



UNIVERSITEIT VAN PRETORIA
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Faculty of Economic and Management Sciences

Fakulteit Ekonomiese en Bestuurswetenskappe
Lefapha la Disaense tša Ekonomi le Taolo

*Diversity at a Critical Juncture:
Accelerating Progress Towards Eradicating Inequalities in the
Workplace*

Keynote Address
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Symposium: Diversity, Equity, Inclusion: grand challenges
Faculty of Management Sciences
Radboud University
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50-Year Trajectory of Diversity Field In MOS

External Socio-Political (macro) context

Internal Socio-Political (micro) AOM context

Populism
White supremacy
Nationalism
“MeToo” & “Black Lives Matter”

Diversity at a Critical Juncture

Structured Inequality
Whiteness
Racialization
Multi-level
Fluid
Intersecting
Mobile

Inclusion

Individualism
Post-racialism/Post-feminism
Technology boom & social media
Environmentalism

Research Themes

**Anti-Discrimination
Equal Opportunity
Affirmative Action**

Civil Rights & Women’s Rights Movements

Educational Access

Caucuses
WIMG¹

Minorities Interest Group

Race & Sex Differences
Women in Management
Discrimination

“Deep” level
Diversity
Business
Case
vs. CDS²

Identity
fluidity
Implicit bias
Diversity climate

**Workforce 2000
projections**
Affirmative Action backlash
Political & Econ
Conservatism
“Diversity
Management”
“GDO” – Gender & Diversity in
Organizations

1980’s & 1990’s
1990

2000’s &
2010’s

1960’s &
1970’s

2019-
future

The Murder of George Floyd in USA May 25, 2020

- Viral
- Wake-Up Call About racialized police brutality
- Fueled #BlackLivesMatter Movement



Diversity, Equity & Inclusion (DEI) at A Critical Juncture

“a moment or certain window of time where there is a significant possibility of a decisive transition from one state to another (Liu, Onar & Woodward, 2014:6).



Global Responses to Murder of George Floyd: Had We Crossed the Rubicon ?



“To create change, we have to re-examine our views and actions in light of a pain that is deeply felt but too often ignored. To the Black community—we see you. You matter and your lives matter.” Tim Cook, CEO of Apple, June 2020



Pushback on DEI

- Political
- Legal
- Cultural
- Transnational
- Authoritarian

“We will wage a war on the woke. We will fight the woke in education, we will fight the woke in the corporations, we will fight the woke in the halls of Congress.” Ron DeSantis, Governor of the USA State of Florida

Recent
Headlines and
Articles Capture
the
Pushback



Rise of Far-Right Political Parties

Sources: New York Times, 2023
LeMonde FR, 2023
Euronews, 2023
New York Times, 2023
South China Morning Post, 2023
Al Jazeera, 2023

Far-Right Parties Are Rising to Power Around Europe. Is Spain Next?

What the Far-Right Republicans Want: To Remake Congress and the Government

Very worrying': Three far-right parties enter Greek parliament

Finland to get right-wing government with far-right

Italy, Sweden and now Finland: Far-right parties in Europe have started to govern.

What's behind the rise of Japan's Sanseito, a far-right party that loves Trump and hates immigration?

Restrictions on Rights of LGBTQ+ Communities

Sources:

New York Times, 2023

BBC. April 2023

Human Rights Campaign,
June 2023

ILGA Europe 2023

Uganda Arrests Man on Antigay Charge Punishable by Death

Minister Kemi Badenoch is considering amending the act to define people's sex as biological sex in England, Scotland and Wales.

According to the Human Rights Campaign, in 2023 there have been more than 525 anti-LGBTQ+ bills introduced in 41 USA states, with more than 75 bills signed into law as of June 5.

In 2022 there was a stark rise in violence against LGBTI people, not only in numbers but also in the severity of that violence, as reported in the latest edition of our [Annual Review of the Human Rights of LGBTI people in Europe and Central Asia](#).

