ANEESH RAI

https://aneesh-rai.com/

aneeshr@umd.edu

ACADEMIC APPOINTMENTS

University of Maryland, Robert H. Smith School of Business *2023-*
Assistant Professor of Management & Organization

Behavior Change for Good Initiative, University of Pennsylvania *2023-2025*
Visiting Scholar

EDUCATION

The Wharton School, University of Pennsylvania *2023*
Ph.D. in Operations, Information, and Decisions
Advisor: Katherine Milkman
Dissertation Committee: Maurice Schweitzer (Chair), Rebecca Schaumberg, Sandra Matz

Princeton University *2017*
B.A. in Psychology, *summa cum laude*
Minors in Computer Science and Cognitive Science

RESEARCH INTERESTS

Diversity, Discrimination, Behavior Change

PUBLICATIONS

Rai, A., Chang, E.H., Kirgios, E.L., & Milkman, K.L. (In-press). "Group Size and Its Impact on Diversity-Related Perceptions and Hiring Decisions in Homogeneous Groups." *Organization Science.*

Rai, A., Sharif, M.A., Chang, E.H., Milkman, K.L., & Duckworth, A.L. (2023). "A Field Experiment on Subgoal Framing to Boost Volunteering: The Tradeoff Between Goal Granularity and Flexibility." *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 108(4), 621.

Kirgios, E.L., **Rai, A.,** Chang, E.H., & Milkman, K.L. (2022). "When Seeking Help, Women and Racial/Ethnic Minorities Benefit from Explicitly Stating their Identity." *Nature Human Behaviour*, 6(3), 383-391

Milkman, K.L., Gromet, D., Ho, H., Kay, J., Lee, T., Pandiloski, P., Park, Y., **Rai, A.**, Bazerman, M., Beshears, J., Bonacorsi, L., Camerer, C., Chang, E.H., Chapman, G., Cialdini, R., Dai, H., Eskreis-Winkler, L., Fishbach, A., Gross, J.J., Horn, S., Hubbard, A., Jones, S.J., Karlan, D., Kautz, T., Kirgios, E.L., Klusowski, J., Kristal, A., Ladhania, R., Loewenstein, G., Ludwig, J., Mellers, B., Mullainathan, S., Saccardo, S., Speiss, J., Suri, G., Talloen, J.H., Taxer, J., Trope, Y., Ungar, L., Volpp, K.G., Whillans, A., Zinman, J., & Duckworth, A.L. (2021). "Megastudies improve the impact of applied behavioural science." *Nature*, 600(7889), 478-483

Chang, E.H., Kirgios, E.L., **Rai, A.,** & Milkman, K.L. (2020). "The Isolated Choice Effect and Its Implications for Gender Diversity in Organizations." *Management Science*, 66(6), 2752-2761.

UNDER REVIEW

Chang, L.W., Kirgios, E.L., **Rai, A.,** & Milkman, K.L. "Evaluating the efficacy of shortlist quotas to promote gender diversity." *(Under Review at Nature Human Behaviour)*

WORKING PAPERS

Blunden, H., Kirgios, E.L., **Rai, A.,** Chang, E.H., & Milkman, K.L. "When Does Flattery Fail? Flattery Backfires For Those Perceived As Inauthentic."

SELECTED RESEARCH IN PROGRESS

Rai, A., Schaumberg, R.L., & Matz, S.C. "Asking Rejected Candidates for Permission to Recontact Them Increases Reapplications." *(Writing)*

Rai, A., Kirgios, E.L., & Milkman, K.L. "Insider versus Outsider Perceptions of Group Diversity." *(Writing)*

Rai, A., Kirgios, E.L., Lucas, B.J., & Milkman, K.L. "Requesting More Referrals Increases Gender Diversity: Evidence From Two Field Experiments." *(Field experiments with 6,000 participants completed)*

Rai, A. "The Consequences of Prosocial Signals That Leak Political Information for Job-Seekers." *(Data collection)*

GENERAL AUDIENCE WRITING

Rai, A., Sharif, M.A., Chang, E.H., Milkman, K.L., & Duckworth, A.L. (January 29, 2024) "The Secret to Accomplishing Big Goals Lies in Breaking Them into Flexible, Bite-Size Chunks." *Scientific American*

Kirgios, E.L., **Rai, A.,** Chang, E.H., & Milkman, K.L. (March 28, 2022) "To Fight Bias, Consider Highlighting Your Race or Gender." *Scientific American*

