gender inequity in organizations. Finally, we highlight steps scholars can take to expand the lenses they use to examine demographic inequity, and as such, expand the range of mechanisms identified and leveraged to reduce such inequity.

Managerial scholarship has made great strides in documenting demographic inequities in organizations and suggesting promising interventions. However, progress has stalled as many organizational solutions to race and gender inequities continue to fall short (Apfelbaum, Stephens, & Reagans, 2016; Kalev, Dobbin, & Kelly, 2006; Leslie, 2019). We consider whether the scientific lens scholars use to approach this topic may affect their findings (e.g., Kaplan, 2008). To do so, we first review research on inequity frames theory, which provides a theoretical

foundation for distinguishing advantage versus disadvantage lenses on inequity and the effects of these lenses. Then, taking the critical perspective of inequity frames theory, we undertake a comprehensive review of recent literature on race and gender inequity in organizations, which reveals that scholars have largely relied on a disadvantage lens to study mechanisms of, and thus solutions to, such inequity. This implicit lens obscures the reality that *both* advantaging and disadvantaging mechanisms contribute to race and gender inequity in organizations, leading scholars to misspecify or miss entirely some root causes and solutions.

The Nature of Race and Gender Inequity

Extant research has documented prevalent race-based (McCord, Joseph, Dhanani, & Beus, 2018; Pager & Shepherd, 2008; Tetlock & Mitchell, 2009; Triana, Jayasinghe, & Pieper, 2015) and sex- and gender-based inequities (Colella, Hebl, & King, 2017;

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Heilman & Eagly, 2008; Rudman & Phelan, 2008; Tosi & Einbender, 1985; Triana, Jayasinghe, Pieper, Delgado, & Li, 2019) in organizations. These inequities affect a host of organizational processes, from hiring and recruitment, to promotion, to punishment and lay-offs, as well as everyday interactions (e.g., Bowles & McGinn, 2008; Browne & Misra, 2003; DiTomaso, Post, Smith, Farris, & Cordero, 2007; Ely & Myerson, 2000; Heilman, 2012; Kossek, Su, & Wu, 2017; Kray & Thompson, 2004; Roberson & Block, 2001; Rosette, Akinola, & Ma, 2018).

To offer a few concrete examples, ample work has demonstrated sex and gender inequity across organizational contexts. For instance, women are less likely to be promoted to leadership positions (Castilla, 2008; Lyness & Grotto, 2018) and are more likely to be interrupted during meetings and day-to-day interactions (Anderson & Leaper, 1998; Woolley, Chabris, Pentland, Hashmi, & Malone, 2010). Race inequity also persists. For instance, Asian (e.g., Jun & Wu, 2021), Black (e.g., Koval & Rosette, 2020; Rosette, Koval, Ma, & Livingston, 2016), and Latino (e.g., Schneider, Hitlan, & Radhakrishnan, 2000) employees are the victims of racial harassment at work. Research has also identified racial disparities in the catching and correcting of employee mistakes—Black employees are more likely to have their mistakes caught compared to White employees (e.g., Reeves, 2014).

However, the *absolute* level of outcome an organization expects or wishes to achieve differs critically between these examples: organizations ought to aim for less harassment and more mistakes caught. Likewise, organizations ought to aim for less interruption and more voice. From this view, racial and gender harassment represents a disadvantage to Black and female employees because they receive treatment worse than the absolute standard. On the other hand, missing mistakes and permitting interruption represents an advantage to White and male employees because they receive treatment that is better than the absolute standard. Here, we suggest that extant research has overwhelmingly focused on disadvantaging mechanisms to explain such racial and gender disparities, such as prejudice and stereotypes against Black employees and women. In contrast, we argue that such gaps may also be driven by specific advantaging mechanisms relative to the absolute standard which favor White employees and men, such as permissiveness and helping intentions.

In turn, such divergent mechanisms suggest different solutions for achieving both equity and the organization's goals for the absolute standard. For instance, a narrow focus on disadvantaging

mechanisms (e.g., reducing prejudice) may help reduce the racial gap in mistake detection but may be insufficient in completely eradicating this racial gap, since advantaging mechanisms (e.g., permissiveness) will continue to fuel inequity (see Figure 1).

Overview

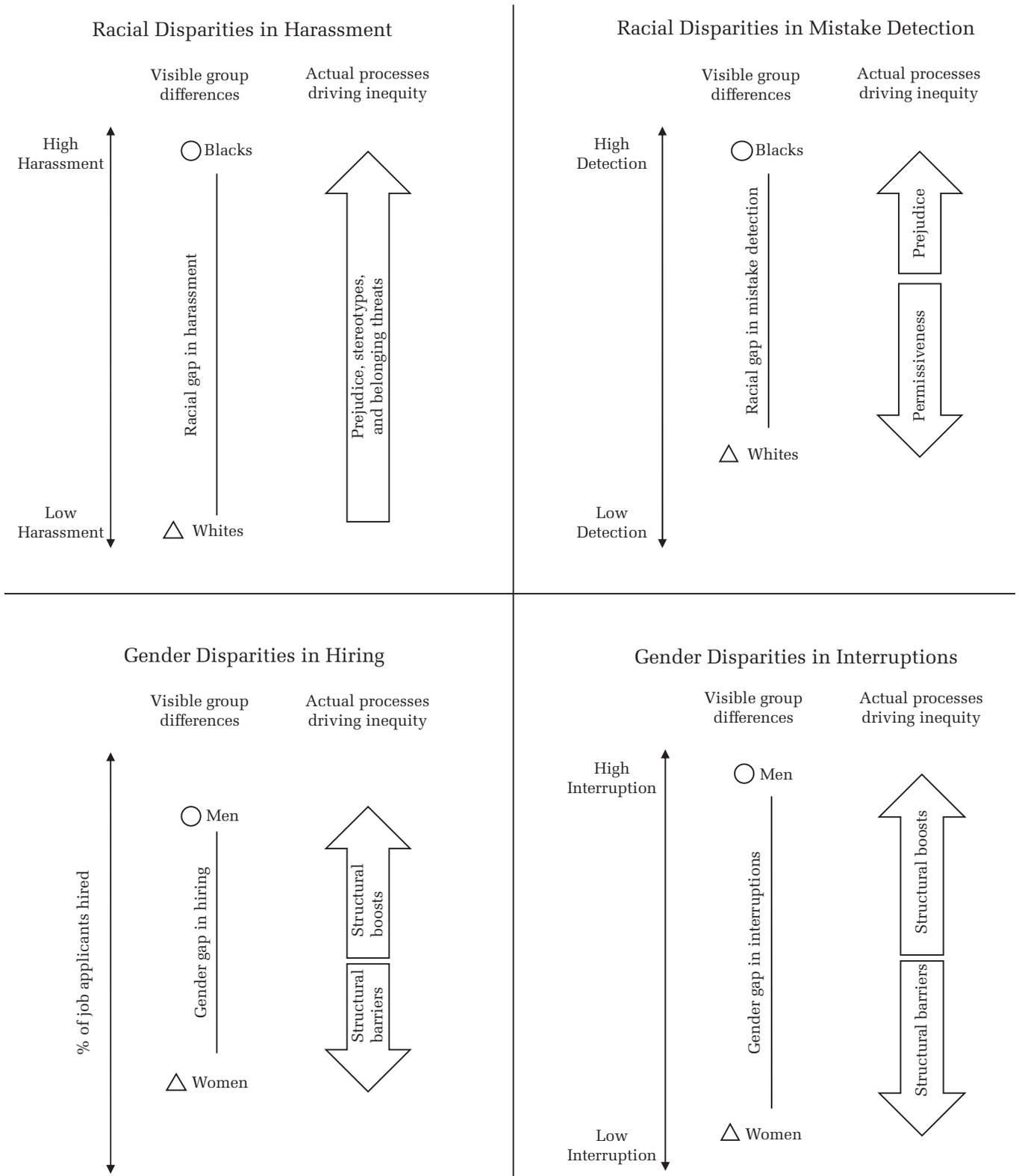
Our review aims to underscore that a chronic focus on disadvantaging mechanisms may lead to an incomplete investigation of sources and solutions for achieving racial and gender equity. Thus, the goal of this review is to provide a more comprehensive framework for studying the mechanisms of race and gender inequity (two major, historical, and persistent categories of dominance¹) in organizations. To build this framework, we first ground ourselves by reviewing a growing body of literature on inequity frames theory, which suggests that inequity can be framed in terms of disadvantage or advantage and that these frames in turn affect cognition about inequity. As one goal of this paper is to provide readers with a comprehensive understanding of the theory, we first review the theory before using its principles to catalog how race and gender inequity research is framed. In this way, we review an important body of literature that demonstrates how subjective framing may affect work that considers the objective causes of intergroup inequity.

Second, by using the principles of inequity frames theory, we systematically catalog existing work on race and gender inequity in organizational contexts, assessing whether scholars examine disadvantaging mechanisms, advantaging mechanisms, or both. In doing so, we document the presence of a disadvantage lens in racial and gender inequity scholarship.

Third, we search through bodies of literature that more readily take an advantage lens to explain inequity and consider what lessons they offer. To do so, we turn to fairly separate literatures on attractiveness, nepotism, and social class inequities, which focus more on advantaging mechanisms. Based on the lessons learned from these outside literatures, we consider how advantaging mechanisms from these separate literatures may also create race and gender inequity in organizations and thus offer

¹ Intergroup work from a range of traditions has used different terms to identify groups along a hierarchy, including the dominant or advantaged group and the marginalized, disadvantaged, or subordinate group. We use these terms interchangeably.

FIGURE 1
Examples of How Group Differences May Result From Both Advantaging and Disadvantaging Mechanisms



scholars of demographic inequity more explanatory power.

Finally, we conclude with questions and recommendations for future work. Our integrative review of these literatures suggests that scholars would benefit from holistically examining both advantaging and disadvantaging inequity processes and crafting interventions accordingly.

INEQUITY FRAMES THEORY

We begin by reviewing a growing body of literature on inequity frames theory (Branscombe, 1998; Lowery, Chow, & Crosby, 2009; Lowery, Knowles, & Unzueta, 2007; Rosette & Koval, 2018), which provides a structural foundation for our later review of research on race and gender inequity. As one of the first papers to comprehensively review inequity frames theory, we first describe the main tenets of the theory and subsequently outline relevant empirical research, which focuses on the consequences of inequity frames. Then, we consider the accuracy of frames. Finally, taking these two views together, we identify a critical yet unanswered question regarding inequity frames: which frames are used, especially by scholars of race and gender inequity? We use these insights from inequity frames theory to guide our catalog of race and gender inequity research and consider the consequences of scholarly frames for understanding such inequity.

Tenets

Inequity frames theory involves two central tenets (Branscombe, 1998; Lowery et al., 2007).² First, inequity—a gap in returns between two groups—can be framed in terms of either disadvantage or advantage. For instance, the gender pay gap might be described as *women being paid less* or *men being paid more*. Each describes the same inequity (i.e., pay gap), but with a different frame and point of emphasis.

Second, inequity frames theory suggests that each frame leads to different sensemaking responses (Lowery et al., 2007). For example, inequity frames suggest a referent group as the normative group that possesses what everyone “ought to” possess (i.e., a standard) while simultaneously suggesting a deviant group that must be explained. Using the gender pay

gap example, the disadvantage frame “*women are paid less*” implies that men are paid a normative wage, while women deviate from the expected standard. In contrast, the advantage frame, “*men are paid more*” implies that women are paid a normative wage, while men deviate from an expected standard and are paid a surplus. Indeed, this fits with the broader social science literature on framing (e.g., Benford & Snow, 2000; Cornelissen & Werner, 2014; Goffman, 1974; Hodgkinson & Healey, 2008; Kreps & Monin, 2011; Levin, Schneider, & Gaeth, 1998; Nelson, Oxley, & Clawson, 1997; Tversky & Kahneman, 1981), which has demonstrated that objective reality can be interpreted and framed in different ways.

Consequences of Frames

Empirical research on inequity frames has focused on how inequity frames shape observers’ understandings of why inequity exists, feelings about the inequity, attitudes toward addressing the inequity, and preferred solutions to addressing the inequity.

Explanations. Lowery and colleagues (2009) have theorized that inequity frames have a powerful effect on observers’ perceptions and behaviors because they suggest a referent group and specify deviant groups in the context of inequity. In this way, frames can affect how people explain the inequity itself and who they perceive to be the deviants who are “causing” the inequity and must be explained. For example, why are women deviant versus why are men deviant? In one study, male and female participants learned about gender inequity in high-stakes standardized math tests (Lowery & Wout, 2010). When the inequity was framed in terms of female disadvantage—implying women were deviating from expectations—women’s self-esteem suffered. However, when the inequity was framed in terms of male advantage—marking men as the deviants—men’s self-esteem reduced instead.

Frames can also shape people’s explanations of inequity by affecting perceived intentionality. For instance, race discrimination yields both victims and beneficiaries, but by framing a discriminatory decision in terms of the beneficiary (e.g., the White candidate was advantaged), third-party observers are more likely to infer positive intentions on the part of the decision-maker (Phillips & Jun, 2022). In contrast, framing the decision in terms of the victim (e.g., the Asian candidate was disadvantaged) leads to inferences of more negative intentions. In turn, these attributions of intentions affect how people

² This work applies to both inequality (a gap between two groups) and inequity (a gap in the rate of return between two groups). Given our focus on race and gender inequity in organizations, we use the term inequity frames.

explain the inequity and whether they perceive it to be discriminatory or not.

Affect. In addition to explanations of inequity, frames also affect observers' emotional responses, especially by highlighting moral rules that may have been violated. For instance, inequity aversion is known across humans and primates (although individuals can vary in the degree of their equity sensitivity [Huseman, Hatfield, & Miles, 1987]). That is, equity theory affirms that *both* beneficiaries and victims of inequity are averse to inequity itself (Adams, 1965; Walster, Berscheid, & Walster, 1973).