Anti-Women Rights

Sources:

Amnesty International,
2022

New York Times, 2022

New York Times, 2023

Institut du Genre en
Geopolitique

“Events in 2021 and in the early months of 2022 have conspired to crush the rights and dignity of millions of women and girls. ” Amnesty International's Secretary General, Agnès Callamard

United States Supreme Court overturns Roe v. Wade, ending right to abortion upheld for decades.

***Growing Segregation by Sex in Israel
Raises Fears for Women's Rights***

South Korea's government has been considering a series of anti-feminist initiatives, including a pledge to abolish the Ministry of Gender Equality and Family.

Attacks Against Racial and Ethnic Minorities

The Stop WOKE Act': HB 7, Race, and Florida's 21st Century Anti-Literacy Campaign (Russell-Brown, K. (2022)).

Supreme Court strikes down race-based admissions at Harvard and U.N.C. (NBC News, 2023)

Europe's Worrying Surge of Anti-semitism (Human Rights Watch, 2021)

EU looks to tighten borders to keep unwanted migrants away (Reuters, 2023).

From Charleston to Pittsburgh to Jacksonville, deadly racist attacks now a way of life in U.S. (Los Angeles Times, 2023)

Ultra-nationalism, antisemitism, anti-Muslim hatred: Council of Europe's anti-racism commission raises alarm over the situation in Europe (European Commission Against Racism and Intolerance)

China urged to tackle online racism targeting Black people (Al Jazeera, 2023)

Attacks on the Disciplinary Legitimacy of DEI

The Diversity and Inclusion Industry Has Lost Its Way

D.E.I. Programs Are Getting in the Way of Liberal Education

Behind the lines of Texas A & M's Diversity War

Sunsetting Racial Justice in the Sunshine State and Florida-izing the Nation: How Florida's Anti-Diversity Legislation May Be a Model for the Supreme Court

"the current and potentially growing use of a "woke" strategy to diversity and its underlying theoretical basis (i.e., critical theories such as critical race theory) are at risk of perceived unfairness and reverse-discrimination of majority group members . . .

Sources:

Harpers Bazaar, 2021

New York Times, 2023

Philanthropy News Digest, 2023

Spindelman, M., 2023

Waldman & Sparr, 2023

Corporate Retreat?

Sources:

