Introduction

Providing a Context for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusive Leadership in the American Polity and in a Culture of Discontent

This primer on diversity and inclusive leadership mainly highlights equity and inclusion challenges for democracy and diversity for the nation state and in US academia, and provides a framework for interrogating whiteness in our racialized society and higher education. We review how institutions have been impacted by global social justice movements with a focus on racial and gender injustices—highlighting the Movement for Black Lives and the Me Too movement, which originated in the US and quickly spread across the globe.

We are uniquely qualified to champion the cause of diversity and inclusive leadership, as we have dedicated our academic work to this field, emerging several decades ago. This book is a result of over fifty years of our combined experience of teaching, research, presentations, workshop facilitating for professional development, visiting scholarships, classroom observations, and external reviews, and it is an attempt to capture some of the critical lessons that we have learned at many universities and colleges in the United States, Europe, Africa, and Central America. Among these universities and colleges that we have engaged are the University of Oxford, University of Westminster, and University of Surrey in England; University of Hamburg and Fulda University of Applied Sciences in Germany; McGill University, Canada; University of the West Indies, Jamaica; University of Ghana, University of Cape Coast, Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology, and Valley View University in Ghana; United States International University in Kenya; University of Cape Town in South

Africa; University of Calabar and the University of Ibadan in Nigeria. In the United States, our work and engagements have brought us to Xavier University, University of Wisconsin–Madison, University of Oklahoma, Harvard University, Yale University, Cornell University, Lehigh University, Ithaca College, Syracuse University, Princeton University, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, University of Massachusetts Amherst, University of Tennessee-Knoxville, Seton Hall University, Fairleigh Dickenson University, Roberts Wesleyan College, the University at Albany (SUNY), Binghamton University (SUNY), the University at Buffalo, SUNY Brockport, Empire State College (SUNY), SUNY Cortland, SUNY Oneonta, SUNY Morrisville, SUNY Delhi, SUNY New Paltz, SUNY Purchase, and SUNY Plattsburg. Nagel also had fellowships and residencies at the Max Planck Institute for the Study of Religious and Ethnic Diversity, Göttingen, Germany and the Czech Academy of Sciences, Prague. Asumah was a Carnegie-African Diaspora Fellow at the University of Ghana, Legon, where he collaborated with African educators on diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) leadership projects and political change.

We made casual contacts with many other institutions that are not on this list. Importantly, we have led multiday diversity, equity, and inclusion institutes for faculty, administrators, schoolteachers, and principals in various institutions. In addition, we are called upon to assist with crises situations between faculty and students or other stakeholders in institutions of higher learning. At this point in our professional lives and after publishing several articles and books on diversity, equity, inclusion, and social justice, we have realized that DEI work is human work, and it has become our modus vivendi—a way of life. Making the personal political and advancing inclusion, equity, and antiracism strategies, not only in our student bodies, but in the administrative ranks in the academy and leadership in the American polity, especially in times of discontent and grievance culture, are paramount to our mission.

Perhaps aside from former President Trump and his compatriots, like Florida's governor, Ron DeSantis, who do not believe in diversity training and leadership, most academics, politicians, and corporate executives would affirm that diversity and inclusive leadership is not an option anymore and it is concomitant with modern-day organizational leadership. Diversity and inclusive leadership transcends the boundaries of transactional leadership, which dwells on the environment of exchange of services and rewards to maintain the status quo of an organization. The genesis of diversity and inclusive leadership is therefore ingrained in the genuine relational

ability to reach the mind and soul of all organizational members, faculty, and students and to bring them to their fullest potential and capacity to produce, contribute, and perform with a diversity, inclusion, and equity mindset. Furthermore, we advocate a diversity and inclusive leadership model, which examines problems and find solutions based on a racial and gender equity framework.

As we have mentioned in our previous work in *The Routledge Companion to Inclusive Leadership*, edited by Joan Marques (2020), dean of the School of Business and professor of management at Woodbury University, many national leaders, college and university presidents, provosts, and deans are mostly "white heteropatriarchal leaders, who have accumulated and consolidated power for years despite this era of diversity and inclusion. Many of these leaders are mostly removed from their students and faculty, depending strictly on a transactional style, which, like the Great Man model, is linear, hegemonic, risk-abating, masculinist, rational, practical and unidirectional" (Asumah & Nagel, 2020, p. 178). Given the symbiotic relationship between democracy and diversity, organizations and institutions of higher learning that continue to follow the leadership model only drag their institutions to organizational leadership implosion and wakefulness deficiency. Our experiences in the United States, Europe, and Africa, unfortunately, confirm our fear that wakefulness, as an important diversity leadership ingredient for inclusive college campuses, is completely absent in the modus operandi of these leaders. Wakefulness in diversity and inclusive leadership provides an impetus for mindful listening to diversity entities, meaningful interconnectedness, and well-being of all stakeholders—students, faculty, and administrators. Marques asserts, "Wakefulness requires a leader's ability to take a hard look at his or her own values and beliefs and finding out whether they align with the collective" (2020, p. 7). We have found out in our work and commitments in diversity and inclusion that the wakefulness lacuna, misalignment of values, microinvalidation, barriers to inclusion, cultural incompetence, and risk management paradigms have all contributed to the recent discontents in our community of learners and the nation state.