Nevertheless, aversions to advantageous versus disadvantageous inequity are generally experienced differently (Adams, 1965; Fehr & Schmidt, 1999; Van den Bos, Peters, Bobocel, & Ybema, 2006; Walster, Walster, & Berscheid, 1978). For instance, developmental research has found that young children reject only disadvantageous inequity, but by eight years old, they reject advantageous inequity as well, and they are even willing to discard resources to avoid it (Blake & McAuliffe, 2011; Blake et al., 2015; LoBue, Nishida, Chiong, DeLoache, & Haidt, 2011; Shaw, Choshen-Hillel, & Caruso, 2016; Shaw & Olson, 2012).

These developmental differences highlight different experiences that advantage versus disadvantage offer. In the case of disadvantage, rationalizing the position requires one to think of oneself as less deserving or skilled. In the case of advantage, one can rely on simple resource maximization motives, or self-serving cognition, rationalizing oneself as better. Indeed, animal comparative studies have suggested that aversion to disadvantageous inequity—requiring frustration at loss—is evolutionarily the first step, whereas developing aversion to advantageous inequity is a second step, requiring sensitivity to long-term relationships (Brosnan, 2019). Related work has found that disadvantageous inequity may prompt emotional responses like envy, whereas aversion to advantageous inequity stems from higher-order cognitive processing regarding fairness constructs (Gao et al., 2018; see also Li, Spitzer, & Olson, 2014; Shaw & Choshen-Hillel, 2017; Sherf & Venkataramani, 2015; Van den Bos et al., 2006).

Building on this work, inequity frames theory suggests the frame used to describe the inequity can mitigate or amplify aversion feelings (Leach, Snider, & Iyer, 2002). Advantage frames—which emphasize the privileges, benefits, or advantages of the dominant group—often evoke threats among the advantaged group (the group benefiting from inequity). Such frames challenge advantaged group members'

attributions of merit and morality; advantage frames highlight privilege, or unfair benefits, based on group membership alone (Brown & Craig, 2020; Knowles & Lowery, 2012; Phillips & Lowery, 2015; 2020). For example, describing the gender pay gap as *women being paid less* does not challenge men's internal attributions for their pay. By contrast, *men being paid more* creates an external attribution for men's excess pay. Given people's desires for positive self- and group-regard—and the importance of these claims for keeping resources and power—advantage frames can evoke defensive responses among the advantaged, including justifying the inequity or denying inequity exists at all (Branscombe, Schmitt, & Schiffhauer, 2007; Iyer, Leach, & Crosby, 2003; Knowles, Lowery, Chow, & Unzueta, 2014; Phillips & Lowery, 2018; Powell, Branscombe, & Schmitt, 2005).

Existing work has also demonstrated that variables such as group identification, legitimacy, and belief in meritocracy can moderate affective responses (e.g., Knowles et al., 2014). For instance, when advantaged group members acknowledge illegitimate inequity, advantage frames can evoke anger and guilt regarding the inequity (Leach, Iyer, & Pederson, 2006; Scully, Rothenberg, Beaton, & Tang, 2018). When the inequity is both acknowledged and legitimate, advantage frames can even promote group pride (Chow, Lowery, & Knowles, 2008; Harth, Kessler, & Leach, 2008; see also Leach et al., 2002).

Finally, by evoking different moral principles—for instance, to avoid harm versus to foster equity—frames can lead to different affective reactions (e.g., Galak & Chow, 2019; Rosette & Koval, 2018; Makov, Newman, & Zauberman, 2020). Disadvantage frames tend to highlight *both* inequity and harm (Rosette & Koval, 2018), whereas advantage frames can pit the desire to achieve equity against concerns about avoiding harm (Galak & Chow, 2019; see also Brosnan, 2019). Thus, disadvantage frames can provoke strong affective responses, whereas advantage frames can evoke more ambivalent experiences (see also Phillips & Jun, 2022).

Solutions. For all the reasons above, frames can also shift people's motivation to correct inequity. For instance, advantage frames can make inequity feel more *self-relevant* for advantaged group members; as such, advantage frames can increase advantaged group members' engagement and motivation to restore equity. When first self-affirmed to reduce their initial defensiveness, Whites are more likely to support affirmative action policies when group inequity is framed in terms of White advantage (Lowery et al., 2007; Lowery, Unzueta, Knowles, & Goff, 2006;

Phillips & Lowery, 2015; see also Scully et al., 2018). At the individual level, disadvantage frames can identify a clear victim with whom to sympathize, thus catalyzing corrective action on the part of the advantaged (Rosette & Koval, 2018).

Finally, by marking which group is deviant or what mechanism is causing an inequity, inequity frames can affect which *kinds* of policies people support (Lowery, Chow, Knowles, & Unzueta, 2012; see also Evers, Inbar, Blanken, & Oosterwijk, 2017). For instance, in the context of social class inequity, highlighting the disadvantages of the lower classes increases collective action intentions (Dietze & Craig, 2021), whereas highlighting the advantages of the upper classes increases support for progressive taxation (Chow & Galak, 2012; Scully et al., 2018).

Which Frames Are Accurate?

While inequity frames theory has demonstrated how frames affect people's understanding of reality, this work has not directly addressed the question of accuracy: how well do frames reflect reality? Two reasons for this stand out. First, in the existing work, large-scale group inequities have often been the focus (e.g., gender pay gap and racial discrimination), and as such, they can be accurately framed in terms of both advantage and disadvantage. That is, racial minorities are disadvantaged by discrimination, just as Whites are advantaged by discrimination. Such use of yoked examples—in which both frames are an accurate description of reality—has made accuracy a moot point.

Second, inequity frames work has generally focused on describing the existence of inequity—a gap between two groups. This work has not considered how frames might apply to the *mechanisms* of inequity or the processes that create such gaps. However, from a mechanism standpoint, some instances of inequity might be more *accurately* described as stemming from advantage or from disadvantage. For instance, the lack of scrutiny of a male employee's work product advantages his performance reviews, whereas misogynistic harassment disadvantages women's reviews. That is, separately from the frames people may use to describe inequity, both disadvantaging *and* advantaging mechanisms can contribute to group inequity.

Importantly, this latter perspective on accuracy requires the existence of some absolute standard against which to compare each group's position. In the example above, how much scrutiny of work products is ideal according to an organization? What

level of harassment of employees is ideal according to an organization? Ostensibly, organizations desire careful scrutiny and no harassment, highlighting not only the gap between men's and women's experiences at work but the direction (i.e., advantage or disadvantage) of that deviance from the standard.

Following this logic, classic work on intergroup competition has offered insights into which frames accurately describe reality. This work has highlighted the fact that both disadvantage *and* advantage can create inequity, focusing specifically on the role of intergroup emotions: outgroup hate versus ingroup love (versus a "standard" of neutrality; Brewer, 1999; DiTomaso, 2015; Greenwald & Pettigrew, 2014; see also Nkomo & Al Ariss, 2014). For instance, DiTomaso (2013) found that Whites benefit from network advantages in the labor market—White individuals who are aware of jobs tend to share this information with other Whites due to patterns of network segregation combined with a motivation to "help" friends and others. In this way, DiTomaso argues that focusing equity interventions on reducing racial animus is unlikely to be effective: racial animus disadvantages racial minorities, but network favoritism advantages Whites much more.

Scholars of discrimination have also taken advantage of multigroup hierarchies to consider the relative roles of ingroup favoritism (an advantaging mechanism) versus outgroup animus (a disadvantaging mechanism) in producing inequity in labor markets (Feld, Salamanca, & Hamermesh, 2016; Goldberg, 1982; Jacquemet & Yannelis, 2012; Salamanca & Feld, 2017). This work suggests that ingroup favoritism is a stronger motive than outgroup animus. For instance, instead of comparing outgroup and ingroup outcomes directly, one study compared ingroup outcomes when ingroup status was concealed versus revealed (to identify endophilia, or ingroup love; Feld et al., 2016). To separately identify exophobia (outgroup hate), the study also compared outgroup outcomes when outgroup status was concealed versus revealed. Results suggested that for both nationality and gender, discrimination was largely driven by ingroup favoritism and outgroup animus was negligible. Other studies have found similar results regarding same nationality versus all others and separately by considering a single outgroup nationality versus all others (Edo, Jacquemet, & Yannelis, 2019; Jacquemet & Yannelis, 2012). In sum, the frequency of ingroup love explanations for inequity in reality, coupled with the commonality of the disadvantaging frame, suggests a mismatch problem.

Which Frames Are Used?

While existing work has focused on the consequences of frames, the tenets of inequity frames theory also suggest that individuals ought to be motivated to *use* certain frames when describing inequity. For instance, groups may use frames that mark others as deviant and treat their own group as the norm (e.g., Cheryan & Markus, 2020; Danbold & Huo, 2015). Given advantaged groups often have the power to set the frame, disadvantage frames ought to be especially likely. That is, regardless of the actual causes of inequity (disadvantaging or advantaging mechanisms, or both), inequity is likely to be described using a *disadvantage* frame because this allows dominant group members to make self-serving attributions (e.g., Lowery & Wout, 2010).

Scholars have also theorized that marginalized group members may prefer disadvantage or advantage frames in different circumstances (e.g., Jun, Chow, Van der Veen, & Bleich, 2022; Lowery & Wout, 2010). For instance, the disadvantage frame increases the likelihood that redistribution efforts will lead to marginalized group members' material gains. The disadvantage frame may also facilitate self-serving attributions for marginalized groups, specifically allowing attributions of negative outcomes to systemic injustice rather than to the self (Crocker, Voelkl, Testa, & Major, 1991; see also Kim, Fitzsimons, & Kay, 2018). However, marginalized groups may also want to avoid the disadvantage frame or even support the advantage frame, which also offers benefits, including self-serving attributions (marking the advantaged group as deviant instead).

In reality, little work has empirically tested which frames are actually used to describe inequity. One recent paper asked business students to define discrimination and found that a disadvantage frame (discrimination against) was used significantly more often than an advantage frame (discrimination in favor of; Phillips & Jun, 2022). On the other hand, when considering physical attribute differences (rather than inequity), one paper showed that people find "more than" comparisons (e.g., men are taller than women) more cognitively fluent and thus use these comparisons more often (Hoorens & Bruckmüller, 2015). Finally, a recent paper, which hand-coded mainstream media publications and used topic modeling on a large corpus of newspaper articles, found that race and gender inequity were especially likely to be described using a disadvantage frame compared to an advantage frame (Jun et al., 2022). Thus, while limited, evidence suggests that race and

gender inequity may be especially framed using the disadvantage frame more than the advantage frame, but that advantage comparisons may be common outside of inequity. In short, more work needs to be done to understand how frames are used.

The frames scholars use can have an outsized impact on both future scientific thinking and practitioner understandings of inequity (e.g., Cornelissen & Werner, 2014; Hodgkinson & Healey, 2008; Kaplan, 2008). Moreover, as reviewed above, frames themselves can affect the perceived causes, feelings, and solutions people have in response to inequity. In particular, this work suggests that scholars' own framing choices might contribute to the neglect of advantage mechanisms. As such, we consider whether scholarship on race and gender inequity in organizations tends to focus on advantage or disadvantage frames.

Summary

The frames used to describe inequity have important consequences that can affect the mitigation, maintenance, or exacerbation of inequity itself. Ultimately, the frames that scholars and practitioners use to *describe* inequity may not reflect the objective mechanisms *creating* that inequity. This insight causes us to ask how the academic community describes racial and gender inequity. A long tradition of research on frames across the social sciences has demonstrated that frames can powerfully direct our attention and shape our interpretation of the world (Benford & Snow, 2000; Cornelissen & Werner, 2014; Goffman, 1974; Hodgkinson & Healey, 2008; Kaplan, 2008; Tversky & Kahneman, 1981). Thus, we also ask, how might scholars' choices affect the mechanisms of inequity that are identified.

INEQUITY LENSES USED TO DESCRIBE RACE AND GENDER INEQUITY IN SCHOLARLY WORK

Here, we consider which lens scholars of race and gender inequity use and what mechanisms (and solutions) this literature has highlighted as a result. We first catalog each paper based on whether it reflects a lens of disadvantage, advantage, or both. Then, we extract themes in the types of mechanisms examined in past research on race and gender inequity at work.

Literature Search Process

To identify articles to review, while keeping the number manageable, we conducted our search as follows. First, we focused our search on empirical work

published in management, sociology, and psychology. This reflects the structure of scholarship on topics of race and gender inequity, in which the three fields cross-cite one another and share professional associations focused on these topics (e.g., GDO Division of Academy of Management; Nkomo, Bell, Roberts, Joshi, & Thatcher, 2019; see also Joshi & Neely, 2018; Pager & Shepherd, 2008; Rudman & Phelan, 2008). We identified 14 high-impact journals in these three fields, relying on New York University's Stern School of Business journal list.³

Second, we examined the table of contents for each of these journals from 2000 to 2020. We chose this time frame based on recent reviews that identified 2000 as a year in which research shifted from focusing on whether organizations might desire demographic diversity at all to considering mechanisms of demographic inequity (our focus) more directly (Nkomo et al., 2019). To keep the number of articles manageable, and because we were interested in cataloging framing lenses that may affect the field, we restricted our selection of older articles (pre-2010) to those with 200 citations or more. Research suggests that articles generally reach their peak citation pattern within 10 years of publication and that those with 200 or more citations by that point may have a continued impact over time (e.g., Quiñones-Vidal, Loópez-García, Peñaranda-Ortega, & Tortosa-Gil, 2004; Xiao et al., 2016; see also Colquitt & Zapata-Phelan, 2007).

Over the course of several months, we looked through the titles, abstracts, and introduction sections, selecting articles that described a process by which a certain gender or racial group received workplace advantages (e.g., higher hiring rates due to favoritism), disadvantages (e.g., lower leader effectiveness ratings due to stereotypes), or both. We eliminated articles that primarily explored nongender or nonrace inequities (e.g., those that focused on inequity due to

disabilities and listed gender or race as exploratory variables) and articles that focused on describing macroeconomic outcome disparities between gender and racial groups (e.g., those that stated the general unemployment rates between the groups). After content screening for articles in this way—focusing on empirical research that primarily considered mechanisms of gender or racial inequity—our search yielded 289 relevant articles.