Wall Street Journal, 2023

New York Times, 2023

Wright, P., 2023

Yahoo Finance, 2023

Wall Street Journal, 2023

Companies Quiet Diversity and Sustainability Talk Amid Culture War Boycotts

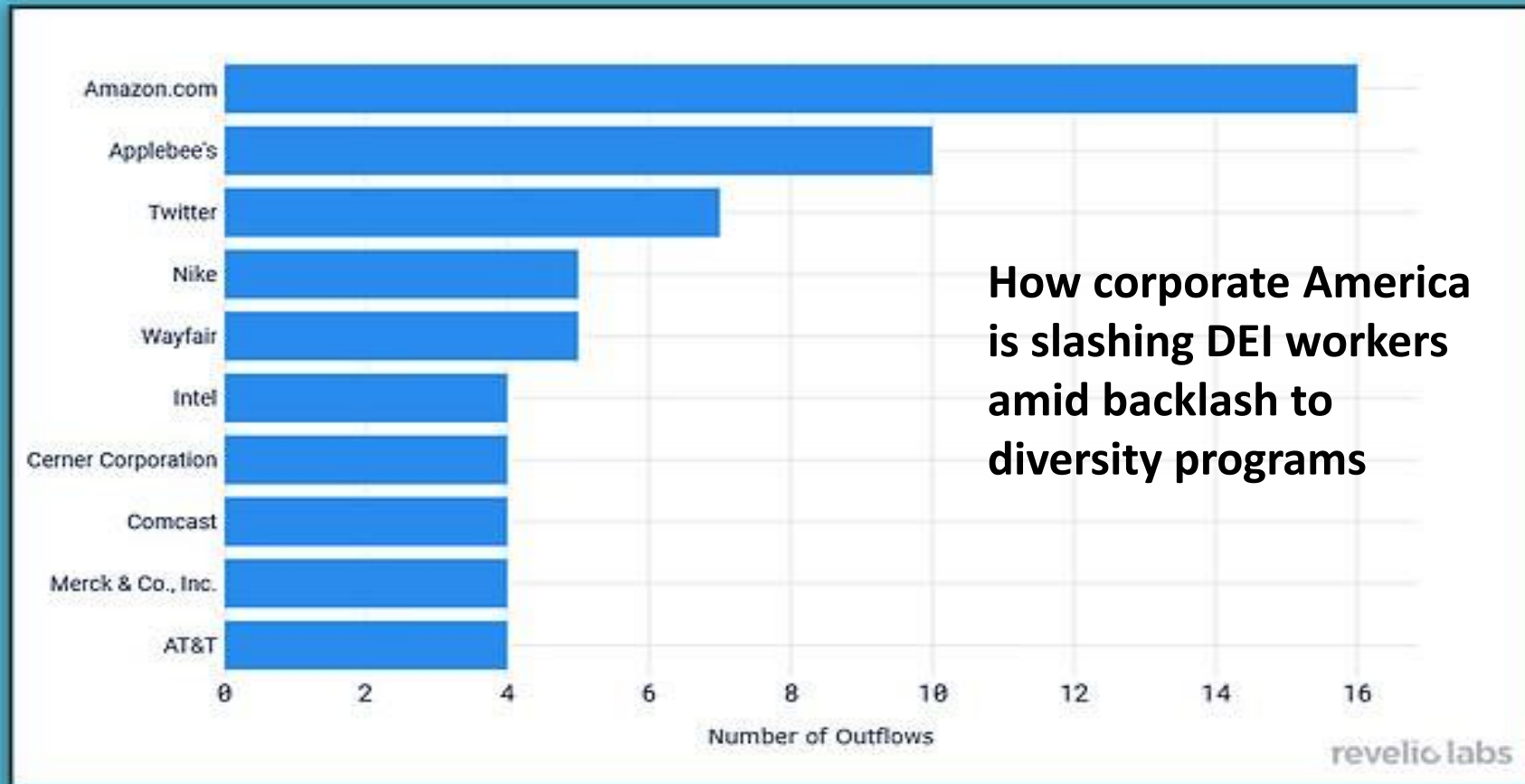
Why Some Companies Are Saying 'Diversity and Belonging' Instead of 'Diversity and Inclusion'

Woke CEOs Might Want to Keep Quiet

Companies that rushed to create DEI initiatives in 2020 are likelier to backtrack on their commitments