Theories about diversity and inclusion leadership have become necessary tools for organizational development. Diversity and inclusion leadership for companies and institutions of higher learning are not luxury anymore; they are a necessity for the proper functioning of any organization. During the Obama administration, some palpable gains had been made, which were then walked back during four years of the Trump

regime. Nevertheless, every major multinational company, every public and private college and university has had to prioritize diversity initiatives, including hiring diversity managers who report to the CEO or presidents of these organizations. Employees and, increasingly, students enrolled in the academy go through diversity and implicit bias training for onboarding and orientations. What is the value of these institutional efforts? Do they provide a less chilly campus climate for those who have been historically marginalized? Do they help to change institutional (DEI) cultures for the better? Do they enable us to understand whiteness (beyond personhood, but in systems and policies), white privilege, the complexities of gender, race, space, and inclusive leadership in the academy? Do they embolden a backlash that recasts those who are yesterday's bullies as today's victims?

We are sympathetic to critical perspectives that analyze institutionalized oppression and in general adopt a broader, macroscopic perspective in social injustice. In their article "Who Benefits? A Critical Race Analysis of the (D)Evolving Language of Inclusion in Higher Education," Harris et al. (2015) tackle the elephant in the room: white supremacy in academia that flourishes unabated even though many diversity initiatives are poured into efforts to stem the tide of institutional racism. Their diagnosis reveals an excessive focus on process (of inclusivity) and performative events instead of outcomes. Such superficial "diversity talk" will not guarantee that the increasingly diverse student body will ever work with a professoriate that matches their demographics. A case in point: the State University of New York (SUNY) recently launched a faculty fellow initiative, Promoting Recruitment, Opportunity, Diversity, Inclusion, and Growth (PRODiG), that would address racial mismatch in science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) and other fields. Its own analysis showed a paucity of Black and Latino faculty. In the end, the initial class of some ninety fellows hired on many of the sixty-four SUNY campuses were predominately white women. We had the opportunity to do a presentation on diversity and inclusion mentoring during the statewide orientation process for the first PRODiG cohorts, and it was not a surprise that the white women in attendance took advantage of this orientation to expand their networking and privilege by requesting a separate consortium for empowerment—redefining space and privilege.

Of course, white women are also underrepresented in STEM fields, especially at university centers. However, by focusing on a fair process rather than on goals, Black, indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC) students find themselves again shortchanged. Meanwhile, the BIPOC PRODiG colleagues who joined SUNY had to quickly learn how to navigate another form of STEM—space, time, energy, and motion, which are controlled

by the hegemony, whiteness, and white institutional presence (WIP) as noted by one scholar in his work on people of color and environmental stress in institutions of higher learning (Pierce, 1975). White women again are benefiting from "inclusion strategies" as they have since the "death" of affirmative action in *Regents University of California v. Bakke* (1978) and *Gratz v. Bollinger* (2003). For most white men, affirmative action policies are all about inflating their egos to make reference to "quotas," which even though illegal, based on the *Regents University of California vs Bakke* (1978) decision, still occupies a place in the minds of white men as a major problem in diversity and inclusion. The conservative majority of the US Supreme Court struck a final blow to affirmative action and race-based admissions in the recent cases of *Students for Fair Admission, Inc. v. President & Fellows of Harvard College* (2023) and *Students for Fair Admissions, Inc. v. University of North Carolina* (2023), and most non-veteran, white men, who are not a protected class under affirmative action welcomed the SCOTUS decisions with a sigh-of-relief.

With reference to white women, as demonstrated by the research of Unzueta et al. (2010), this is how most white professional women perceive affirmative action—to be beneficiaries of the policies or not. If they view affirmative action as a "quota" system, then they are in the same ego-maintenance cahoots with white men. However, if white women find themselves to be beneficiaries of affirmative action, they do not engage in the ego-maintenance assumptions that "undeserving" BIPOC folx were hired for a particular position or college admission (Unzueta et al., 2010). In the end, we see that, again, despite good intentions, it is mostly whites who benefit from "diversity and inclusion" strategies.