After identifying this final set of articles, we coded each article as using either a disadvantage lens (emphasizing that one group is disadvantaged relative to another), an advantage lens (emphasizing that one group is advantaged relative to another), or both lenses to describe workplace inequity. An author's interpretation of inequity can be captured by many different factors, including: (a) the language used to describe the mechanism (e.g., "outgroup prejudice" vs. "ingroup favoritism"), (b) the literature used in the theory-building (e.g., stereotyping vs. homophily literature), or (c) the proposed solutions to combat inequity (e.g., increased use of diversity hiring practices which help minorities vs. decreased use of peer recruiting which advantages Whites). Thus, we took a holistic approach to interpret the overall frame used by scholars to explain mechanisms of inequity.

First, we specifically coded the abstracts of these articles, as we wanted to capture the overall lens used to explain causes of inequity. We considered whether the language used in the abstract primarily described a process by which women or racial minorities received a disproportionate amount of an undesirable outcome (disadvantage), a process by which men or White individuals received a disproportionate amount of a desirable outcome (advantage), or both processes. For instance, we coded Roberts, Weisman, et al. (2020: 1290) as using an advantage lens because the article explored how "the extent to which God is conceptualized as a White man [the advantaging mechanism] predicts the extent to which White men are perceived as particularly fit for leadership [the desirable outcome]."

Next, when the inequity lens was not clear from the abstract, we turned to the hypothesis development, introduction, and discussion sections to examine whether the existing theories that the authors draw upon used a disadvantage lens, an advantage lens, or both. For example, we coded Grand (2017) as using a disadvantage lens because the article explored how stereotype threat (disadvantaging mechanism) impairs women's (marginalized group) ability to learn in organizational contexts.

³ Our review (Table 1) relied on the 2020 New York University Stern School of Business journal list to identify outlets (J. C. Magee, personal communication, September 3, 2020), focusing on empirical outlets across management, psychology, and sociology. The journals we used for our search were: *Academy of Management Journal*, *Administrative Science Quarterly*, *American Sociological Review*, *American Journal of Sociology*, *Journal of Applied Psychology*, *Journal of Experimental Psychology: General*, *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *Management Science*, *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes*, *Organization Science*, *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, *Psychological Bulletin*, and *Psychological Science*.

Finally, if the lens was not clear from the abstract or the theory-building sections, we examined whether the authors' proposed solutions to combat inequity were designed to remove barriers for subordinate groups, eliminate unfair advantages for dominant groups, or both. To illustrate, we coded Brandts, Groenert, and Rott (2015) as using both lenses because the article examined how receiving advice by an experienced third party can reduce the gender gap by simultaneously encouraging strong-performing women to enter into competition (thereby reducing a disadvantage) and discouraging weak-performing men from entering into competition (thereby reducing an advantage).

Descriptive Results of the Review

Our review resulted in 62 papers on racial inequity, 186 papers on gender inequity, and 41 papers that concerned both types of inequity. Thus, a majority of papers (64%) focused on gender, whereas only a minority considered race (21% focused on race and 14% considered race and gender). Overall, 82% of papers focused on disadvantage, 5% focused on advantage, and 13% used both lenses. Thus, when explaining racial and gender inequities, scholars overwhelmingly used a disadvantage lens (Table 1). We did not find this overwhelming focus on disadvantage to vary by domain: 76% of papers on racial inequity, 86% of papers on gender inequity, and 76% of papers on both racial and gender inequity focused on disadvantage.

As argued above, the lens scholars use to understand inequity ought to be strongly tied to the mechanisms they identify as causing inequity. In what follows, we summarize the primary mechanisms considered in papers that used a disadvantage lens and compare this work to the small minority of papers that used an advantage lens.

Trends from the Review: The Dominance of the Disadvantage Lens

Disadvantage-focused papers (82% of papers reviewed) emphasized that a marginalized group is disadvantaged relative to another group or groups or to some normative standard. These papers identified a host of mechanisms creating such inequity. However, our reading of the disadvantage-focused papers suggests that the mechanisms identified largely fall into three major categories: prejudice and stereotyping, belonging threats, and structural barriers. After identifying these categories, we formally coded each

paper to identify which category was dominant by considering the abstract, core argument, and conclusions of the paper, as described above. Notably, these categories are neither exhaustive (other mechanisms may exist) nor independent (some papers may have included multiple mechanism categories, and the categories may have been interrelated). Nevertheless, these three categories emerged the most frequently in our review of the disadvantage-focused papers and the dominant mechanisms they considered.

Prejudice and Stereotyping Prejudice (affective associations) and stereotyping (cognitive associations) each specify biases that can produce inequity. Most (61%) disadvantage-focused papers identified mechanisms in this category. In the case of prejudice, studies of race inequity in organizations emphasized the role of both explicit and implicit animus in disadvantaging target groups. For instance, Brief et al. (2000) demonstrated in two experiments that negative implicit feelings toward Black candidates lead them to be selected for an interview less frequently than Whites when a legitimate authority provides a business justification to discriminate (see also Dovidio & Gaertner, 2000). Kang et al. (2016) presented a large-scale audit study that showed similar findings regarding Asian and Black candidates (see also Milkman et al., 2015; Bertrand & Mullainathan, 2004).

In the case of stereotyping, studies of gender inequity in organizations emphasized warmth and competence stereotypes that serve as barriers to female advancement (Eagly & Karau, 2002; Heilman et al., 2004; Rosette et al., 2016), while studies of racial inequity emphasized competence stereotypes that prevent racial minority employees' advancement (Avery et al., 2015). Kray et al. (2014) focused on stereotypes of female negotiators as less competent and more easily misled compared to male negotiators. Carton and Rosette (2011) focused on competence stereotypes of Black individuals and found that Black leaders are perceived to be less competent than White leaders after a failure. That is, a cognitive association or belief—race/competence or gender/competence—can then lead organizational members to make different assumptions about an employee and results in workplace inequity (see also Dupree, Torrez, Obioha, & Fiske, 2021).

Belonging Threats Belonging threats—or factors that prevent individuals from either feeling like or being perceived as belonging in an organization—are also a critical mechanism creating disadvantage against women and racial minorities and were the focus of 18% of the disadvantage papers. This

TABLE 1
Review of Existing Literature: Disadvantage Versus Advantage Lens

Topic Area	Citation	Overall Frame		
		Advantage	Disadvantage	Both
Gender	Abraham (2017)		✓	
Gender	Abraham (2020)	✓		
Gender	Aguinis, Ji, & Joo (2018)		✓	
Gender	Akinola, Martin, & Phillips (2018)		✓	
Gender	Amanatullah & Morris (2010)		✓	
Gender	Amanatullah & Tinsley (2013)		✓	
Gender	Asgari, Dasgupta, & Stout (2012)		✓	
Gender	Baer, Vadera, Leenders, & Oldham (2014)			✓
Gender	Baldiga & Coffman (2018)			✓
Gender	Barbulescu & Bidwell (2013)		✓	
Gender	Belliveau (2012)		✓	
Gender	Bian, Leslie, Murphy, & Cimpian (2018)		✓	
Gender	Blevins, Sauerwald, Hoobler, & Robertson (2019)		✓	
Gender	Bohnet, Geen, & Bazerman (2016)		✓	
Gender	Botelho & Abraham (2017)		✓	
Gender	Bowles & Flynn (2010)		✓	
Gender	Bowles, Babcock, & Lai (2007)		✓	
Gender	Brands & Fernandez-Mateo (2017)		✓	
Gender	Brands & Kilduff (2014)		✓	
Gender	Brandts et al. (2015)			✓
Gender	Braun, Peus, & Frey (2018)		✓	
Gender	Brescoll (2011)		✓	
Gender	Brescoll & Uhlmann (2008)		✓	
Gender	Brescoll, Dawson, & Uhlmann (2010)		✓	
Gender	Brescoll, Uhlmann, Moss-Racusin, & Sarnell (2012)		✓	
Gender	Brewer, Osborne, Mueller, O'Connor, Dayal, & Arora (2020)		✓	
Gender	Brinton & Oh (2019)		✓	
Gender	Briscoe & Joshi (2017)		✓	
Gender	Budig & Hodges (2010)		✓	
Gender	Cahlíkova, Cingl, & Lively (2020)		✓	
Gender	Caleo (2016)		✓	
Gender	Cardador (2017)		✓	
Gender	Carnahan & Greenwood (2018)		✓	
Gender	Castilla & Benard (2010)	✓		
Gender	Cha & Weeden (2014)			✓
Gender	Chan & Anteby (2016)		✓	
Gender	Chang, Kirgios, Rai, & Milkman (2020)		✓	
Gender	Cheryan, Plaut, Davies, & Steele (2009)		✓	
Gender	Clark, Thiem, Hoover, & Habashi (2017)		✓	
Gender	Cohen & Broschak (2013)		✓	
Gender	Correll, Benard, & Paik (2007)		✓	
Gender	Cowen & Montgomery (2020)		✓	
Gender	Danbold & Bendersky (2020)		✓	
Gender	Danbold & Huo (2017)		✓	
Gender	Davies, Spencer, & Steele (2005)		✓	
Gender	Derks, Van Laar, Ellemers, & De Groot (2011)		✓	
Gender	Desai, Chugh, & Brief (2014)		✓	
Gender	Devine, Forscher, Cox, Kaatz, Sheridan, & Carnes (2017)		✓	
Gender	Diekman, Brown, Johnston, & Clark (2010)		✓	
Gender	Dimitriadis, Lee, Ramarajan, & Battilana (2017)		✓	
Gender	Ding, Murray, & Stuart (2012)		✓	
Gender	Duguid (2011)		✓	
Gender	Duguid & Thomas-Hunt (2015)		✓	
Gender	Dwivedi, Joshi, & Misangyi (2018)		✓	
Gender	Emerson & Murphy (2015)		✓	

TABLE 1
(Continued)

Topic Area	Citation	Overall Frame		
		Advantage	Disadvantage	Both
Gender	Evans, Slaughter, Ellis, & Rivin (2019)		✓	
Gender	Farh, Oh, Hollenbeck, Yu, Lee, & King (2020)		✓	
Gender	Fernandez & Sosa (2005)			✓
Gender	Fernandez-Mateo & Fernandez (2016)		✓	
Gender	Ferriman, Lubinski, & Benbow (2009)			✓
Gender	Gabriel, Butts, Yuan, Rosen, & Sliter (2018)		✓	
Gender	Gaucher, Friesen, & Kay (2011)		✓	
Gender	George, Helson, & John (2011)		✓	
Gender	Georgeac & Rattan (2019)		✓	
Gender	Gersick, Bartunek, & Dutton (2000)			✓
Gender	Gerstel & Clawson (2014)			✓
Gender	Gibson & Lawrence (2010)		✓	
Gender	Gladstone & O'Connor (2014)		✓	
Gender	Gorman (2005)		✓	
Gender	Grand (2017)		✓	
Gender	Greenberg & Mollick (2017)		✓	
Gender	Grover, Ito, & Park (2017)		✓	
Gender	Gupta, Han, Mortal, Silveri, & Turban (2018)		✓	
Gender	Gupta, Turban, & Bhawe (2008)		✓	
Gender	Gutsell & Remedios (2016)		✓	
Gender	Hanek, Garcia, & Tor (2016)		✓	
Gender	Hebl, King, Glick, Singletary, & Kazama (2007)		✓	
Gender	Heilman, Caleo, & Halim (2010)		✓	
Gender	Heilman & Chen (2005)		✓	
Gender	Heilman & Haynes (2005)		✓	
Gender	Heilman & Okimoto (2007)		✓	
Gender	Heilman & Wallen (2010)		✓	
Gender	Heilman, Wallen, Fuchs, & Tamkins (2004)		✓	
Gender	Hideg & Ferris (2014)		✓	
Gender	Hideg & Ferris (2016)		✓	
Gender	Hideg & Wilson (2020)		✓	
Gender	Hideg, Krstic, Trau, & Zarina (2018)		✓	
Gender	Hoisl & Mariani (2017)		✓	
Gender	Hoobler, Wayne, & Lemmon (2009)		✓	
Gender	Hoyt (2012)		✓	
Gender	Hoyt & Burnette (2013)		✓	
Gender	Huffman, Cohen, & Pearlman (2010)		✓	
Gender	Ip, Leibbrandt, & Vecci (2020)		✓	
Gender	Johnson, Murphy, Zewdie, & Reichard (2008)		✓	
Gender	Johnson, Sitzmann, & Nguyen (2014)		✓	
Gender	Joshi (2014)		✓	
Gender	Joshi, Son, & Roh (2014)		✓	
Gender	Judge & Cable (2011)		✓	
Gender	Judge & Livingston (2008)			✓
Gender	Kanze, Huang, Conley, & Higgins (2018)		✓	
Gender	Karelaia & Guillen (2014)		✓	
Gender	Kim et al. (2018)		✓	
Gender	Kinias & Sim (2016)		✓	
Gender	Koch et al. (2015)			✓
Gender	Koenig, Eagly, Mitchell, & Ristikari (2011)		✓	
Gender	Kray, Galinsky, & Thompson (2002)		✓	
Gender	Kray, Kennedy, & Van Zant (2014)		✓	
Gender	Kray, Thompson, & Galinsky (2001)			✓
Gender	Lambrech & Tucker (2019)		✓	
Gender	Lanaj & Hollenbeck (2014)			✓

TABLE 1
(Continued)