Maybe Hold Off on Getting Rid of the DEI Leader

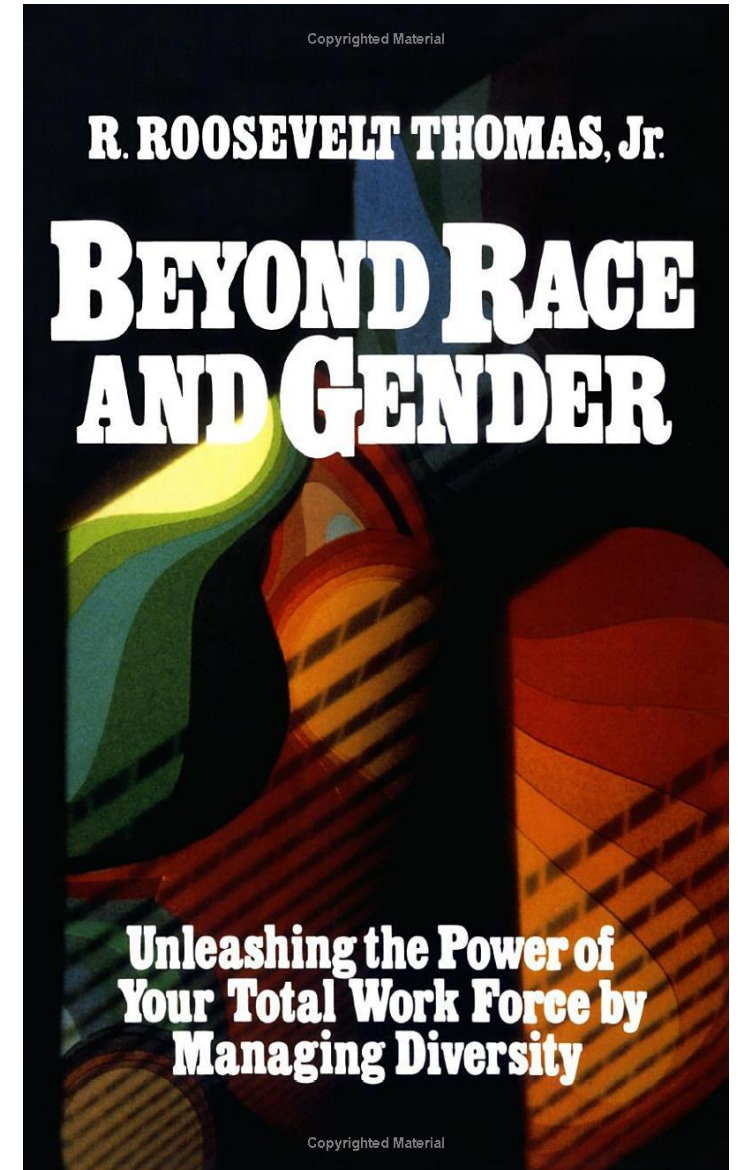
BIGGEST OUTFLOWS OF DEI STAFF SINCE JULY 2022