We depart from Harris et al.'s (2015) insightful critique with respect to the term "inclusive excellence," first promulgated by the Association for American Colleges and Universities (AAC&U). These authors worry about co-optation of funders like the Ford Foundation, which has had specific interests in quelling radical demands for social justice and undermined democracies in the Global South (p. 30). We are sympathetic to their claim that AAC&U freeze-frames inclusive excellence by appealing to demographic shifts in the professoriate, asking BIPOC faculty to do more than their fair share of antiracist pedagogy, critical whiteness studies (CWS), critical race theory (CRT), and building an awards structure, which "quantifies and commodifies inclusive excellence" (p. 31). These authors charge that AAC&U ignore interlocking systems of oppression, specifically any concern about social justice. Thus, the organization caters to the neoliberal ideology of the Ford Foundation that funds it, rather than providing a

meaningful progressive blueprint for social-justice oriented scholars and teachers. We concur with Cabrera et al. (2017) that higher education and diversity studies are missing an important link in addressing social justice issues because of the hegemony of whiteness, color neutrality (colorblindness), epistemologies of ignorance, prevalence of comfortability to sustain whiteness, especially on predominantly white institutions (PWIs), and the ontological aggrandizement of whiteness in higher education (pp. 7–9). Diversity endeavors on college and university campuses have succumbed to the practice of "niceness," submission to white fragility, white leadership, white institutional presence—overwhelming white leadership and authority on college campuses, contribute to high levels of performative DEI activities, and lip service to diversity rather than concrete policy and institutional change. Yet, we argue that inclusive excellence still has a place and should be cultivated by all stakeholders on the twenty-first-century campus. We think that the term can be used to effectively incorporate anti-oppressive education that includes the entire professoriate, not just the chosen few BIPOC faculty. It is a good concept, which we use to move away from the meritocratic-laden ideology of "academic excellence." In the following section, we provide a brief genealogy of the promises and contradictions of the social and political ideologies that characterize the American polity and the drama of democracy and diversity to structure the context for the continuing struggle for inclusive spaces and places in higher education. In this context, we stand with scholars and researchers who remind us that the term "higher education" was coined to separate and describe learning that was designed for the elite in society and not for commoners (Geiger, 2005). Our current structures and systems of higher education contain elements of inequity and elitism. The irony of popular higher education is that its origins were not what present public educational institutions were designed to promote. Historically, higher education, like the American society, was structured and influenced by individualism and meritocracy, which processes and values could be counterproductive to the principles of inclusion, diversity and democracy, so far as minoritized groups and women are concerned.

Democracy and Diversity: The Origins

At the inception of this country, interlocutors of nation building, democracy, and the new American Constitution vigorously engaged in debates in the Federalists Papers about the American political experiment with a

republic, homogeneity, and the size of government and the nation state—the anti-federalist advocated for a smaller central government and more power to the states within the union. The federalists, on the other hand, argued for a larger republic with politics of difference, heterogeneity, and diversity, which would provide strength to the new republic. Hamilton, Madison, and Jay saw the power of diverging viewpoints. Or did they? Hamilton was clear about how differences in opinions should not be seen as deficiencies but would provide sociopolitical vitality for the new nation state. The federalists were victorious in their quest for a republic whose foundation will comprise of a complex, continual experimentation with both democracy and diversity (Sunstein, 1992). Hitherto, democracy and diversity had a symbiotic relationship and that ideal was fully demonstrated in the debates by both opponents and proponents of the nature of the United States and multicultural democracy. Madison in Federalist 10 warns the republic about factions, but he emphasized the essence of equality, liberty, and difference (Sunstein, 1992). Our work on these noble ideals continuous to evolve even today.

Diversity and inclusive leadership demand particular attention during these times of discontent, internet information frenzy, political divisiveness, and the effects of the global pandemic, and the fight for racial justice. As diversity and inclusion have become indispensable and irrepressible, diversity and inclusive leadership is a sine qua non. Nevertheless, there are very few institutions that offer doctoral degrees in diversity leadership, and, ironically, most organizational leaders who preach the gospel of diversity and inclusion do not attend professional development institutes for diversity and inclusion. In over twenty years of leading diversity and inclusion institutes around the world, we can count with the fingers on one hand presidents, provosts, deans, and directors who have taken time out to attend some of our colloquiums or professional development institutes.

Making the Case for Diversity and Inclusive Leadership

A critical exploration of diversity leadership has never been more important than in our times of discontents, global pandemics, political insurgency, and racial injustice. We began this work over six years ago, and our analysis since then has been shaped by social and political upheaval during the Obama administration, Trump era, and its remnant Trumpism. We braced ourselves when Trump was elected by a minority of voters, thanks to the Electoral College system, as we knew it would only be a matter of time

that some of the liberal reforms made under the Obama administration would be dismantled. It is interesting and ironic to note from our discussion above that the same Electoral College victory in 2016 that gave the Trumpublicans the power to rule would be attacked by Trump insurgents on January 6, 2021, because the political tide did not flow his way. Is this recent event at the Capitol with predominantly white males in our times of discontent the irony of democracy and diversity?

What happened to the United States' security apparatus and leadership during the insurgency is still under investigation. As ardent observers and researchers for politics of inclusion and social justice, we were not disappointed with our prediction, when billionaire Betsy DeVos was confirmed to a cabinet post in charge of the Education Department. She had no prior experience in education administration, but unions and education administrators alike worried that she would dismantle public education as we knew it. When DeVos finally resigned in early January after an attempted coup, or what Latin American observers label *autogolpe* (Call, 2021), incited by the outgoing president, unions had two words: "good riddance." Her parting "gift" was yet another transphobic policy memorandum, which outlined that Title IX does not apply to transgender students (Padgett, 2021).