Topic Area	Citation	Overall Frame		
		Advantage	Disadvantage	Both
Gender	Latu, Mast, Lammers, & Bombari (2013)		✓	
Gender	Lee & Huang (2018)		✓	
Gender	Lee, Kesebir, & Pillutla (2016)		✓	
Gender	Lee, Pitesa, Pillutla, & Thau (2015)	✓		
Gender	Leibbrandt & List (2015)			✓
Gender	Leibbrandt, Wang, & Foo (2018)		✓	
Gender	Leslie, Manchester, & Dahm (2017)		✓	
Gender	Leung & Koppman (2018)		✓	
Gender	Little, Hinojosa, Paustian-Underdahl, & Zipay (2018)		✓	
Gender	Little, Major, Hinojosa, & Nelson (2015)		✓	
Gender	London, Downey, Romero-Canyas, Rattan, & Tyson (2012)		✓	
Gender	Lutter (2015)		✓	
Gender	Lyness & Heilman (2006)		✓	
Gender	Lyness & Thompson (2000)		✓	
Gender	Madera, Hebl, & Martin (2009)		✓	
Gender	Martin & Phillips (2017)		✓	
Gender	Martin & Phillips (2019)		✓	
Gender	Martin, North, & Phillips (2019)		✓	
Gender	McCabe, Lubinski, & Benbow (2020)		✓	
Gender	McClellan, Martin, Emich, & Woodruff (2018)	✓		
Gender	Merluzzi (2017)		✓	
Gender	Montgomery & Cowen (2020)		✓	
Gender	Morgan, Walker, Hebl, & King (2013)		✓	
Gender	Mun & Jung (2018)		✓	
Gender	Netchaeva, Kouchaki, & Sheppard (2015)			✓
Gender	Newton & Simutin (2015)		✓	
Gender	Nichols & Cook (2019)		✓	
Gender	Niessen-Ruenzi & Ruenzi (2019)		✓	
Gender	Okimoto & Brescoll (2010)		✓	
Gender	Ostroff & Atwate (2003)		✓	
Gender	Padavic, Ely, & Reid (2020)			✓
Gender	Parks-Stamm, Heilman, & Hearn (2008)		✓	
Gender	Paustian-Underdahl, Eaton, Mandeville, & Little (2019)		✓	
Gender	Phillips (2005)		✓	
Gender	Pondorfer, Barsbai, & Schmidt (2017)		✓	
Gender	Proudfoot, Kay, & Koval (2015)		✓	
Gender	Quadlin (2018)		✓	
Gender	Ramati-Ziber, Shnabel, & Glick (2020)		✓	
Gender	Ranganathan (2018)		✓	
Gender	Rehg, Miceli, Near, & Van Scotter (2008)		✓	
Gender	Reskin & McBrier (2000)	✓		
Gender	Reynolds et al. (2020)		✓	
Gender	Rivera & Tilcsik (2016)	✓		
Gender	Rivera & Tilcsik (2019)		✓	
Gender	Rosette & Tost (2010)			✓
Gender	Rudman & Kilianski (2000)		✓	
Gender	Rudman, Moss-Racusin, Phelan, & Nauts (2012)		✓	
Gender	Ruffle & Shtudiner (2015)			✓
Gender	Ryan, Haslam, Hersby, & Bongiorno (2011)		✓	
Gender	Samek (2019)		✓	
Gender	Scott & Brown (2006)		✓	
Gender	Sherf, Tangirala, & Weber (2017)			✓
Gender	Shockley, Shen, DeNunzio, Arvan, & Knudsen (2017)		✓	
Gender	Sinclair & Kunda (2000)		✓	
Gender	Small, Gelfand, Babcock, & Gettman (2007)		✓	

TABLE 1
(Continued)

Topic Area	Citation	Overall Frame		
		Advantage	Disadvantage	Both
Gender	Smith-Doerr, Alegria, Husbands Fealing, Fitzpatrick, & Tomaskovic-Devey (2019)		✓	
Gender	Solal & Snellman (2019)		✓	
Gender	Sterling & Fernandez (2018)		✓	
Gender	Stoet & Geary (2018)		✓	
Gender	Stout & Dasgupta (2011)		✓	
Gender	Tharenou (2001)		✓	
Gender	Tharenou (2008)		✓	
Gender	Thébaud (2015)		✓	
Gender	Tinsley, Howell, & Amanatullah (2015)		✓	
Gender	Tonoyan, Strohmeyer, & Jennings (2020)		✓	
Gender	Toosi, Sommers, & Ambady (2012)		✓	
Gender	Uhlmann & Cohen (2005)			✓
Gender	Uhlmann & Cohen (2007)		✓	
Gender	Vescio, Gervais, Snyder, & Hoover (2005)		✓	
Gender	Vial, Brescoll, Napier, Dovidio, & Tyler (2018)		✓	
Gender	von Hippel, Wiryakusuma, Bowden, & Shochet (2011)		✓	
Gender	Wallen, Morris, Devine, & Lu (2017)		✓	
Gender	Wang, Chiang, Tsai, Lin, & Cheng (2013)			✓
Gender	Wang, Holmes, Devine, & Bishoff (2018)		✓	
Gender	Williams & Tiedens (2016)		✓	
Gender	Yang & Aldrich (2014)		✓	
Gender & Race	Apfelbaum et al. (2016)		✓	
Gender & Race	Berdahl & Moore (2006)		✓	
Gender & Race	Biernat & Sesko (2013)			✓
Gender & Race	Biernat, Fuegen, & Kobryniewicz (2010)	✓		
Gender & Race	Bowles & Gelfand (2010)			✓
Gender & Race	Castilla (2011)	✓		
Gender & Race	Castilla (2015)		✓	
Gender & Race	Chaney, Sanchez, & Remedios (2016)		✓	
Gender & Race	Galinsky, Hall, & Cuddy (2013)		✓	
Gender & Race	Hall, Galinsky, & Phillips (2015)		✓	
Gender & Race	Hekman, Aquino, Owens, Mitchell, Schilpzand, & Leavitt (2010)		✓	
Gender & Race	Hekman, Johnson, Foo, & Yang (2017)		✓	
Gender & Race	Kaiser, Major, Jurcevic, Dover, Brady, & Shapiro (2013)		✓	
Gender & Race	Kalev (2014)		✓	
Gender & Race	Kalev et al. (2006)		✓	
Gender & Race	Lashley & Pollock (2020)		✓	
Gender & Race	Leslie, Mayer, & Kravitz (2014)			✓
Gender & Race	Livingston, Rosette, & Washington (2012)		✓	
Gender & Race	Lowery & Wout (2010)			✓
Gender & Race	McCord et al. (2018)		✓	
Gender & Race	McDonald & Westphal (2013)		✓	
Gender & Race	McDonald, Keeves, & Westphal (2018)		✓	
Gender & Race	Milkman, Akinola, & Chugh (2015)		✓	
Gender & Race	Monin & Miller (2001)		✓	
Gender & Race	Norton, Vandello, & Darley (2004)			✓
Gender & Race	Park & Westphal (2013)		✓	
Gender & Race	Petersen, Saporta, & Seidel (2000)		✓	
Gender & Race	Pietri, Drawbaugh, Lewis, & Johnson (2019)		✓	
Gender & Race	Rattan & Dweck (2018)		✓	
Gender & Race	Raver & Nishii (2010)		✓	
Gender & Race	Roberts et al. (2020)	✓		
Gender & Race	Rosenfeld & Kleykamp (2012)		✓	
Gender & Race	Rosette & Tost (2013)			✓

TABLE 1
(Continued)

Topic Area	Citation	Overall Frame		
		Advantage	Disadvantage	Both
Gender & Race	Sekaquaptewa & Thompson (2002)		✓	
Gender & Race	Storer, Schneider, & Harknett (2020)		✓	
Gender & Race	Unzueta, Gutiérrez, & Ghavami (2010)		✓	
Gender & Race	Westphal & Milton (2000)		✓	
Gender & Race	Westphal & Stern (2007)		✓	
Gender & Race	Williams, George-Jones, & Hebl (2019)		✓	
Gender & Race	Zhu & Westphal (2014)	✓		
Gender & Race	Zhu, Shen, & Hillman (2014)		✓	
Race	Apfelbaum, Grunberg, Halevy, & Kang (2017)		✓	
Race	Avery, McKay, Volpone, & Malka (2015)		✓	
Race	Bacharach, Bamberger, & Vashdi (2005)		✓	
Race	Bauman, Trawalter, & Unzueta (2014)		✓	
Race	Brief, Dietz, Cohen, Pugh, & Vaslow (2000)		✓	
Race	Carter & Murphy (2017)		✓	
Race	Carton & Rosette (2011)		✓	
Race	Cha & Roberts (2019)			✓
Race	Debrosse, Rossignac-Milon, Taylor, & Destin (2018)		✓	
Race	Dover, Major, & Kaiser (2016)			✓
Race	Dovidio & Gaertner (2000)		✓	
Race	Dumas, Phillips, & Rothbard (2013)			✓
Race	Fernandez & Fernandez-Mateo (2006)		✓	
Race	Gamoran, Collares, & Barfels (2016)		✓	
Race	Gardner & Ryan (2020)		✓	
Race	Good, Bourne, & Drake (2020)		✓	
Race	Gündemir, Carton, & Homan (2019)		✓	
Race	Hall, Avery, McKay, Blot, & Edwards (2019)		✓	
Race	Hall, Phillips, & Townsend (2015)		✓	
Race	Harackiewicz, Canning, Tibbetts, Priniski, & Hyde (2016)		✓	
Race	Hernandez, Avery, Tonidandel, Hebl, Smith, & McKay (2016)		✓	
Race	Hernandez, Avery, Volpone, & Kaiser (2019)		✓	
Race	Hinds, Carley, Krackhardt, & Wholey (2000)	✓		
Race	Howell, Harrison, Burris, & Detert (2015)			✓
Race	Jacoby-Senghor, Sinclair, & Shelton (2016)		✓	
Race	James (2000)		✓	
Race	Kang, DeCelles, Tilcsik & Jun (2016)		✓	
Race	Kubota, Li, Bar-David, Banaji, & Phelps (2013)		✓	
Race	Lee, Pitesa, Thau, & Pillutla (2015)			✓
Race	Lount, Sheldon, Rink, & Phillips (2015)		✓	
Race	Lowery et al. (2012)			✓
Race	Lowery et al. (2006)			✓
Race	Mendoza-Denton, Downey, Purdie, Davis, & Pietrzak (2002)		✓	
Race	Mobasser (2019)		✓	
Race	Mollica, Gray, & Trevino (2003)		✓	
Race	Moore (2010)		✓	
Race	Morrison, Plaut, & Ybarra (2010)		✓	
Race	Nelson (2019)		✓	
Race	O'Hara, Gibbons, Weng, Gerrard, & Simons (2012)		✓	
Race	Pedulla & Pager (2019)		✓	
Race	Phillips & Lowery (2015)			✓
Race	Plaut, Garnett, Buffardi, & Sanchez-Burks (2011)			✓
Race	Pope, Price, & Wolfers (2018)		✓	
Race	Purdie-Vaughns, Steele, Davies, Ditlemann, & Crosby (2008)		✓	
Race	Purkiss, Perrewé, Gillespie, Mayes, & Ferris (2006)		✓	
Race	Rosette & Koval (2018)			✓
Race	Rosette, Carton, Bowes-Sperry, & Hewlin (2013)		✓	

TABLE 1
(Continued)

Topic Area	Citation	Overall Frame		
		Advantage	Disadvantage	Both
Race	Rosette, Leonardelli, & Phillips (2008)	✓		
Race	Seidel, Polzer, & Stewart (2000)		✓	
Race	Shteynberg, Leslie, Knight, & Meyer (2011)			✓
Race	Smith (2005)		✓	
Race	Sy et al. (2010)		✓	
Race	Thoman, Muragishi, & Smith (2017)		✓	
Race	Tomaskovic-Devey, Hällsten, & Avent-Holt (2015)		✓	
Race	Walton & Cohen (2007)		✓	
Race	Willard, Isaac, & Carney (2015)		✓	
Race	Wilton, Bell, Vahradyan, & Kaiser (2020)		✓	
Race	Yogeeswaran & Dasgupta (2010)		✓	
Race	Younkin & Kuppuswamy (2017)		✓	
Race	Zapata, Carton, & Liu (2015)		✓	
Race	Zhang (2017)			✓
Race	Zhang (2019)	✓		

mechanism often builds on foundations of prejudice or stereotyping but emphasizes the target individual's subjective social experience. For instance, studies have suggested that women feel a lower sense of fit when job advertisements use masculine wording (Gaucher et al., 2011) and when interviewers use gender-exclusive language (i.e., using *he* to indicate *he* or *she*; Stout & Dasgupta, 2011), and they subsequently view such jobs as less appealing. Likewise, research has found that racial minority job candidates are likely to hide racial cues—and cues of merit along with them—in their resumes when organizations do not signal valuing diversity (Kang et al., 2016).

These studies also documented belonging barriers that continue affecting employees throughout the selection process and even after they join the organization, including prototype beliefs and cultural fit expectations. As a result, female and racial minority employees both feel lower belonging (Danbold & Bendersky, 2020) and are evaluated as less of an organizational fit (Lyness & Heilman, 2006). Research has found that such belonging threats continue to create inequity even when these individuals rise to powerful positions in organizations. For example, McDonald et al. (2018) found that White male top managers experience lower organizational commitment and are less likely to support minority-status colleagues following the appointment of a racial minority or female CEO.

Structural Barriers Finally, we found that many disadvantage-focused papers (26%) emphasized how structural barriers—reduced access to social, financial, and cultural capital—faced by racial

minorities and women contribute to racial and gender inequities.⁴ While we found that this work may reference prejudice and stereotypes or belonging threats as additional mechanisms, the emphasis ultimately lies in the structuring of capital. For instance, Petersen et al. (2000) demonstrated how segregation in social networks, and thus access to organizational opportunities, can present barriers to racial minorities' advancement (see also Khattab, van Knippenberg, Pieterse, & Hernandez, 2020). Networks can also affect salary, with those less closely connected—such as racial minorities—receiving worse outcomes (Seidel et al., 2000). Pedulla and Pager (2019) found that many of these gaps were not driven by differential network utilization but rather by differential returns. Beyond network structure, technology can also create barriers: a recent study found that advertising algorithms that optimize cost effectiveness result in job ads being seen less by women than men because it is more expensive to show ads to younger women (Lambrecht & Tucker, 2019).