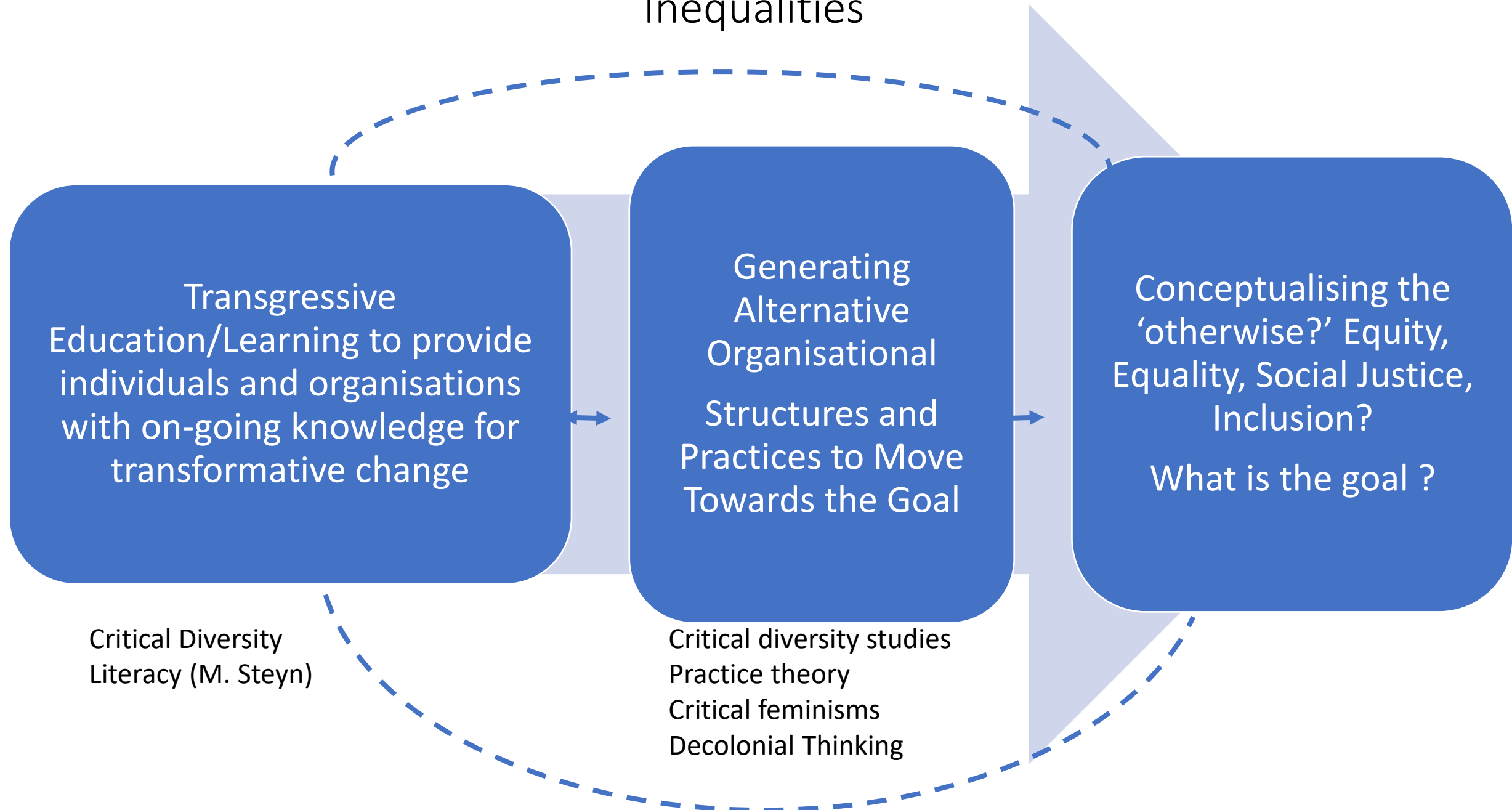
<https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-11724079/Goodbye-anti-bias-training-DEI-teams-axed-diversity-RECKONING.html>