Nonetheless, the historical contradictions surrounding the American nation state, whose origins rest on the principles of democracy and diversity as defining qualities and characteristics but whose actions and deeds have suffered from institutional anemia in activating the principles of equity and inclusion, demand deeper explanations. Indubitably, at the infancy of the nation state, those who shepherded its development and historic undertakings restricted themselves to a polity organized around white heteropatriarchal hegemonic male political culture. As the United States continued to expand, the founding ideals would conflict with the actions of most of its own leaders and those who cherished the ideals of freedom, liberty, justice, equality, diversity, equity, and inclusion. What happened along the way in maintaining the founding qualities of the United States? Why should a country with such a foundation and leaders who were imbibed with the fluids of freedom and justice continue to find no tangible reasoning for granting all people, regardless of race, ethnicity, sex, gender, class, disability, religion, region, and other diversity categories the same things the leaders and powerholders will argue is American—reconciliation, respect, equity, and fairness?

Perhaps most of us are blinded by the abstract and legal constraints that were propounded in the writings of the founders to prevent the general

populace (whites) from the tyranny of the majority and to make sure that democracy and diversity prevailed. However, we cannot succumb to historical amnesia by forgetting that the founding of this country was violent, including looting, pillaging, raping, dehumanization, disenfranchisement, injustice, and betrayal by some of our leaders. The "We" in "We the People" in the Declaration of Independence has not maintained its real meaning. It has never represented the totality of the American polity. Black bodies were stolen from Africa to build this nation—the holocaust of enslavement. Black folx must fight back to retrieve their bodies from the American body politic. Indigenous people's lands were looted, and it is ironic when some political commentators associate "looting" with, especially, Black bodies in Black Lives Matter demonstrations. Have Americans quickly forgotten the statecraft, leadership, soldiery, and yet deception of Benedict Arnold, whose battlefield engagement was second to none but defected to the British side of the war? Are President Trump and his seventy-four million followers, some of whom staged an abortive coup d'état against the United States Congress and the nation's sacred temple of democracy and diversity, the Capitol, on January 6, 2021, modern day Benedict Arnolds?

Our experimentation with democratic and diversity projects has not taken a productive shape, because the American political culture has not been properly healed from the past atrocities and calamities. The body politic is not healed sufficiently for reconciliation to ensue. Those in leadership positions are not bold enough to make social justice, racial equity, and inclusive democracy a campaign promise. The Biden-Harris administration is one of the few to make racial justice an agenda, something that has been delayed by too many leaders, but now it cannot be deferred anymore. However, as we wait for President Biden to put his "whole soul" in this race project, leaders at our various social institutions must genuinely make racial justice a priority. Race, in the politics of inclusion and equity, is the elephant in the American room. The *longue durée* of race as sociopolitical foundation and superstructure of the American political culture makes us vulnerable in placing the racial body only in historical terms, but history is not dead, we live history.

Race and Racism

The concept of race, a crucial diversity category that signifies and symbolizes socioeconomic and political conflicts and interests by making

references to different phenotypes, is a "master category" of our lives. Race, as we understand it today, is a social construct. As Omi and Winant inform our cognitive structures in this work, "Race is a way of 'making up people.' The very act of defining racial groups is a process fraught with confusion, contradiction, and unintended consequences. . . . We assert that in the United States, race is a master category—a fundamental concept that has profoundly shaped, and continues to shape the history, polity, economic structure, and culture of the United States" (2015, pp. 105–106). However, race intersects with gender, sex, religion, geography, class, sexual orientation, and other diversity categories that dominate our lives and make any sociopolitical analysis meaningful. It is impossible to comprehend and appreciate diversity leadership without organizing our thinking process around the intersectionality of race and the other matrices of domination above.

Our cultural and racial interdependence is inevitable; nonetheless, the race project in the United States received its impetus from European racist pseudoscientists and explorers who made contacts with Africa and the "new world." Even over two hundred years before the founders sustained the holocaust of slavery in the New England area and the rest of the United States, the Portuguese, as chronicled in the work of Gomes Eanes de Zurara, the biographer of Prince Henry, anti-Black racism would serve as strong justification for African slavery (Kendi, 2016, p. 23). As soccer enthusiasts and social justice advocates, we lament the horrible and racist slavery roots of many of the English Premier League clubs, whose establishments sustained their wealth and fame through the blood, sweat, and free labor of enslaved Black people. Ironically, the English Premier League has made kneeling to the ground, before any match starts, a symbol for racial justice after the killing of George Floyd by a white police officer in Minneapolis on May 25, 2020.

What happens in the American polity and on our college campuses concerning race, gender, and white hegemony may be localized but does not consist of isolated cases. We can make strong connections and linkages of oppression, marginalized groups, cultural imperialism, and exploitation across the Atlantic Ocean. English aristocracy and owners of wealthy English Football Association League organizations, such as Liverpool Football Club and Manchester United, have created their wealth on the backs of enslaved Black people from Africa and the Caribbean. These owners and leaders, whose ancestors exploited Black folx, and the English Premier League, are just making efforts to weed out racism after

George Floyd's murder (Bona, 2020). Major English banks such as Lloyds and Barclays are culprits of the enterprises that exploited Black bodies and the Black race for their enormous wealth and power. These banks, still today, continue to sponsor the most prestigious English Premier League, La Liga in Spain, and the Ligue de Football Professionnel in France. Even though both Lloyds and Barclays have denounced racism and embraced diversity and inclusion, history is not dead.