AWARDS AND GRANTS

Cornell ILR Workplace Inclusion & Diversity Education Grant, 2023 (PI; Co-PIs: Brian Lucas, Erika Kirgios, Katherine Milkman; $25,000)
Robert H. Smith School of Business Internal Grants Program, 2023 (PI; Co-PI: Jennifer Marr; $38,315)
Wharton Leadership Center Grant, 2022 ($5,000)
Mack Institute for Innovation Management Research Grant, 2022 ($5,000)
Russell Ackoff Doctoral Student Fellowship, 2022 ($2,500)
Paul R. Kleindorfer Scholar Award, 2022 ($4,000)
Mack Institute for Innovation Management Research Grant, 2021 ($7,000)
George James Term Fund Travel Award, 2019 ($300)
Russell Ackoff Doctoral Student Fellowship, 2019 ($2,000)
Princeton Psychology Senior Thesis Prize, 2017
Princeton Psychology Senior Award, 2017
Princeton Psychology Junior Award, 2016

CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS AND CHAIRED CONFERENCE SYMPOSIA

Group Size and Its Impact on Diversity-Related Hiring Decisions in Homogeneous Groups

- Society for Judgment and Decision Making, Montreal, Canada, 2019

- East Coast Doctoral Conference, New York, NY, 2020 (Conference canceled due to COVID-19 pandemic)

- International Association for Conflict Management, 2020, Virtual

- Society for Judgment and Decision Making, 2020, Virtual

- Academy of Management, 2021, Virtual

– Selected as part of a showcase symposium

A Field Experiment on Subgoal Framing to Boost Volunteering: The Tradeoff Between Goal Granularity and Flexibility

- CHIBE-PAIR Roybal Mini-Symposium, 2020, Virtual

- Society for Personality and Social Psychology Judgment and Decision Making Pre-Conference, 2021, Virtual

- East Coast Doctoral Conference, 2021, Virtual

- Association for Consumer Research Conference, 2021, Virtual

- Society for Judgment and Decision Making, 2021, Virtual (poster)

- MIT Conference on Digital Experimentation, 2021, Virtual

- Behavioral Science and Policy Association Annual Conference, 2022, Virtual

Insider versus Outsider Perceptions of Group Diversity.

- Academy of Management, Seattle, WA, 2022

    – Selected as part of a showcase symposium

    – Part of chaired symposium "New Perspectives on Increasing Diversity and Reducing Inequality in Organizations" (Co-chaired with Linda W. Chang)

- International Association for Conflict Management, Ottawa, Canada, 2022

- Society for Judgment and Decision Making, San Diego, CA, 2022

Requesting More Referrals Increases Gender Diversity: Evidence From Two Field Experiments.

- Behavioral Decision Research in Management, Chicago, IL, 2024

- Academy of Management, Chicago, IL, 2024

INVITED PRESENTATIONS

- University of Maryland, Department of Psychology, Spring 2024

- University of Chicago, Honesty, Opportunity, Prosociality, & Ethics (HOPE) Lab, Spring 2023

- Georgetown University, McDonough School of Business, Fall 2022

- Cornell University, School of Industrial and Labor Relations, Fall 2022

- University of Maryland, Robert H. Smith School of Business, Fall 2022

- American University, Kogod School of Business, Fall 2022

- IS Student Presentations Over the Cloud (ISPOC), Fall 2022

ADVISING

Dissertation Committees:

- Tara Holmes (University of Maryland, Management & Organization, Expected 2024)

- Yasha Spriha (University of Maryland, Management & Organization, Expected 2025)

PROFESSIONAL SERVICE

Ph.D. Admissions Coordinator, OBHR Area, University of Maryland, 2023-Present

Ad hoc Reviewer:

- *Journal of Applied Psychology*

- *Management Science*

- *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes*

- *Organization Science*

- *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*

Co-Chair of DEI Initiatives (with Bella Ren) of Wharton Doctoral Council, 2021-2023

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Instructor for 'Managing People and Organizations' (Undergraduate, Spring 2024)
Teaching Assistant for 'Managerial Decision Making' (MBA, Spring 2020; Spring 2021; Spring 2022; Spring 2023)
Teaching Assistant for 'Foundations of Teamwork and Leadership' (MBA, Fall 2021)
Guest Lecturer for 'Evaluating Evidence' (Undergraduate, Fall 2021; Topic: Audit studies in behavioral science)

SELECTED MEDIA COVERAGE

- "Do You Need a Routine?", *No Stupid Questions - Freakonomics Radio* , March 9, 2024

- "Want to Achieve Your Dreams? Try Subdividing Your Goals", *Knowledge at Wharton*, March 4, 2024

- "How Some Experiments Use Emails to Control for Systemic Bias", *Chicago Booth Review*, February 20, 2024

- "Why Identity Matters When Asking for Career Help", *Knowledge at Wharton*, February 21, 2022

PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS

Academy of Management (AOM)
International Association for Conflict Management (IACM)
Society for Judgment and Decision Making (SJDM)
Society for Personality and Social Psychology (SPSP)

OTHER RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

Research Coordinator, Behavior Change for Good (University of Pennsylvania), 2017-2018, Philadelphia, PA
Research Assistant, Elizabeth Levy Paluck Lab (Princeton University), 2014-2017, Princeton, NJ