The DEI Paradigm

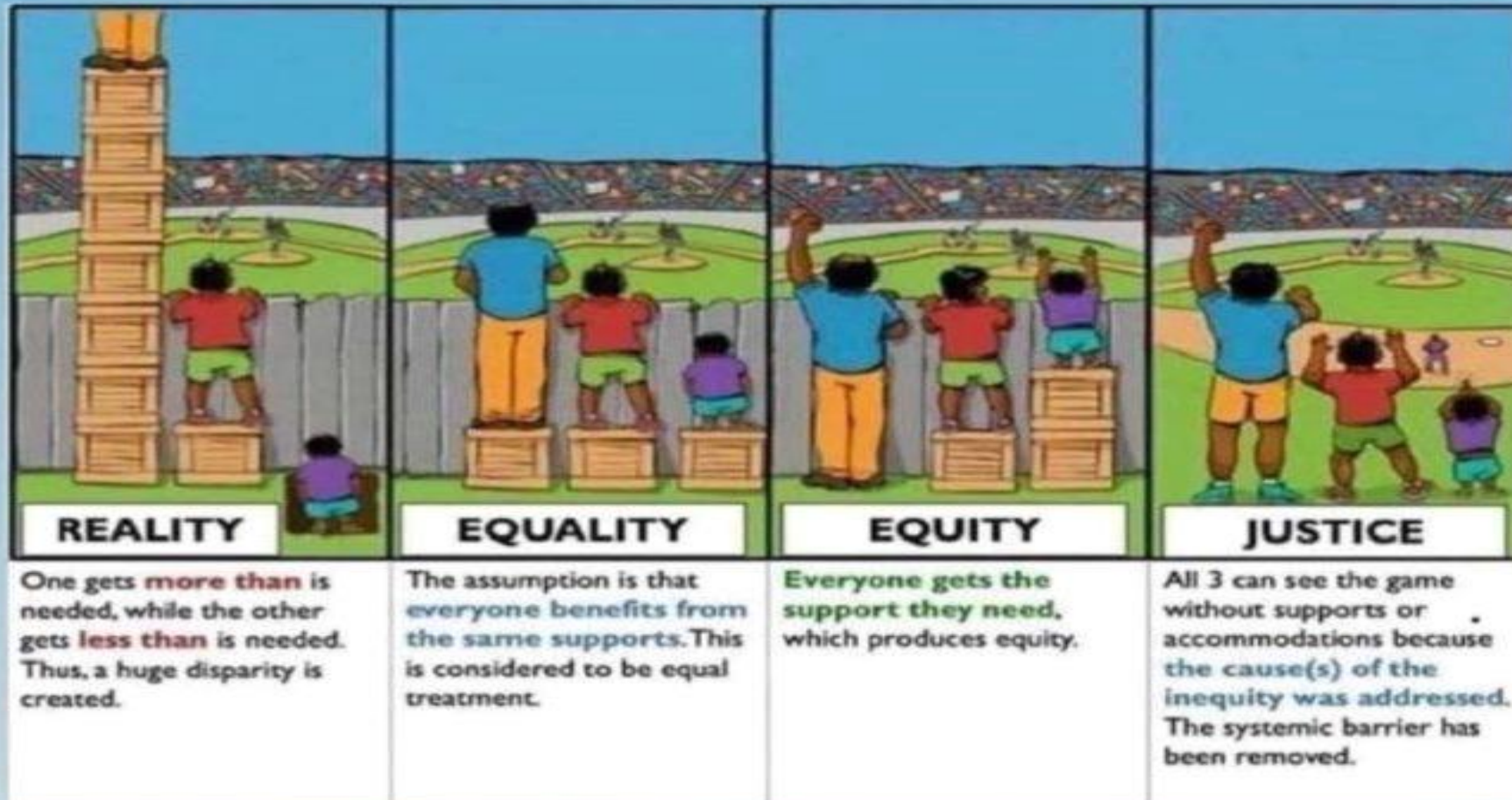
- DEI's origins foreshadowed where we are today
 - Workforce 2000 forecast was misleading
 - Women, racial and ethnic minorities have always been included (*unequally*) in the workforce of nations
 - Diverted attention from systems of oppression that produce and reproduce inequality
- ✓ Depoliticized legitimate calls for ending systemic inequalities
- ✓ Enabled capitalist organisations to absorb the 'forecasted' surge in women and racial/ethnic minorities into existing unequal structures while appearing progressive and non-oppressive
- ✓ Perpetuated the violence of inclusion (material and psychological)
- ✓ Enabled incremental change rather than systemic



Possibilities for Accelerating Progress Towards Eradicating Workplace Inequalities



What is the goal?



Transforming
organisational
systems,
processes and
structures

Transformative
Inclusion

<https://www.bu.edu/diversity/resource-toolkit/inequity-equality-equity-and-justice/>

@restoringracialjustice

Transformative Inclusion

- Removes structures, systems, processes and values that produce and sustain inequalities
- Goes beyond bringing in 'Different Bodies'
- Goes beyond individual-level to organisational level interventions
- Changes power relations
- Imagines and builds alternative structures, practices, processes and social relations that change the way 'we' do things
- Not an end state; but on-going action and effort to generate a transformed organisation and *regeneration* to sustain it.

Non- Conclusion Instead Dwell in Possibility



“To be truly radical is to make hope possible, rather than despair convincing.” Raymond Williams author of *Resources for Hope* (1989: 118).

“More importantly, it is the work of transgressively embracing the unknown, challenging the dust of old, the stale out-of-date norms, and planting that which we desire most in their place. It is the work of transgressive learning in times of crisis.” Kulundu, I. McGarry, D. & Lotz-Sisitka, H. Think Piece: Learning, Living and Leading into Transgression—a reflection on decolonial praxis in a neoliberal world." *Southern African Journal of Environmental Education* 36 (2020:116).

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