Besides, the over seventy-year reign of Queen Elizabeth II of the United Kingdom ended on September 8, 2022, in Balmoral Castle, Scotland. The queen died peacefully, but the constitutional monarchy of the United Kingdom is not dead. Soccer fans and supporters of the English Premier League missed the opportunity to sing the national anthem, "God Save the Queen" during the time of national/global mourning. A minute of silence for the Queen preceded every match when the league resumed. The lyrics of the national anthem changed slightly to "God Save the King"—King Charles III. For her seventy years of reign, at the seventh minute of every football match in the English Premier Leagues, there was a pause and a loud applause by the fans and supporters. Yet many former colonized people and the British Commonwealth are not afraid to associate those seventy years of her reign with British imperialism, colonialism, exploitation, and cultural imperialism. During the ten days of mourning for the death of the Queen of England, the English Premier League was suspended briefly and resumed after a few days. The world missed the symbolism of the kneeling by the players before each game started—an action against institutional and global racism—a gift of protest gesture to the world from Colin Kaepernick, an American civil rights activist and football quarterback who played in the National Football League. For some time, no one knew whether the Kaepernick kneeling against racism would ever return to the Premier League, because it was stopped to introduce new antics associated with the English monarchy to the beautiful game. This is how quickly the world forgets about the pain of marginalized and colonized people. Alas, the Kaepernick kneeling against racism has returned to some football stadiums in the United Kingdom, but it is fading away slowly, nevertheless, because racism is still alive and kicking.

In the European football leagues, colonized Black bodies play for their former colonizers. Black bodies are usually highly anointed with the holy water and legacy of assimilation and cultural imperialism to remain competitive with their European teammates. In fact, we do not have to go too far in history to realize how France won the 2018 World Cup in

Russia with predominantly Black talented African bodies. Talented Black bodies are still traded in these leagues like the times of Maafa, the holocaust of slavery, plantation agriculture, and the system of sharecropping. Most soccer players in the United States have the aspiration of playing in the English Premier League, a business-leisure system whose origins in exploiting Black folx and women are unpardonable.

In the United States, the higher education system is the training ground for professional football, soccer, and other sports. Most talented student of color athletes find their way into the National Football League (NFL) and, in soccer, Major League Soccer (MLS), with the hope of playing in the English Premier League, La Liga in Spain, or Ligue de Football Professionnel in France. So, from the higher educational systems that were not designed to grant success for colonized Black bodies to leagues that continue to utilize Black bodies for profit, the plantation mentality still prevails—mostly Black players doing the hard manual labor, and exclusively white managers, administrators, and leaders doing all the "thinking"—something Iris Marion Young characterized as the reasoning/body dichotomy: "The work of abstract rationality is coded as appropriate for white men, while the work that involves caring for the body or emotions is coded for women and the 'menial' work of serving and being servile is coded for nonwhites" (1990, p. 222). Other studies have provided similar evidence. Kovel maintains that modern capitalism and social arrangements have always structured functions of society and labor partly based on race and gender. Whiteness has been exclusively associated with reason, while Blackness is relegated to the body (1984, pp. 141–148).

Many profit-making Division I (D-I) colleges and universities in the United States whose wealth and endowments were derived from the system of slavery and enslaved Black people are not just in the business of knowledge production. Rather, they are in the business of wealth creation through sports, leisure, and pleasure with strong foundation of systemic racism, sexism, and white heteropatriarchy. However, in the United States, the most profitable college sport is American football, generating about $31.9 million per annum, per school on the average, followed by basketball, and a majority of the players are Black. Two top Texas schools, Texas A&M University, and the University of Texas at Austin each had projected annual value of $147 million for 2022 (Crawford, 2021). The context remains the same, exploitation, marginalization, and cultural imperialism are tools of whiteness. White heteropatriarchy, and hegemonic leadership are prevalent in the institutions of higher learning

and society at large, where Black bodies are used and confined. Inclusive leadership approaches could facilitate the mitigation of systemic racism, sexism, and institutional change.

No matter how it is analyzed, European and white American leaders used three reasonings to continue their anti-Black race projects in America: (a) profitability—the fact that Maafa, that is, the African holocaust, provided an economic system of merchants, plantation agriculture, and free laborers to start infant industries in America based on the exploitation of Black Africans; (b) practicability—Indigenous people and white indentured servants were not good slaves, they failed the system, so Black Africans (physically strong, performed manual labor, and locationally displaced, low escape possibilities) were the practical choice for enslavement; (c) justifiability—European and white American racist mentality, religious absurdity, false biological assumptions of race, white cultural "superiority," and social Darwinism, survival of the white "fittest" race, all provided justifications for the treatment of the powerless and voiceless (Karenga, 2010). White kings, explorers, founders, and political leaders engaged and continue to engage in the politics of anti-Black racism and racial despotism.