Even after entering the organization, differential access to capital can present structural barriers to

⁴ Some debate exists regarding the adjectives structural, institutional, and systemic to describe patterns of racism and sexism in society. Largely, these terms are used interchangeably, and together they invoke the idea that both formal policies and informal practices create and reinforce group inequity, especially by shaping access to different forms of capital (see, e.g., Aspen Institute, 2021; Feagin & Elias, 2013; Pincus, 1996). We rely on the term “structural” to capture this idea.

women and racial minorities. For example, women are less likely to report receiving sponsorship and mentorship (Lyness & Thompson, 2000), and both women and racial minorities are less likely to receive mentoring regarding norms among corporate boards (McDonald & Westphal, 2013). Likewise, women are more likely to suffer motherhood penalties to their careers as a result of both family leave policies and family structures (e.g., Correll et al., 2007; Hideg et al., 2018).

Summary Overall, we found that the majority of papers in our review took a disadvantage lens to explain race and gender inequity and emphasized disadvantaging mechanisms. Our formal coding suggests that these disadvantaging mechanisms in turn cluster into three main categories—prejudice and stereotyping, belonging threats, and structural barriers. In turn, the solutions to fix inequity that this work offers focuses on these three categories. For instance, papers using a disadvantage lens emphasized the need to reduce prejudice and stereotyping and to provide more belonging and structural access to disadvantaged groups via training, mentorship programs, and networking events (e.g., Avery et al., 2015; Hall et al., 2019; Rosette et al., 2013).

Trends from the Review: The Rarity of the Advantage Lens

As described above, a mere 5% (13) of reviewed articles relied on an advantage lens alone that emphasized the benefits and privileges enjoyed by the dominant group. Nevertheless, from our review and coding of these rare papers, some recurring and some new mechanisms of inequity emerged.

First, a few papers that our review identified as using an advantage lens emphasized social role theory (15% of advantage-focused papers), particularly as applied to gender (e.g., Abraham, 2020; Lee et al., 2015; McClean et al., 2018; Reskin & McBrier, 2000). These papers considered how role expectations and stereotypes may provide men an advantage in organizations and society, particularly at the hiring phase. For instance, given social role expectations that men enact more agency and dominance, men are favored as leaders and entrepreneurs, giving “men an advantage in managerial employment” (Reskin & McBrier, 2000, pg. 213; see also Abraham, 2020). In this case, the work emphasized how such role expectations might advantage men in particular.

Second, several papers (31% of advantage-focused papers) focused on homophily processes or the attraction to and favorable treatment of demographically

similar others. That is, given that those with greater power in organizations tend to be White and male, homophily processes are theorized to advantage White and male employees. In a paper by Zhang (2019) following NBA teams (in which most head coaches are White), data suggested that players experience “more favorable treatment” from same-race coaches after wins. In this way, the author identified favorability among same-race manager–employee pairs as explanatory, thus marking favoring itself as excess or unusual compared to some normative standard. Castilla (2011), Hinds et al. (2000), and Zhu & Westphal (2014) likewise identified overly favorable treatment toward similar others as a source of inequity that advantages dominant group members.

Third, Rosette et al. (2008) provided a useful demonstration of how prejudice and stereotypes can serve not only as a barrier but also as an unfair advantage to dominant group candidates. Specifically, they showed that White male candidates are more likely to be presumed to be good leaders, *above and beyond the reality* of the candidates’ leadership skills. That is, the authors identified a mistaken assumption, driven by stereotypes, that favors White men in a way that violates an absolute standard (in this case, reality; see also Biernat et al., 2010; Roberts, Weisman, et al., 2020). Likewise, Rivera and Tilcsik (2016: 1097) demonstrated similar processes providing “an advantage for men” in professional employment. Castilla and Benard (2010) built on this view by emphasizing how managerial perceptions of organizational processes—specifically, as meritocratic or nonmeritocratic—can license individuals to act on their biases and stereotypes, ultimately advantaging men. Fifty-four percent of the advantaged-focus papers fell into this mechanism category.

Interestingly, the latter two categories of advantage focused papers tended to come from different social sciences traditions: a sociological tradition, which often uses homophily as a core construct, versus an organizational behavior and psychological tradition, which often uses prejudice as a core construct. While both constructs represent critical processes that create gaps between groups and are both used across the social sciences, each field’s relative emphasis on attraction and favoritism versus aversion and animosity may in turn affect lenses on inequity.

Suggested solutions among the advantage-focused papers again included addressing prejudice and stereotype management, for instance, reducing prejudice, shifting stereotypes, or expanding prototypes associated with different roles. Trainings, contact, and even decision-making “nudges” were invoked as

methods of potentially managing such prejudice and stereotyping. However, these papers also emphasized interventions to diversify networks and reduce *favoritism*, rather than focusing on prejudice against marginalized groups alone. As such, different elements of organizational processes were targeted.

Overall, we found very few papers that took an advantage lens, and those that did focused primarily on homophily and stereotypes as mechanisms. This rather narrow scope of advantaging mechanisms examined in the literature suggests that scholars of inequity may benefit from expanding the scope to other types of advantaging mechanisms that contribute to inequity.

Trends from the Review: The Rare Combination of Both Lenses

A small percentage of papers (13% of our review) used both lenses—that is, they emphasized both the advantages dominant groups receive and the disadvantages marginalized groups suffer from. We again reviewed and formally coded these combined lens papers to identify common mechanisms.

First, several papers (16% of both-lens papers) were explicitly couched in inequity frames theory (e.g., Lowery et al., 2012; Lowery et al., 2006; Rosette & Koval, 2018); as such, these papers emphasized the ways in which the target inequity could be discussed in terms of advantage *and* disadvantage. Nevertheless, this explicit perspective was rare. Moreover, these papers did not generally emphasize mechanisms of inequity per se but rather emphasized how the same gap between groups might be framed in different ways, and they considered the consequences of such differential framing.

Second, and mirroring some papers that used an advantage lens, another set of papers that used both an advantage and disadvantage lens came from a social role theory perspective (34% of both-lens papers). In this work, two different sets of stereotypes (male vs. female) were mapped onto qualitatively divergent roles expected of men and women (Eagly, 1987; Eagly, Wood, & Diekmann, 2000). In turn, some of these papers described both the experience of men and the experience of women somewhat independently (e.g., Biernat & Sesko, 2013; Koch, D’Mello, & Sackett, 2015). For instance, Baer et al. (2014) described how role expectations regarding competition can stimulate creativity for groups of men but suppress creativity for groups of women. Likewise, Judge and Livingston (2008) discussed how support for traditional gender roles exacerbates

the gender wage gap—that is, both advantaging men and disadvantaging women. Padavic et al. (2020) similarly discussed how support for workaholicism can advantage men but also create harm and disadvantage for both sexes. Of note, many of the disadvantage-focused papers also used social role theory. This suggests that this work may remain largely couched in disadvantage, while only a handful additionally included an advantage frame.

Third, another set of papers relied on a combination of lenses, but with a twist. Papers explicitly studying affirmative action and related “diversity policies” sometimes considered the “advantages” accrued to *marginalized* groups and the “disadvantages” to dominant groups (16% of both-lens papers).⁵ For instance, this work used the disadvantage lens by focusing either on the threat affirmative action policies might pose to dominant group members (e.g., Dover et al., 2016; Plaut et al., 2011) or on second-stage disadvantages such policies might create for marginalized group members who are selected (e.g., self-doubt and animosity from the dominant group; Leslie et al., 2014). However, this collection of work also considered advantage, especially by framing such policies as a boost for marginalized employees (e.g., Shteynberg, Leslie, Knight, & Mayer, 2011), or less commonly by explicitly recognizing the advantaged position of the dominant group (e.g., Sherf et al., 2017).

Suggested solutions in this space often emphasized using alternate frames to address inequity or expanding the prototype associated with the social role—similar to the advantage-frame papers reviewed above. For example, in the case of affirmative action and diversity policies, changing the emphasis to assuage dominant group members (e.g., including Whites in definitions of diversity; Plaut et al., 2011) is a potential intervention. Other suggestions included reducing stereotyping and prejudice among dominant group members or convincing dominant group members that reducing disadvantage to marginalized group members will not harm their dominance and may even offer instrumental benefits (e.g., the “business case” for diversity; for an important critique of this view, see Georgeac & Rattan, 2022; Tierney, 1997; Unzueta & Knowles, 2014).

⁵ One quadrant is missing: work that considers traditional discrimination in terms of an advantage frame. That is, how do standard (i.e., non-diversity) hiring practices advantage dominant group members, and might being the beneficiary of such standard discrimination create feelings of self-doubt or animosity from others who did not enjoy such benefits?

Summary

While the literature on equity theory and intergroup competition has made an effort to explain the existence of dual paths to inequity, our review found that scholarship on race and gender inequity in organizations has largely taken a disadvantage lens and thus focused on disadvantaging mechanisms. Indeed, our review reveals that very few journal articles considered advantaging mechanisms—those that may allow dominant groups to *over-benefit* in comparison to a relevant absolute standard—in their explanations of gender and racial inequity in organizations. Even in cases when mechanisms themselves could be construed as both disadvantaging and advantaging (e.g., stereotypes), scholars nevertheless tended to take only the disadvantage lens. As such, suggested solutions to inequity have often focused on reducing barriers to marginalized groups, which may have missed opportunities for additional intervention.

At least three possibilities may explain this disproportionate use of the disadvantage lens. First, to the extent that Whites (Devos & Banaji, 2005; Nkomo & Al Ariss, 2014) and men (Cheryan & Markus, 2020; Navarrete, McDonald, Molina, & Sidanius, 2010; Prewitt-Freilino, Caswell, & Laakso, 2012; Sidanius & Veniegas, 2013) are understood to be the default and thus normative standard, then inequity may be presumed to be driven by disadvantages against non-Whites and nonmen. Second, to the extent that scholars have been socialized—for instance, by mainstream media (Jun et al., 2022) or by motivations of others (Phillips & Lowery, 2018)—to rely on a disadvantage frame, then the disadvantage lens may be propagated due to norms. Finally, scholars may be personally motivated to use a disadvantage lens: focusing on disadvantage offers scholars from dominant groups a way to explain inequity that does not implicate themselves as having benefited from unfair advantages (Lowery et al., 2007; Lowery & Wout, 2010; see also Roberts, Bareket-Shavit, Dolins, Goldie, & Mortenson, 2020).

EXPANDING THE ADVANTAGE LENS: APPLYING LESSONS FROM OTHER LITERATURES

Next, to expand the advantage lens in the study of race and gender inequity, we consider other areas of research where scholars have typically examined advantaging processes. We specifically consider whether the advantage frame has been used to study demographic organizational inequity (aside from race and gender inequity) and identify literatures on

attractiveness, nepotism, and social class as often taking an explicit advantage lens. As such, we *apply* lessons from these three groups of literature to race and gender inequity. In this way, we hope to expand the advantage lens on race and gender inequity research and discuss potential advantaging mechanisms that may contribute to these inequities in organizations (see Table 2).

Literatures Using an Advantage Frame

We identify attractiveness; nepotism, cronyism, and internal referrals; and social class in organizational selection as research areas that consider advantaging processes and prescribe solutions that reduce inequitable benefits for dominant groups. Given our goal to broaden the advantage lens in the study of race and gender equity, we focused on processes identified in the attractiveness, nepotism, and social class literature that may have particular relevance to race and gender inequity, rather than undertaking an exhaustive review of these literatures. Nevertheless, we introduce each group of literature briefly here.

Attractiveness. Scholars spanning fields as disparate as law, human resources, psychology, and economics have demonstrated how physical appearance affects selection and outcomes. Overall, this literature has found evidence of an “attractiveness advantage,” such that individuals deemed⁶ more physically attractive receive more positive treatment and outcomes across a range of organizational contexts (Hamermesh, 2011; Hosoda, Stone-Romero, & Coats, 2003; Nault, Pitesa, & Thau, 2020; Rhode, 2010; Wolbring & Rioridan, 2016). Interestingly, the very name of this phenomenon—*attractiveness advantage*⁷—demonstrates the advantage lens this literature tends to take. That is, rather than explaining bias against the less attractive, this literature has identified bias in favor of the more attractive as the occurrence worth explaining.

⁶ Importantly, attractiveness standards are deeply socio-culturally dependent, varying over time and place (e.g., Swami et al., 2010) and varying by individual (e.g., Swami, Buchanan, Furnham, & Tovée, 2008; but see cross-cultural research on facial symmetry: Pisanski & Feinberg, 2013). Such standards also overlap significantly with race and gender beliefs (e.g., Cash, Gillen, & Burns, 1977; Franzoi, 2001; Poran, 2002; Wilkins, Chan, & Kaiser, 2011). Nevertheless, to the extent an individual perceives another to be attractive, positive motivations often result.

⁷ Across different fields, the terms *beauty premium*; *beauty bias*; and *attractiveness*, *appearance*, or *beauty-discrimination* are also used, further supporting the advantage frame (in which the advantaged group is emphasized).