APPENDIX: SELECTED RESEARCH ABSTRACTS

Group Size and Its Impact on Diversity-Related Perceptions and Hiring Decisions in Homogeneous Groups. With Edward H. Chang, Erika L. Kirgios, and Katherine L. Milkman (*Organization Science, In-press*)

Why do some groups face backlash for lacking diversity, while others escape censure? We suggest that a group's size and Bayesian reasoning may help explain this puzzle. Because each member of a group represents the outcome of a selection decision, people have more information about larger homogeneous groups. Thus, we theorize that, consistent with Bayesian reasoning, people make different inferences about larger homogeneous groups than smaller ones, with downstream consequences for diversity management. Across a field study and three experiments, we examine how a homogeneous group's size influences diversity-related perceptions and hiring decisions. We first examine U.S. corporate boards in the S&P 1500, finding that among larger boards, all-male boards and all-White boards are significantly underrepresented relative to chance expectations. This underrepresentation increases as a function of board size, suggesting that larger groups work harder to avoid homogeneity. Moreover, larger homogeneous boards are more likely than smaller ones to add women or underrepresented racial minorities. We corroborate these field results with three experiments that generalize our findings to other settings. One experiment also examines the underlying mechanisms for the effect: Larger homogeneous groups are viewed as having (i) selection processes that are more likely to be unfair; (ii) less diversity; and (iii) greater impression management concerns than smaller homogeneous groups, all of which predict a greater likelihood of diversifying. Our findings highlight the role of group size in shaping diversity-related perceptions and decisions, and the benefits of incorporating Bayesian reasoning into theories about how groups are judged and selected.

A Field Experiment on Subgoal Framing to Boost Volunteering: The Tradeoff Between Goal Granularity and Flexibility. With Marissa A. Sharif, Edward H. Chang, Katherine L. Milkman, and Angela L. Duckworth (*Journal of Applied Psychology*, 2023)

Research suggests that breaking overarching goals into more granular subgoals is beneficial for goal progress. However, making goals more granular often involves reducing the flexibility provided to complete them, and recent work shows that flexibility can also be beneficial for goal pursuit. We examine this tradeoff between granularity and flexibility in subgoals in a pre-registered, large-scale field experiment (N = 9,108) conducted over several months with volunteers at a national crisis counseling organization. A pre-registered vignette pilot study (N = 900) suggests that the subgoal framing tested in the field could benefit goal-seekers by bolstering their self-efficacy and goal commitment, and by discouraging procrastination. Our field experiment finds that reframing an overarching goal of 200 hours of volunteering into more granular subgoals (either 4 hours of volunteering every week or 8 hours every two weeks) increased hours volunteered by 8% over a 12-week period. Finally, we find that increasing subgoal flexibility led to more durable benefits from creating subgoals, but we find mixed evidence as to whether increasing subgoal flexibility directly boosted productivity.

When Seeking Help, Women and Racial/Ethnic Minorities Benefit from Explicitly Stating their Identity. With Erika L. Kirgios, Edward H. Chang, and Katherine L. Milkman (*Nature Human Behaviour*, 2022)

Receiving help can make or break a career, but women and racial/ethnic minorities do not always receive the support they seek. Across two audit experimentsone with politicians and another with studentsas well as an online experiment (total N=5,145), we test whether women and racial/ethnic minorities benefit from explicitly mentioning their demographic identity in requests for help, for example, by including statements like "As a Black woman..." in their communications. We propose that when a help seeker highlights their marginalized identity, it may activate prospective helpers' motivations to avoid prejudiced reactions and increase their willingness to provide support. Here we show that when women and racial/ethnic minorities

explicitly mentioned their demographic identity in help-seeking emails, politicians and students responded 24.4% (7.42 percentage-points) and 79.6% (2.73 percentage-points) more often, respectively. These findings suggest that deliberately mentioning identity in requests for help can improve outcomes for women and racial/ethnic minorities..

The Isolated Choice Effect and Its Implications for Gender Diversity in Organizations. With Edward H. Chang, Erika L. Kirgios, and Katherine L. Milkman (*Management Science*, 2020)

We highlight a feature of personnel selection decisions that can influence the gender diversity of groups and teams. Specifically, we show that people are less likely to choose candidates whose gender would increase group diversity when making personnel selections in isolation (i.e., when they are responsible for selecting a single group member) than when making collections of choices (i.e., when they are responsible for selecting multiple group members). We call this the *isolated choice effect*. Across six preregistered experiments (N = 3,509), we demonstrate that the isolated choice effect has important consequences for group diversity. When making sets of hiring and selection decisions (as opposed to making a single hire), people construct more gender-diverse groups. Mediation and moderation studies suggest that people do not attend as much to diversity when making isolated selection choices, which drives this effect.