Racial Despotism and Anocracy in a Democracy

From the inception of this nation state, therefore, white racial hegemony and racial despotism have shaped the body politic of United States. In racial despotism, the endeavors to fully understand the agency and authority of race and to restructure the country into an antiracist nation state are extremely slow—from the end of slavery, Emancipation Proclamation, Radical Reconstruction, the Great Migration, Jim Crow, the civil rights and Black Power movements, to Black Lives Matter. In the process of racial despotism, diversity leadership is highly challenged by various white heteropatriarchal leaders, whether it is Jefferson, who struggled with the political morality of owning slaves and writing "All men are created equal" or the Trump administration's policy that targeted Blacks, Latino, Muslims, immigrants of color, and favored white immigrants.

Trump displayed his preference for Norwegians—"We should have more people from places like Norway"—and not immigrants from "shithole" countries, like Haiti, El Salvador, and Nigeria (Aizenman, 2018). Is American democracy becoming an anocracy because of lack of inclusive leadership? Are so many states and local governments becoming

an anocracy—political entities with mixed authoritarian and democratic structures and powers? President Biden might have a case for campaigning for the midterm elections of 2022 with a theme that emphasizes the "battle for the soul of the nation" ("Biden Addresses Threats," 2022). The picture is clear, there are questions involving the leadership style projected within the Trump administration and Make America Great Again (MAGA) followers that continue to make policies in states and local governments that threaten the "soul of democracy."

The Irony of Democracy and Diversity

The irony of democracy is that it can produce space for an inevitable tension with diversity. When the general populace or competing constituents engage in the politics of difference for their perceived rights and sacred constitutional demands, there is an obscured and yet a legitimate call for inclusivity—diversity and democracy. Structural and systemic paralysis can easily emerge if the tensions between diversity and democracy are not reconciled at the proper time and with due diligence. Diversity and inclusive leadership are very essential at this point. Former President Trump, in his leadership role as an American president, was a quintessential example of a leader who represented what we see as irreconcilable differences in diversity and democracy. Trump talks about democracy even after his presidency, but his actions were/are autocratic and very much against diversity. Many examples of his demonstration of the tension between democracy and diversity include his rejection of the democratic process of the US Congress meeting to ratify president-elect Joe Biden's Electoral College victory and his incitement of a coup d'ětat and insurgency at the United States Capitol, the sacred temple of democracy. In addition to many immigration policies by Trump against immigrants of color and his attack on, especially, Black female reporters such as Abby Phillip and April Ryan, he propounded an executive order banning racial sensitivity trainings and critical race theory, calling them "efforts to indoctrinate government employees with divisive and harmful sex-and-race-based ideologies" (Cineas, 2020).

Lacking diversity and inclusion leadership in our times of call out culture and a culture of discontent could adversely affect democracy. In a recent prime-time address to the nation from Philadelphia, President Biden gave us a premonition that MAGA Republicans and former President Donald Trump represent extremism, a threat to democracy and the "Soul

of the Nation" (MSNBC, 2022). In this work, democracy "refers to the ideal that all human beings have equal value, deserve equal respect, and should be given the equal opportunity to fully participate in the direction of the society" (AAC&U, 1998, p. 9). This definition is more meaningful to our work in that it also strengthens the pillars of diversity—people are respected for who they are. Their differences are not seen as deficiencies, they maintain added value to the beloved community, and they have the equal opportunity to participate in issues that affect their lives. Therefore, we find in Lincoln's Gettysburg Address in 1863, which provided a formidable architecture to the building of our democracy, the following: ". . . and that government of the people, by the people, for the people. . . ." This vision might be sufficient at Lincoln's time, but we have reached a point in time of a multicultural democracy.

Participatory democracy that relies on liberal theory has the ability to engage in the suppression of Black, Indigenous, people of color (BIPOC) folx, as we have experienced in recent times—difficulty to register, purging voter rolls, disenfranchising returnees from prison, rigid voter identification requirements, and restricting early voting (American Civil Liberties Union, 2020). The multicultural and inclusive democracy model that we propose would "correct" the inadequacy of traditional participatory democracy by ascertaining that representation is genuine and reflective of the diversity of the general populace through devising a system that would recognize the disenfranchised and BIPOC folx. Multicultural and inclusive democracy is relational, not only procedural in context (Asumah and Johnston-Anumonwo, 2002, p. 422).