TABLE 2
Potential Advantage and Disadvantage Mechanisms for Race and Gender Inequity

		Organizational Outcomes		
		Endorsements (Referrals and Mentorship)	Evaluations (Hiring, Fit, and Performance)	Punishments (Penalties and Firing)
Mechanisms Driving Inequity	Prejudice & Stereotypes	Lower support for application process Fewer mentoring offers Worse interview treatment (e.g., Milkman et al., 2015)	Lower hireability ratings Lower manager likeability ratings Worse performance evaluations (e.g., Brief et al., 2000)	More criticism after errors More likely to be fired after misconduct Punished more for ethics violations (e.g., Carton & Rosette, 2011)
	Belonging Threats	Less sense of mentorship fit Less likely to be considered a fit by managers with promotion or mentor matches (e.g., McDonald et al., 2018)	Reduced fit perceptions by hiring manager Applicant lower sense of fit with organization Lower employee experience of fit in organization (e.g., Lyness & Heilman, 2006)	Penalizing natural styles (e.g., hair and religious symbols) Increased ostracism post-misconduct (e.g., Koval & Rosette, 2020)
	Structural Barriers	Fewer network-connections with high power others Less likely to be remembered when referees inspect networks (e.g., Pedulla & Pager, 2019)	Evaluation metrics that prioritize previous evaluations (and thus allow bias to persist) Higher experience standards and reduced uncertainty tolerance (e.g., Sterling & Fernandez, 2018)	Increased police & punitive systems in organizations with more racial minorities (e.g., Ray, 2019)
Advantage	Helping Behavior	More likely to be offered spontaneous sponsorship Larger first offers in bargaining (e.g., Solnick & Schweitzer, 1999)	Increased first-offers for pay Ingratiation behaviors rewarded in hiring (e.g., Westphal & Stern, 2007)	Offering character reference after misconduct Offering warnings before misconduct escalates or reported (e.g., Biernat et al., 2010)
	Permissive Behavior	Ignoring faults when referring Continuing sponsorship in face of errors (e.g., Egan, Matvos, & Seru, 2017)	More positive evaluations in face of errors Work output accepted more despite errors (e.g., Brewer et al., 2020)	Uncivil behavior more tolerated Lower propensity to punish deviance Mistakes not noticed (e.g., Bowles & Gelfand, 2010)
Structural Advantages		More likely to be connected to those with referral information Whiteness offers value to clients (e.g., DiTomaso, 2013)	Increased overwork opportunities for pay Hiring metrics requiring multiple internal references, elite credentials (e.g., Cha & Weeden, 2014)	Increased access to legal recourse (e.g., Sandefur, 2008)

Notes: The work included in our review demonstrates persistent racial and gender inequities across core organizational processes (Amis, Mair, & Mumin, 2020), including evaluations (hiring, promotion, and ratings), endorsements (mentoring and sponsorship), and punishments (demotion and firing). The vast majority of race and gender inequity papers emphasized disadvantage mechanisms, which our coding identified as forming three major clusters. However, outside literatures on attractiveness, nepotism, and social class inequity have emphasized the advantage mechanism, which we also clustered into three major categories. Here, we complement the three disadvantage mechanisms our review revealed in current race and gender inequity research with an application of three advantage mechanisms that may also affect race and gender inequity.

Nepotism. Literature on nepotism (preferential treatment of family), cronyism (preferential treatment of friends), and internal referrals have found that familial, friendship, or other network connections advantage some job candidates over others (Burks, Cowgill, Hoffman, & Housman, 2015; Jones & Stout, 2015; Padgett & Morris, 2005; Schlachter & Pieper, 2019). Further, post-hiring, such connections are related to more beneficial outcomes, including higher wages, favorable reviews, and promotion (e.g., Brown, Setren, & Topa, 2016). As in the attractiveness advantage literature, nepotism, cronyism, and internal referrals take an explicitly advantage-focused lens: how and why people *benefit* from close network ties compared to those who do not have such ties is the phenomenon deserving of explanation.

Social class. In its simplest form, social class marks someone's rank in society with regard to resources; however, social class is complex in that it incorporates not only material resources, such as income and wealth, but also social and cultural resources, including education and occupational prestige (Bourdieu, 1984; Kraus, Piff, & Keltner, 2011; Stephens, Markus, & Phillips, 2014). As such, network connections and attractiveness also have strong social class elements: those with more resources can afford to make themselves connected and beautiful, and those who are connected and beautiful can retain more resources (e.g., Rhode, 2010). We focused on work that specifically considered economic inequality, particularly wealth and income.

Ample work across the social sciences has aimed to understand economic inequality, or the gap between those who have more and those who have less. Interestingly, this work has tended to consider both disadvantage and advantage lenses, spanning the entire spectrum when explaining these gaps. For instance, some work has focused on understanding the unique political, economic, and psychological factors that make poverty more likely and harder to escape (Shah, Mullainathan, & Shafir, 2012). Belonging threats (Belmi & Laurin, 2016; Phillips, Stephens, Townsend, & Goudeau, 2020; Stephens, Fryberg, Markus, Johnson, & Covarrubias, 2012) and structural disadvantages (Meuris & Leana, 2018; Reardon, 2011) also contribute. Other work has focused on understanding moderate to extreme wealth and the unique political, economic, and psychological factors that make such wealth more entrenched (Reeves, 2018; Rivera, 2016; Grusky, 2019); we focus on this work below.

Identifying Advantage Mechanisms

In sum, cross-disciplinary work on the attractiveness advantage has tended to use an advantage lens, asking why attractive individuals receive more than others or more than what is expected. Likewise, work on the preferential treatment of network ties, including nepotism, cronyism, and internal referrals, has asked why those who are well-connected receive more than others or more than what is expected. Work on the preferential treatment of the wealthy asks why those who have more receive *even* more than what would be expected or merited.

In the following sections, we take a closer look at these three disparate literatures that identified helping intentions (offering special favors), permissiveness (declining to punish), and structural advantages (preferential access to capital) as key mechanisms enabling inequity. We discuss these three advantaging mechanisms of inequity in greater detail and consider whether and how such mechanisms might also contribute to race and gender inequity. Interestingly, we find that the mechanisms of inequity that these outside literatures identified appeared much less frequently in the race and gender inequity literature. Nevertheless, we surface a small number of published articles—which largely did not appear in our earlier review (and are published mainly in specialty journals)—that identified helping, permissiveness, and structural advantages as mechanisms that fuel race and gender inequity. As such, we speculate on other ways in which such mechanisms may increase race and gender inequity in organizations.

Helping

Across the three outside literatures, special favors and interpersonal helping behaviors—that is, help that goes beyond typical interpersonal treatment to assist someone—featured frequently.

Helping in outside literatures. For instance, people often assume that attractive others have a variety of positive qualities (Dion, Berscheid, & Walster, 1972), which in turn leads people to perceive the attractive as more intelligent (Lee et al., 2015); indeed, even teachers expect more attractive children to be more intelligent and to make better progress in school compared to less attractive children (Clifford & Walster, 1973). The boosts enjoyed by those deemed attractive go beyond positive stereotypes: attractive children and adults alike receive more and better care (Langlois, Kalakanis, Rubenstein, Larson, Hallam, & Smoot, 2000). This extends to doctor–patient interactions (Westfall, 2018) and customer service interactions

(Reingen & Kernan, 1993). In a field study of online networking behavior, attractive women who asked for assistance with a task received not only more frequent help but also more detailed and friendlier help—that is, more helpful help (Schwarz & Babfeld, 2019). Attractive individuals are also more likely to report benefiting from organizational sponsorship, such as being recommended by a manager for higher-status assignments (Dossinger, Wanberg, Choi, & Leslie, 2019). Importantly, across these forms of help, less attractive individuals still receive baseline assistance that may be expected, such as from doctors—they are not turned away at the door. Rather, when it comes to *unexpected* help and favors—those that go above and beyond—attractive individuals reap the benefits. This fits with cultural explanations, which suggest that attractiveness advantages may result more frequently in settings that are construed to be based on choice (Anderson, Adams, & Plaut, 2008; Lee & Adams, 2021).

Mirroring the attractiveness literature findings, nepotees and cronies benefit from increased interpersonal help from their network connections, which improves their outcomes over less connected employees (Castilla & Rissing, 2019; Derfler-Rozin, Baker, & Gino, 2018; DiTomaso, 2013; Westphal & Stern, 2006). First, referred and otherwise connected candidates benefit from helping intentions from their tie, which puts them in a position to be considered for the job in the first place. Second, these helping intentions extend into the workplace. Indeed, a major source of motivation fueling such connections is loyalty and wanting to help the tie (see also the concept of “guanxi”; Chen & Chen, 2004). As such, individuals continue to benefit from extra support and helping once in the organization itself (Fernandez, Castilla, & Moore, 2000). For instance, ties are more likely to receive socialization benefits and special information (Castilla, 2005).

Likewise, those from higher social class backgrounds receive more favorable and helpful interpersonal treatment during interviews and selective matching processes, largely because of interviewers' sense of comfort and similarity (Ridgeway & Fisk, 2012; Rivera & Tilcsik, 2016). For instance, in elite consulting firms, those who can discuss niche, wealthy hobbies such as tennis, golf, or skiing tend to engender more perceptions of similarity, and as a result more favoring and helping intentions (Rivera, 2016). In interpersonal interactions, those who are perceived as wealthier also benefit from more favorable treatment. Importantly, this occurs even when people have no expectation of benefiting from the

wealth of the interaction partner: people are more likely to volunteer for and donate to individual advocates who are perceived to be higher social class (Callaghan, Delgadillo, & Kraus, 2019; Nelissen & Meijers, 2011).

Helping in race and gender. How might helping intentions affect race and gender inequity? Recent work has found that White and male employees receive more help in their job search than do marginalized group employees (DiTomaso, 2013, 2015). This initial advantage in help is then compounded, as recruiters perceive White employees' referrals more positively than non-White employees' referrals (Silva, 2018). In addition, as with higher social class individuals (Ridgeway & Fisk, 2012; Rivera & Tilcsik, 2016), White and male employees may benefit from more favorable treatment in interviews and selection decisions in male- and White-dominated organizations, due to interviewers' greater feelings of comfort and similarity. Likewise, it is possible that managers may allow White and male employees to skip formal requirements more often, whether during hiring or performance reviews. And, as with attractive individuals, men benefit from higher first offers in negotiations (e.g., Solnick & Schweitzer, 1999).

Other processes of helping may also advantage White and male employees. Much like how attractive individuals (Dossinger et al., 2019) are helped more in organizations, White and male employees may especially benefit from organizational sponsorship and get recommended more for higher-status assignments and positions, above and beyond their actual skills (Chow & Campbell, 2021). Additionally, research has found that employees who share demographic similarity with their mentors receive more psychosocial and career mentoring (Avery, Tonidandel, & Phillips, 2008). Because high-status positions in organizations are usually dominated by White men, it is more probable for male and White employees to receive mentorship from demographically similar mentors and receive more support in their careers.

Permissiveness

Another mechanism of inequity that surfaces frequently in the three outside literatures is permissiveness, in which individuals are less likely to be inspected or punished for violations of rules and standards and more likely to experience leniency (e.g., ignoring blatant mistakes).

Permissiveness in outside literatures. A meta-analysis of jury perceptions of defendants found that

attractive defendants benefited from not only less perceived guilt but also shorter sentence recommendations, even when guilt was confirmed (Mazzella & Feingold, 1994; Stewart, 1985). Work on game theory has found similar effects, demonstrating that attractive defectors—those who violate social norms and trust by stealing from other participants—are punished less than others (Putz, Palotai, Csertő, & Bereczkei, 2016).

Dovetailing again with the attractiveness literature, work on nepotism and cronyism identified permissiveness as one process by which connected individuals receive a boost in organizational outcomes. For instance, workers report that workplace incivility, such as making rude comments or behaving with hostility, is more tolerated when a nepotee engages in it compared to others (Arici, Arasli, & Cakmakoglu, 2020; see also Ashforth & Anand, 2003). Moreover, nepotees and cronies benefit from more permissive hiring processes that tolerate lower skills and increased mistakes. For instance, nepotism and cronyism literatures have suggested that those benefiting from such ties are perceived as less competent but nevertheless persist in the organization (e.g., Padgett, Padgett, & Morris, 2019; Welle, 2004; but see Burks et al., 2015; Schlachter & Pieper, 2019).

Permissive treatment also stands out as a mechanism that advantages upper social class individuals. Those from higher social class backgrounds can afford to buy permission—for instance, paying fines or threatening litigation to protect themselves from punishment (Sandefur, 2008). Indeed, children attending wealthy (vs. working-class) schools are actively socialized to break rules and focus on their individual desires (Anyon, 1980; see also Lareau, 2003; Stephens et al., 2014). Permissive treatment toward higher social class individuals also appears in interpersonal interactions. For instance, those from higher classes based on occupational prestige or education often receive positive benefits due to status, including helping intentions and deference (e.g., Blader & Yu, 2017; Cheng & Tracy, 2013; Magee & Galinsky, 2008). As a different example, those from higher social class backgrounds exhibit more overconfidence—inaccurate estimations of their own abilities—than do others (Belmi, Neale, Reiff, & Ulfe, 2020). In turn, this overconfidence can lead others to permit those with lower abilities to continue through, especially given positive stereotypes that lead individuals to presume the wealthy are more competent than they are (Durante & Fiske, 2017; Swencionis & Fiske, 2018; see also Collins, 2019; Connor, Varney,

Keltner, & Chen, 2021; Fiske & Markus, 2012; Kraus, Torrez, Park, & Ghayebi, 2019).

Permissiveness in race and gender. Recent work has found that, among both engineers and law clerks, dominant group (e.g., White, male) employees' mistakes fail to get noticed more often than marginalized group employees' mistakes (e.g., racial minorities, women; Reeves, 2014; Terrell et al., 2017). This dovetails with developmental research, which demonstrates that boys' mistakes and rule-breaking—whether in school, in social interactions, or otherwise—are more tolerated (Gansen, 2019; Musto, 2019). Likewise, one paper from our review that used an advantage frame found that White male trainees' errors were less likely to be formally reported compared to Black male trainees' or White female trainees' errors, in turn leading to (incompetent) White male trainees being fired less often (Biernat et al., 2010). Further, one paper from our review that used both advantage and disadvantage frames (Bowles & Gelfand, 2010) found that when outright workplace deviance is observed (e.g., lying, physical abuse, and stealing), White and male targets are treated more leniently than others.

Drawing on research from these outside literatures, it is likely that permissiveness advantages White and male employees in other ways. For instance, in selection and promotion decisions, White and male employees with subpar qualifications may be permitted to move forward while non-White and nonmale employees' subpar qualifications are identified as problematic and unpermitted (Foschi, 2000). Beyond mistakes or errors (Frese & Keith, 2015), outright biases (e.g., nepotism) in employees' decision-making frequently occur in organizations; these too may be permitted more among White and male employees. Even when such mistakes are found, White and male employees are more likely to receive the benefit of the doubt than non-White and nonmale employees due to both dominant ingroup favoritism as well as biases that affect members of all groups. As in the context of social class (Belmi et al., 2020), it is also possible such permissiveness results in White and male employees being overconfident (e.g., Cheng, Anderson, Tenney, Brion, Moore, & Logg, 2021), which in turn results in even more permissiveness for low abilities. For instance, Pelham and Hetts (2001) considered a body of work on women's apparently reduced sense of entitlement to pay and suggested that such findings may be better interpreted as men's overly elevated entitlement to pay: men's

self-payment decisions were less tied to their actual performance than were women's.