Diversity

In this work, we apply the American Association of Colleges and Universities characterization of diversity. Here, in our modified definition, diversity refers to the "variety created in any society (and within any individual) by the presence of different points of view and ways of making meaning [in discussions and actions] which generally flow from [references to different races, ethnicities,] cultures, and religious heritages, from the differences in the socialization processes of women, men, and [gender non-binary people], and from differences that emerge from class, age, and developed ability" (AAC&U, 1998, pp. 9–10). Before inclusion and equity attracted attention in the past fifteen years, diversity enjoyed the monopoly

of attention in both individual and institutional spheres. Consequently, diversity is sustained through individual and institutional endeavors and dynamics, and, because power and human agency are involved, it is susceptible to "-isms"—racism, sexism, classism, ageism, and multiplicities of "-isms"—intergroup dynamics of superordinates and subordinates seeking power, resources, equity, recognition, justice, and respect. Since the civil right movements, diversity has become a hallmark for institutional and community interaction and engagement.

As with everything else, implementation of diversity in our institutions can be complex. America's diversity project is becoming even more complicated because of different generations, recent gender nonbinary categories, geography, changes in immigrant populations, and transdisciplinary and multiperspectival approaches in identifying diversity categories. Leaders at state and national levels and at institutions of higher learning must devise new and effective measures in dealing with diversity projects. Furthermore, it is not unusual to learn from historically marginalized groups that diversity programs are not addressing the real issues of oppression and systemic racism. Many institutions are so caught up in the game of increasing representation—numerical diversity—that they fail to pay attention to problems associated with the "numbers game."

Organizations and institutions that are in the business of just "showing" how diverse their workforce or student population is, based on race, ethnicity, age, gender, and developed ability may do well in the areas of touristic diversity and on their websites; one may be surprised to learn about the institutional climate and what their equity score card indicates. These same organizations may demonstrate strong diversity categories at the entry levels, mostly, but the power differential among employees and students and policy-making powers remain with traditional white male establishmentarians. Yet we are witnessing new moments in American history with a first-ever woman of color, Kamala Harris, as Vice President of the United States; the hegemony of white male establishmentarians in the American polity will continue to be challenged as more women and nonheteropatriarchal males are entering positions of power.

Gender Trouble in the Age of Me Too

It seems that some critical theorists and educators have come a long way since Karl Marx first articulated "the woman question" or W. E. B. Du Bois answered the question of what it feels like to be typecast as a problem, as

a Black man in a white polity. But one still wonders who continues to be left out in these conversations, which hint at an additive problematic: the awkward and illogical trope of "women and minorities" remains the classic and de jure configuration of affirmative action policies (Nagel, 2014). Yet, it has been superbly troubled in this Black feminist classic primer: *All the Women Are White, All the Blacks Are Men, but Some of Us Are Brave* (Hull et al., 1982). Black feminist scholar, Kimberle Crenshaw (1989) captured this with a brilliant conceptual paradigm shift. She introduced us to the metaphor of intersection, and it has troubled feminist theory and practice in exciting ways. Crenshaw argues that antiracist analysis that does not engage with gender issues reinscribes sexism and heteropatriarchal norms, and feminist analysis that is silent on racial formations also adheres to white supremacist violence (p. 140). The third wave of feminism, including Black feminism and Black womanism, continues to trouble neat divisions and has ushered in a veritable politics of difference. Sexual pluralism in terms of orientation and identities have broken up metaphysical binaries and dichotomies that were unimaginable a century ago when "the homosexual" was invented as a species, in the famous words of white gay philosopher Michel Foucault.

In this book, we tackle race and gender politics utilizing the prism of an intersectional analysis, yet we note that we may not quite succeed with troubling heteronormativity effectively. It is as if Audre Lorde's dictum "The master's tools will never dismantle the master's house" continues to haunt us. There are some small steps that feel hopeful. Generation Z students refer to others with the default pronoun "they/them" and genderqueer and gender nonconforming students challenge the architectural spaces of the twenty-first-century campus—in terms of both traditional classrooms and bathroom allocations and residential life and other student-life centered places. Creating a sense of belonging for increasingly diverse and underrepresented student bodies will be the key challenge for the colleges and universities that fight for survival with the dire demographic projections of a shrinking pool of eligible traditional student cohorts. To give the true meaning of the university as an entity where research, instructions, diversity of disciplines, inclusive student body, and faculty engage in the enterprise of education, diversity, and inclusive leadership will always be indispensable.

Diversity and Inclusive Leadership

There is a plethora of characterizations for diversity and inclusive leadership. The two, diversity and inclusive leadership, go hand in hand. Institutions

of higher learning are always in transition because students enroll and graduate constantly. Furthermore, demographic shifts in the student body occur because of birth rates, migrations, and relocations. New faculty and staff join the academy, and committee leaderships, department chairs, deans, and even provosts change position quite often. This transition is not different from what occurs in the nation state as political leadership, international interactions, struggles for equity, and resource distribution, make diversity and inclusive leadership indispensable and irrepressible. Differences in age, race, ethnicity, gender, class, and other diversity categories require leaders to be more inclusive in their leadership style and interaction with students and faculty/employees. A one-size-fits-all leadership style is, therefore, failure-prone in any multicultural and diverse setting. Change-leadership and equity-minded approaches do enhance DEI and inclusive leadership in a culture of cure.

In his seminal essay on diversity and racism in America, Ward (2022) characterizes diversity as "essentially about *quantity*: the range and number of different identities and cultures in any given system. *Inclusion* is essentially about *quality:* the quality of participants across identities and cultures. *Equity* is about *justice:* the policies that ensure equitable outcomes" (p. 9). Educational leaders should be aware that numerical diversity, "quantity," is not a panacea to our racial iniquity issues, and we cannot solve racial inequity problems on our campuses completely with a diversity framework. White institutional presence and policy-making leaders have frequently associated the increases in BIPOC populations on our campuses with improvement in race relations, confusing campus climate with campus culture and at the same time depending on risk management strategies to counteract DEI problems, and this convoluted approaches only creates distraction and frustration for our BIPOC students and faculty.

How Risk Management Affects Diversity Leadership

In these times of global pandemic, most institutional leaders will agree that risk management and safety are more important than anything else is. Nevertheless, college and university leaders have made risk management an indispensable tool for their leadership styles even before COVID-19 turned its ugly head on human existence and caused disproportionately more harm and deaths in BIPOC communities. The irrepressible tension

between risk management and diversity leadership cannot be overemphasized. Risk management is how institutional leaders identify, review, evaluate, and control perceived occurrence of risk in an institution. However, as Hubbard argues in his recent work, "Most managers would not know what they need to look for to evaluate a risk management method and, more likely than not, can be fooled by a kind of analysis placebo effect" (2020, pp. 4–5).

Furthermore, the way we analyze risk and our estimation of risk can be tricky, because we have to factor in the frequency of imaginability and relatability that may contribute to the risk. That is, what is the likelihood that something can be dangerous or threatening to the university's image or reputation? There is no way of projecting the future, but we usually count on our best estimations. So, when leaders in the American polity and institutions of higher learning rely on imaginability bias to make diversity and inclusion decisions, we are entrapped in a quagmire of overestimation and underestimation of risk, and misalignment of what is visceral and what is cerebral. As we have mentioned earlier, since diversity and inclusion work is human work and we must be intentional to secure results, risk management does not provide a fertile leadership ground for diversity and inclusion leadership on our college campuses and in the American polity, because the experiences of minorized groups and the best available information is mostly masqueraded in whiteness, lacking DEI perspectives.

Since the tragic shooting incident at Virginia Tech, all public and private colleges and universities have reassessed risk management; many have armed their campus police and even militarized them. Active shooter scenarios are no longer carried out in far-away shooting ranges; rather, they are directly played out in residence halls and classrooms. Fortunately, they are done when no students are present. What does this have to do with our concerns about diversity leadership? When uniformed, gun-carrying campus police had a "coffee with a cop" session at the gym entrance, a Black student shared being triggered by such police presence and wrote his reaction in a poem for a creative writing class. He carries the trauma of "stop-and-frisk" policies in New York city, which was used to racially profile Black and Latino youth for decades.

When Black and Latino students hold social events on campus and they are shepherded by faculty and staff, but campus police still make their overwhelming presence felt, meaningful social gathering becomes infinitesimally diluted. These students' events, designed to define their own social spaces, without having to explain themselves to extra authoritative

bodies, defeat the purpose of the students' freedom and ability to define their social spaces in an already highly policed campus. The rationale for police presence needs no explanation for risk managers and those who believe BIPOC students must be "watched" closely all the time (public safety) before they damage the "public good"—whether it is property or service. White campus police who reside in rural white America do not know of such trauma and lived experience. They relish the hard-won access to guns since the Virginia Tech incident seemingly made it a requirement for proper risk management. Prior to Virginia Tech, they were "merely" peace officers and had to rely on city police for any dangerous situation that they could not handle without weapons. Never mind that the city of Cortland has a police station located less than a mile away from campus.

Now, risk management has a new enemy to deal with: a tiny virus that seems virtually invincible. Now, campuses must make new "rational" decisions that pits the health and well-being of the community against sound fiscal policy that demands that classes are held in person regardless of (mental) health status of students or faculty. Such calculus is particularly distressing to BIPOC folx who have lost loved ones to COVID-19. Their concern is not taken into consideration, as no diversity policy has been promulgated to address multilayered issues regarding access, equity, and mental distress. Even uniform policies in an online class are cause for alarm, and, using diversity leadership best practices, it would behoove campus administrators and chief diversity officers to call on faculty to check in with students and prepare flexible guidelines that will serve all students equitably. A case in point: One of our Latino student was immensely relieved and grateful for getting an extension on a term paper from one of us after they contracted COVID-19. They shared that another faculty denied such appeal and it caused obviously great anxiety to the affected student (and, perhaps, to their family members). But we must acknowledge the fact that in such a situation, where risk management supersedes diversity and inclusion considerations, BIPOC students suffer both anxiety and trauma, while most of the student body may only deal with anxiety.

As we have already alluded to above, Trumpism clarified to us an extreme leadership style. Among the various philosophies that we discuss in this book are servant leadership, focusing on equity and inclusion, trust-building, and transformation and transactional leadership, focusing on hierarchy, control, and loyalty. It now seems uncontroversial to suggest that Trumpism endorses a dangerous, reactionary transactional style that