Moreover, deviant, unethical, and counterproductive behaviors among White and male employees may not only be less punished but may even be more permitted by managers. This may relate again to identification: the same behavior enacted by dominant group members may be less likely to be noticed as unethical. For instance, White boys are less likely to be referred for discipline than are Black boys in school (Okonofua, Walton, & Eberhardt, 2016; Skiba, Michael, Nardo, & Peterson, 2002). Moreover, once identified, Whites and men may be less likely to receive punishment, or they simply receive less severe punishment. For instance, one paper found that men are less likely to be fired after financial misconduct compared to women and are more likely to be hired again (Egan et al., 2017). Similar results have been found among lawyers facing ethical violations (Kennedy, McDonnell, & Stephens, 2021).

Finally, the cycle may repeat. To the extent that White and male employees make errors or behave unethically, and are then punished or even fired, they may benefit from leniency when seeking to recover their reputations and find new employment. For instance, others may be more willing to vouch for their intentions and reformation, in turn reducing perceptions of the severity or likelihood of those behaviors repeating.

Structural Advantages

Structural advantages—or policies and practices that provide increased access to capital compared to the standard organizational treatment—are foundational to both the nepotism and social class literatures.

Structural advantages in outside literatures. Internal referrals work has found that referred candidates receive more attention from recruiters, are held to lower evaluative standards (e.g., allowed to skip early phases or requirements), and otherwise benefit from a host of preferential treatment (Keller, 2018; Schlachter & Pieper, 2019). Importantly, these are not merely discretionary actions by individual actors but *policy-mediated* actions: organizations explicitly build in shortcuts in their recruiting and hiring practices to prioritize referred candidates. Likewise, in nepotism and cronyism literatures, the sheer fact that the candidate shares a close relationship with a powerful individual within the organization puts them on a different processing track, sometimes skipping review altogether (Derfler-Rozin et al., 2018).

Structural advantages are again integral to understandings of social class. Money (not to mention status) buys not only goods but also opportunity: organizations and society as a whole use money as the access toll for education, health, and more (Collins, 2019; Grusky, Hall, & Markus, 2019; Reeves, 2018; Tilly, 1998). For example, given U.S. education is largely funded by property taxes, those with access to wealth also enjoy better public education opportunities (Chetty, Hendren, & Katz, 2016; Massey, Charles, Fischer, & Lundy, 2003; Reardon, 2011). Higher social class offers access to not only better education but also more prestigious education, in turn providing credentials that can incorrectly signal higher quality (e.g., Collins, 2019). Likewise, wealth offers access to higher test scores, above and beyond students' actual competence (e.g., Geiser & Studley, 2002). Network connections among the social class elite also offer a boost: admissions rates increase when applicants are legacies, donors, or athletes (including expensive sports, such as sailing), even though candidates in these categories are often less qualified (Arcidiacono, Kinsler, & Ransom, 2022; Castilla & Rissing, 2019; Golden, 2007; Hurwitz, 2011).

Once students access higher education, advantages persist, as universities are designed to prioritize upper-class cultural norms (Phillips et al., 2020; Stephens et al., 2012; see also Anyon, 1980; Lareau, 2003; Massey et al., 2003). Moreover, the opportunity to hold internships—an important early source of qualification and merit—varies sharply by social class, as a result of both connections and wealth (Curiale, 2009; Swan, 2015). Students who have more funds can afford to take unpaid work, subsidized by their personal or familial wealth. In turn, this gives those from wealthy backgrounds a leg up in hiring later on. Post-education, structural advantages that offer privileged access continue. During applications and interviews, those from higher social class backgrounds are preferred over equally competent candidates from lower class backgrounds (Sharps & Anderson, 2021; Rivera & Tilcsik, 2016). Once hired, workplaces again prioritize upper-class norms (Dittmann, Stephens, & Townsend, 2021; Gray & Kish-Gephart, 2013; Stephens et al., 2014). In this way, those from the higher social classes enjoy privileged access not only to more capital, but also to more education, credentials, and employment.

Structural advantages in race and gender. Whereas structural barriers may prevent non-Whites and non-men from accessing capital (compared to what is standard) and advancing in organizations,

structural advantages offer access that goes above and beyond, thus uniquely aiding Whites and men in their advancement. For instance, Brandts, Groenert, and Rott (2015) showed that relying on self-selection, instead of actively recruiting, creates a structural advantage for men, such that more mediocre men (and fewer strong women) apply. Changing the structure such that recruits are managed (in this case, offering advice on whether to apply) reduces the frequency of weak men and increases the frequency of strong women entering the pool. Although even with this amount of management, a gender gap persists because men become more likely to enter. In this way, the structures that allow people to self-assess qualifications and self-select into application provides advantages to (mediocre) men.

Drawing on work from social class, the role of elite school recruiting can likewise present a structural advantage for Whites: this common practice in elite firms gives an explicit advantage to those who attended a subset of colleges above those who attended schools not on the list, including schools serving historically marginalized communities (e.g., historically black colleges and universities). In addition to hiring and recruiting, work–life policies can also provide structural advantages. For instance, using explicitly advantage-framed language, Hodges and Budig (2010) demonstrated that White men receive a fatherhood *bonus*, such that they receive more pay after becoming a father. Relatedly, family leave policies have been found to advantage men, who are *more* likely to be promoted after taking leave, in part because they are able to use the time to become more productive compared to women who take leave and men without leave (Antecol, Bedard, & Stearns, 2018). Men also benefit from overwork, which contributes to the gender wage gap (Cha & Weeden, 2014).

Moreover, the policies and practices that structure access to capital create not only barriers, but separately and additionally create advantages, which nevertheless are less discussed. For example, policies that foster differential access to wealth, educational resources, health care, criminal justice, networks, and political power are interrelated forces that disadvantage racial minorities but also advantage Whites in organizational contexts (e.g., Anicich, Jachimowicz, Osborne, & Phillips, 2021; Atkins, 2021; Atkins, Cook, & Seamans, 2021; Baradaran, 2017; Finkelstein, 1992; Ibarra, 1993; Khattab et al., 2020; Ray, 2019; Sandefur, 2008). For instance, Atkins (2021) found that Whites are more likely to benefit from “prosperity pull”—credit market conditions that make capital more accessible—than

are Blacks, which in turn boosts Whites’ entrepreneurship. Although the specific institutions that create and maintain sexism may differ from institutions that perpetuate racism, many of the aforementioned ideas regarding structural inequity extend to gender. For example, responsibilities and authority institutionalized by marriage and families (e.g., Berk, 2012), health-care policies (e.g., Alexanderson, Wingren, & Rosdahl, 1998; Homan, 2019), and work policies (e.g., Padavic, Ely, & Reid, 2020), can both disadvantage women *and* advantage men.

Further still, recent research (Jun et al., 2022) suggested that mainstream media and lay individuals have a propensity to describe such structural processes as barriers, ignoring the simultaneous boosts that men and White individuals benefit from. In this way, dominant group members receive yet another benefit: they are protected from concern and discomfort regarding the fact that they enjoy unearned benefits. Meanwhile, policies designed to provide structural advantages for marginalized group members (e.g., affirmative action) receive heavy scrutiny, such that beneficiaries begin to feel self-doubt and stigma (Heilman, Block, & Lucas, 1992; Leslie et al., 2014), unlike dominant group members whose advantages (e.g., tax policies; Scully et al., 2018) are not questioned or even recognized.

Summary We surveyed three disparate literatures that explicitly took an advantage lens—considering how and why attractive, well-connected, or wealthy individuals over-benefit compared to expectations. We find that common inequity mechanisms identified in these literatures include interpersonal helping intentions, permissiveness, and structural advantages. In each case, these mechanisms represent uniquely advantaging processes that boost some individuals relative to others, as opposed to disadvantaging processes that hold some back.

From this review and integration, we extract and systematically classify, and in some cases reframe, how *both* advantaging and disadvantaging mechanisms contribute to race and gender inequity. Table 2 presents an integration of the commonly identified disadvantage mechanisms (extracted from our initial review) and the novel advantage mechanisms (suggested by our expansion of the advantage frame). This integration of existing literature reveals that prejudice and stereotyping, belonging threats, and structural barriers disadvantage racial minorities and women; as such, these mechanisms are major areas of focus for intervention. However, we also reveal that helping intentions, permissiveness, and structural advantages benefit Whites and men. These

advantaging processes have been largely neglected in race and gender inequity work and thus represent areas in need of more research.

In each case, reducing prejudice, belonging threats, and structural *barriers* likely will not completely resolve the race and gender inequity; rather, helping intentions, permissiveness, and structural *advantages* must also be addressed. Thus, to the degree that scholars and managers neglect to address such advantaging processes, organizations may miss critical opportunities for creating equity.

In addition, it is both interesting and instructive to muse as to why these outside literatures may use an advantage lens more so than racial and gender inequity work.⁸ A few possibilities exist. First, it is possible that the chronic lenses used follow which groups are considered the prototypical, default, or majority group in the space, rather than following groups that are dominant in the hierarchy. That is, Whites and men are both dominant in current instantiations of the racial and gender hierarchies and prototypical or default (Cheryan & Markus, 2020; Danbold & Bendorsky, 2020; Frankenberg, 1993). In contrast, the attractive, well-connected, and wealthy may represent dominant groups in the hierarchy but are *not* seen as prototypical—rather, they are seen as ideal exemplars. This observation fits well with tenets of inequity frames theory, which suggests that frames imply which group is seen as deviant versus normative. In the case of frames that scholars *use*, the inverse may be possible: the existence of a priori assumptions about deviance and default may be driving the frames.

Second, it is also possible that the frames which emerge are those that fit the motivations and beneficial outcomes of the audience itself—scholars and practitioners. To the extent that scholars and practitioners (largely not benefiting from nepotism) hope to root out nepotism, identifying nepotism as an unfair

advantage to be taken away is useful. To the extent that scholars (largely White) and practitioners (largely White men) hope to root out racial inequity, identifying minority and female disadvantage ought to be more comforting than facing one's own advantages (and the possibility that these may be taken away).

FUTURE WORK AND OPEN QUESTIONS

Our integrative review suggests that recent research on race and gender inequity has largely focused on disadvantage, neglecting investigations on the advantaging mechanisms that can potently cause and maintain race and gender inequity in organizations. We extract themes from the review and integration above to offer suggestions for future work. In particular, we highlight open questions and make suggestions for future research regarding four critical areas: clarifying mechanisms of inequity, crafting effective interventions, integrating demographic domains of inequity, and increasing inclusion in managerial scholarship.

Clarifying Mechanisms

Our review suggests that researchers and managers would benefit from considering both disadvantage and advantage when identifying mechanisms that contribute to inequity. As recent research has focused more on disadvantaging mechanisms, greater attention to advantaging mechanisms may be particularly fruitful. By considering what role advantage mechanisms play in producing gaps between groups (in addition to disadvantaging mechanisms), previously unidentified mechanisms might be unearthed.

Concretely, we suggest that researchers and managers may first ask themselves how the instance of inequity in question may be produced by both disadvantages and advantages. Let us consider the case of the racial gap in internal promotions resulting from competence stereotypes. Our review suggests that researchers have tended to investigate this question by examining the relative disadvantages non-White employees suffer from for being perceived as incompetent compared to White employees. However, a more comprehensive investigation of the same question would also entail the researcher examining the advantages White employees enjoy for being perceived as more competent than they are (e.g., Belmi et al., 2020; Cheng et al., 2021).

Another important question is whether the impact of disadvantages or advantages may be stronger. For instance, it is possible that competence stereotypes are symmetric, such that the advantages Whites

⁸ A representative sentence: “To the extent that attractive individuals receive greater career-enhancing advantages in their day-to-day work experiences than those who are judged less attractive . . . we may gain much needed and more actionable insight into why physically attractive individuals experience advantages as their careers unfold” (Dossinger et al., 2019: 110). Could the same be applied to race? “To the extent that White individuals receive greater advantages in their work experiences than Black individuals, we may gain insight into why White individuals experience advantages as their careers unfold.” Certainly so. And yet, the novelty and absence of such sentences in the race and gender literatures are striking—it sounds strange to read.

enjoy directly mirror the disadvantages non-White suffer from. However, mechanisms may also be asymmetric, such that Whites are assumed to be more competent than they are in reality and receive a bigger boost than non-Whites receive in penalty. The opposite is also possible. Such a separation in mechanisms of advantages and disadvantages will help unveil the exact nature of mechanisms that produce the inequity in question.

Yet another concrete way organizational scholars might comprehensively examine the impact of both advantaging and disadvantaging mechanisms is to consider how mechanisms of inequity impact more than two groups. To date, scholars of race and gender have overwhelmingly taken a dichotomous approach to studying group inequities. In the case of race, scholars have focused on the relationship between “racial minorities” as a monolith versus Whites, or a single non-White group (often Blacks) versus Whites—despite psychological and sociological research showing the unique histories and treatment different racial groups (e.g., Asians, Latinos, and indigenous peoples) receive. In the case of gender, scholars have largely focused on the differences between men and women, despite the importance of nonbinary gender categories (Sawyer, Thoroughgood, & Webster, 2016). Such a dichotomous treatment of groups may have contributed to the ease of framing group inequities as driven by disadvantaging mechanisms or led to assumptions that inequities are caused by symmetric mechanisms.

The introduction of a third group introduces complexity but also offers clarity regarding the nature of group inequity being considered. Let us go back to the example of understanding how competence stereotypes impact promotion rates by employee race by considering employees who identify as Asian, Black, Latinx, and White. Such a consideration of multiple racial groups may force researchers to choose a “baseline” group for ease of interpretation, which will likely lead to the realization that mechanisms producing inequity are relative, that inequity may be resulting from both advantages and disadvantages, and that the choice of the baseline must be questioned. Going further, researchers may realize that a more comprehensive investigation of the same question may require the use of an entirely different comparison point—whether Asian, Black, Latinx, and White employees are perceived as more or less competent than they are in reality (rather than comparing between groups), and the extent to which such misestimations contribute to racial differences in promotion rates.

Further, considering multiple groups may better reveal how both advantaging and disadvantaging mechanisms may produce inequity. For instance, multiple unique mechanisms may come into play: Whites’ benefiting from permissiveness when they demonstrate incompetence may contribute to inequity separately from stereotypes of incompetence toward Blacks and stereotypes of competence toward Asians. Depending on whether there is an asymmetric effect of competence stereotype advantages and disadvantages, and in what direction the asymmetry lies, different solutions are required.

Crafting Interventions

Our review finds that race and gender inequity scholarship has overwhelmingly taken a disadvantage lens. In turn, this suggests that interventions aimed at reducing inequity are likely to focus on lifting marginalized group members—which is unlikely to sufficiently resolve inequities that are driven by both advantage and disadvantage. Thus, another avenue of future research could consider the efficacy of interventions aimed at reducing advantage, disadvantage, or both. We suggest that scholars and managers may consider at least three questions: (a) What is the absolute extent of behavior a manager wishes to achieve among their employees (absolute standard)? (b) How congruent is the intervention with the mechanism of inequity? (c) How persuasive are differently framed interventions in a given context?

First, stakeholders ought to ask what outcome goal they wish to achieve to identify the desired absolute standard. Against this goal, stakeholders can then compare different groups to understand which advantaging and disadvantaging processes must be corrected to achieve equity goals. Consider the example of gender differences in interruptions: men interrupt more often than women do (Anderson & Leaper, 1998). This gap could be closed by training women to interrupt more, encouraging men to interrupt less, or both. Notably, the inequity itself can be resolved either way but with different implications for the outcome goal: do women interrupt less than would be useful for the team, or are men permitted to interrupt more despite detriments to the team? Thus, when designing an intervention, a manager may want to consider the appropriate level of interruptions they perceive as beneficial to achieving organizational goals. In this case, a manager may set an outcome goal for both men and women to engage in low levels of interruption, as interruptions generally produce negative outcomes, but no interruption

whatsoever may lead to groupthink. The manager may then assess the extent to which interruptions by men and women differ from this absolute standard and design interventions that achieve both the outcome and equity goals.

Second, stakeholders may ask how congruent a designed intervention is to identified mechanisms of inequity. As referenced in our overview of various literatures guiding this review, emerging evidence has found that race and gender inequity are driven by both advantaging and disadvantaging mechanisms. Yet, our review finds that scholars tend to attribute much of race and gender inequity to disadvantaging mechanisms and therefore are more likely to suggest interventions that focus on reducing barriers to disadvantaged group members (rather than on also reducing boosts to advantaged group members). Thus, it is likely that most popular interventions designed to reduce inequity are incongruent and insufficient in addressing the full extent of mechanisms that contribute to inequity.

Individual scholars examining a particular mechanism of inequity may therefore benefit from considering interventions that match the directionality of the mechanism. For instance, an intervention targeting implicit bias against women is unlikely to resolve an inequity in permissiveness toward men's mistakes. Rather, an intervention targeting the advantages men are receiving may be more effective (cf. Bezrukova, Spell, Perry, & Jehn, 2016; Kalev et al., 2006; Kalinoski, Steele-Johnson, Peyton, Leas, Steinke, & Bowling, 2013). As another example, many empirical studies have demonstrated that women are less likely to be perceived as experts compared to men. An embedded assumption in this gap is that men are appropriately recognized as experts and women are underrecognized. Recent work, however, has demonstrated that men may be *over*-perceived as experts (Belmi et al., 2020; Cheng et al., 2021)—that is, they may be viewed as more expert than they really are, which suggests an entirely different intervention.

Moreover, interventions may also benefit from compound approaches to both advantage and disadvantage mechanisms at play. For instance, warmth stereotypes that advantage Whites may exacerbate permissiveness when Whites act unethically, via assumptions of good intentions. Meanwhile, belonging threats that disadvantage women may be exacerbated by the observation of men receiving more help. As another example, structural advantages may give Whites an advantage in the hiring phase, via network connections. The pool of applicants itself may then be evaluated by employees (or

algorithms) that prejudicially minimize non-White applicants' qualifications. At the same time, White applicants in the pool who inflate their qualifications may not be punished. In this way, multiple mechanisms of inequity may work in tandem to produce an even bigger gap between groups; however, a solution targeting only the biased algorithm is unlikely to eliminate the gap, given the advantaging mechanisms at play as well.

Third, stakeholders may ask how persuasive differently framed interventions are. That is, separate from identifying advantaging or disadvantaging mechanisms, stakeholders may strategically *frame* the inequity they seek to eliminate in order to generate support for change. For example, prior research suggested that dominant group members are more supportive of redistributive policies when inequity is framed as advantage due to the greater self-relevance of such frames (Chow & Galak, 2012; Lowery et al., 2009). Thus, independent of whether the inequity in question is driven more by advantage or disadvantage, framing the inequity or intervention using the advantage lens may generate more support for the intervention.

At the same time, this effect may depend on the specific policy being implemented. When inequity frames match the intervention policy (reducing advantage versus reducing disadvantage), people support the policy more (e.g., Chow & Galak, 2012; Dietze & Craig, 2021). In this way, the persuasiveness of differently framed policies may depend on how well the policies match the narrative stakeholders have about a particular instance of inequity. Additional factors that shape the inequity narrative, such as individual versus group-based inequity (Rosette & Koval, 2018), and openness versus defensiveness (Knowles et al., 2014), may also shape which frames generate more support for change. Thus, scholars' communication of the mechanisms of inequity may be particularly important.

Integrating Literatures: Demographic Inequity

Our integrative review suggests race and gender scholars may benefit from considering a broader range of demographic inequities to generate new insights. It is important to recognize that race and gender are very particular, socially constructed demographic attributes, with unique histories, dynamics, and resulting inequities. Nevertheless, by borrowing the insights and lenses used by scholars studying other forms of demographic inequity, scholars of race and gender may find ways to expand

the lens. For instance, by reviewing both race and gender inequity work, as well as separate literatures on attractiveness, nepotism, and social class, we reveal new advantaging mechanisms that likely work in concert with disadvantaging mechanisms to produce race and gender inequity. Thus, our review suggests that future work might benefit from being less siloed by demographic category (e.g., race and gender) and instead integrate around the theme of *demographic inequity*, borrowing theories from one another.

While we focus on race and gender as important categories of dominance, thinking in terms of both disadvantage and advantage mechanisms is likely to be useful for inspecting other forms of demographic inequity as well (e.g., LGBTQ+, disability, and age). That is, while demographic categories like gender, race, LGBTQ+, and disability involve critical historical and sociological differences, they may also share some elements in the production of inequity. Specifically, these dimensions of inequity are similar in that gaps in resources and opportunities exist between groups, and these gaps are shaped by potent historical, structural, and social forces (Colella & Stone, 2005; Martinez, Sawyer, & Wilson, 2017; Ragins & Cornwell, 2001; Shore & Goldberg, 2015). Moreover, group membership in these socially constructed categories is largely ascribed or beyond the control of the individual, and all individuals fall into at least one of the groups along each dimension of the demographic status hierarchy (Hall, Hall, Galinsky, & Phillips, 2019; Rosette, Ponce de Leon, Koval, & Harrison, 2018). As such, mechanisms like permissiveness and helping intentions may benefit dominant demographic groups across these dimensions, while belonging threats and prejudice disadvantage marginalized groups.

Through a close investigation of both advantaging and disadvantaging mechanisms, scholars may also gain a better understanding of intersectional inequity. Although burgeoning research has uncovered some of the unique outcomes faced by individuals marginalized in multiple dimensions, less is known about the processes that lead to these outcomes (see Hall, Hall, et al., 2019). Notably, major theories of intersectionality, including double jeopardy and intersectional invisibility, often focus on the disadvantages of multiple marginalized identities, whereas a “compounded advantages” perspective is relatively rare. However, our review suggests that advantaging mechanisms are also likely to compound, such that the experience of being an attractive and wealthy White male creates cascading advantages that help propel these men to the top of

organizations more quickly than even an average-looking, middle-class White male (see also DiPrete & Eirich, 2006). Intersectional patterns of inequitable outcomes might be better understood by considering both the disadvantaging *and* advantaging mechanisms accessed by different identities (e.g., Livingston et al., 2012).

From such integration, we expect new questions to emerge. For example, what structural or organizational features lead to the prevalence of advantage versus disadvantage mechanisms? When does the production of inequity differ across demographic dimensions, and why? How might advantage and disadvantage mechanisms compound when taking an intersectional view—for instance, a wealthy Black male may experience a unique set of advantaging and disadvantaging mechanisms compared to a poor White female?

While some theoretical approaches have worked to craft explanations for inequity that recognize both the particularities and commonalities across demographic dimensions (e.g., status characteristics theory, social dominance theory, and social roles theory; Eagly, 1987; Ridgeway, 1991; Sidanius & Pratto, 1999), infusing these theories with an emphasis on both advantage and disadvantage may additionally be helpful. For instance, work uniting status characteristics and cognitive traditions demonstrates the existence of both pro-dominant group and anti-marginalized group implicit biases; and yet, work relying on such biases as mechanisms has overwhelmingly emphasized the disadvantage frame (Greenwald & Pettigrew, 2014). Likewise, work from equity theory and other justice traditions has notably described both under-benefiting and over-benefiting, and yet the vast majority of work considers under-benefiting phenomena (Brockner & Wiesenfeld, 2019).

In sum, we suggest that scholars may benefit from not only investigating their demographic category of interest but also expanding their scope to understand the features of demographic inequity as a whole. As fundamentally interdisciplinary fields, management and organizational behavior are well positioned to undertake this expansion by taking a holistic view on inequity.

Equitable Scholarship

In the current review, we focused on a restricted set of empirical journals to narrow the research scope. However, different disciplines and journals may be more likely to emphasize advantages compared to what our review demonstrated in the fields

of management, psychology, and sociology. For instance, our approach might have missed important work in other journals (e.g., *Sex Roles*, in which we indeed found advantaged frame papers in the Identifying Advantage Mechanisms section above) and journals from disciplines that inform organizational scholarship (e.g., law, economics, etc.). Indeed, in applying lessons from our review to imagine an advantage lens for race and gender inequity research, we were able to find only a few empirical studies using such an advantage lens, and these were largely published in journals outside of our list of empirical journals that are considered top tier in management. To the extent that top journals in the fields we reviewed take an implicit disadvantage frame, they may be less likely to perceive advantage-framed work as useful or relevant.

Indeed, contesting the frames used to study inequity and diversity has been an important source of progress. For instance, Apfelbaum, Phillips, and Richeson (2014) challenged the idea that diverse teams need to be explained and instead suggested that homogenous teams are the rarity in need of explanation. Moreover, DiTomaso (2015), McDermott (2020), Nkomo and Al Ariss (2014), Nkomo (1992), and others have written at length about the role of advantaging/privileging mechanisms in producing organizational inequity. This builds on classic work by Du Bois (1935), Gutman (1973), hooks (1990), and Lorde (1977), among others. Work from disciplinary perspectives (e.g., Ray, 2019; Salter & Adams, 2013), especially sociology and cultural theory, also considered advantage and buck the trend. Nevertheless, these theories of advantage are not common in empirical work on organizations published in our journal list: disadvantage is winning the framing contest (Kaplan, 2008).

In turn, the lack of advantage lens studies in top tier management journals may reflect gatekeeping preferences by the decision makers of such journals. While inequity frames scholars have placed less emphasis on antecedents to frame choices, scholars have suggested that the demographic group membership of individuals may be an important determinant of which frame is preferred: dominant group members are theorized to prefer the disadvantage frame because it is less likely to induce negative emotions and makes group inequity less self-relevant (e.g., Lowery & Wout, 2010). Marginalized group members' preferred frame is less obvious: whereas a disadvantage frame may provide material benefits, an advantage frame can protect group members' group esteem. Given the presumption that dominant group members prefer the advantage frame, and

marginalized group members' frame preference is ambivalent, it is possible that the lack of demographic diversity (particularly race diversity) among gatekeepers of journals contributes to the lack of advantage lens investigations of race and gender.

Thus, in addition to the gatekeeping preferences of specific journals and fields, the individual scholars doing the work may also affect the likelihood of frames. As an example, scholars in other fields have attributed the lack of race research to the lack of racial representation in the field itself (Roberts, Bareket-Shavit, et al., 2020; see also Dupree et al., 2021). Just as scholars' backgrounds may impact what topics they consider worthy of study, so might these backgrounds affect the frame they use to study the topic. Notably, in our review, we find three times as many articles considering gender as compared to race and six times as many articles using a disadvantage lens as compared to an advantage lens or both. Future work might consider whether these patterns are related to representation among scholars themselves. Related to our call to expand researchers' frames, it will be important to grow our understanding of how both scholars and practitioners develop and use frames to understand inequity and with what consequences. What determines which frames scholars and managers use to assess inequity?

CONCLUSION: BARRIERS AND BOOSTS

We integrate emerging work on inequity frames theory with existing scholarship on race and gender inequity in organizations, revealing new ways of approaching demographic inequity scholarship. While documenting the existence of race and gender inequity remains important, identifying the mechanisms creating such inequities is also critical. Whereas race and gender inequity can be driven by both disadvantaging and advantaging mechanisms, a chronic focus on disadvantage leads scholars to neglect advantaging mechanisms. In turn, this chronic lens likely affects how solutions are designed and implemented and ultimately the degree of success (or failure) at creating equity. Deeply reflecting on *how* (i.e., in which direction) to close racial and gender gaps in organizations is critical for success.

In sum, our integration demonstrates the importance of taking a comprehensive view on demographic inequity by considering both the barriers that push some downward and the boosts that lift some upwards. Our critical perspective helps scholars and practitioners consider organizational mechanisms of demographic inequity that may otherwise

go unnoticed and suggests solutions be tailored to specific inequity mechanisms. We aim to bring considerations of specific advantage and privileging mechanisms—supporting “systems of domination” and supremacy (Nkomo et al., 2019: 502)—into focus for scholars of demographic inequity in organizations.

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