

ANEESH RAI

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EDUCATION

The Wharton School, University of Pennsylvania

Expected 2023

Ph.D. Candidate in Operations, Information, and Decisions

Advisor: Katherine Milkman

Dissertation Committee Chair: Maurice Schweitzer

Dissertation Committee Members: 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

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.

*denotes equal authorship

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

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*

PAPERS UNDER REVIEW

Rai, A., Chang, E.H., Kirgios, E.L., & Milkman, K.L. "Group Size and Its Impact on Diversity-Related Perceptions and Hiring Decisions." *2nd Revise and Resubmit at Organization Science*

Rai, A., Sharif, M.A., Chang, E.H., Milkman, K.L., & Duckworth, A.L. "Subgoals Boost Productivity Even When Goal Progress Is Observable: A Field Experiment." *Revise and Resubmit at Journal of Applied Psychology*

SELECTED RESEARCH IN PROGRESS

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

Rai, A., Zhang, T., Norton, M.I., & Milkman, K.L. "Using Rediscovery to Promote Goal Re-engagement." (*Field experiment with 21,000 participants in progress*)

Rai, A., Kirgios, E.L., Lucas, B.J., & Milkman, K.L. "The Impact of a Longer List Manipulation on Gender Diversity in Referrals." (*Field experiment with 7,500 participants preparing to launch*)

Rai, A., Kirgios, E.L., & Milkman, K.L. “Insider vs. Outsider Perceptions of Group Diversity.” (*Data collection in progress*)

Blunden, H.*, Kirgios, E.L.*, **Rai, A.**, Chang, E.H., & Milkman, K.L. “When Flattery Fails: Documenting the Negative Consequences of Ingratiation for Advice Seekers.” (*Field experiment with 2,500 participants completed*)

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Kirgios, E.L., **Rai, A.**, Chang, E.H., & Milkman, K.L. “Pay-It-Forward or Help Others? Analyzing the Impact of Pay-It-Forward Messaging on Charitable Giving.” (*Field experiment with 9,000 participants completed*)

Schaumburg, R.L., **Rai, A.**, & Chang, E.H. “The Psychological Consequences of the Changing Nature of Work and Their Implications for Dominant Demographic Group Members’ Support for Increasing Diversity in Organizations.” (*Data collection in progress*)

AWARDS AND GRANTS

Paul R. Kleindorfer Scholar Award, 2022

Mack Institute for Innovation Management Research Grant, 2021

George James Term Fund Travel Award, 2019

Russell Ackoff Doctoral Student Fellowship, 2019

Princeton Psychology Senior Thesis Prize, 2017

Princeton Psychology Senior Award, 2017

Princeton Psychology Junior Award, 2016

CHAired CONFERENCE SYMPOSIA

- **New Perspectives on Increasing Diversity and Reducing Inequality in Organizations** (Co-Chaired with Linda W. Chang). Academy of Management (selected as a showcase symposium), Seattle, WA, 2022.

CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS

Group Size and Its Impact on Diversity-Related Hiring Decisions.

- Society for Judgment and Decision Making, Montreal, Canada, 2019
- East Coast Doctoral Conference, New York, NY, 2020*
- International Association for Conflict Management, 2020**
- Society for Judgment and Decision Making, 2020**
- Academy of Management, 2021**

– Selected as part of a showcase symposium

Subgoals Boost Productivity Even When Goal Progress Is Observable: A Field Experiment.

- CHIBE-PAIR Roybal Mini-Symposium, 2020**
- Society for Personality and Social Psychology Judgment and Decision Making Pre-Conference, 2021**
- East Coast Doctoral Conference, 2021**
- Association for Consumer Research Conference, 2021**

- Society for Judgment and Decision Making, 2021** (poster)
- MIT Conference on Digital Experimentation, 2021**
- Behavioral Science and Policy Association Annual Conference, 2022**
- Advances with Field Experiments Conference, Chicago, IL, 2022

Insider vs. Outsider Perceptions of Group Diversity.

- Academy of Management, Seattle, WA, 2022
 - Selected as part of a showcase symposium
- International Association for Conflict Management, Ottawa, Canada, 2022

The Psychological Consequences of the Changing Nature of Work and Their Implications for Dominant Demographic Group Members' Support for Increasing Diversity in Organizations.

- International Association for Conflict Management, 2021**

* Conference canceled due to COVID-19 pandemic

**Conference held virtually due to COVID-19 pandemic

PROFESSIONAL SERVICE

Ad hoc Reviewer for *Management Science*, 2019-Present

Ad hoc Reviewer for *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, 2021-Present

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

Ph.D. Social Chair of Operations, Information, Decisions Department, 2019-2020

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Teaching Assistant for 'Managerial Decision Making' (MBA, Spring 2020; Spring 2021; Spring 2022)

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)

MAGAZINE AND NEWSPAPER ARTICLES

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

PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS

Academy of Management (AOM)

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

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.

Group Size and Its Impact on Diversity-Related Perceptions and Hiring Decisions with Edward H. Chang, Erika L. Kirgios, and Katherine L. Milkman (*Revise and Resubmit at Organization Science*)

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.

Women and Racial 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 experiments—one with politicians and another with students—as 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, e.g., 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.

Subgoals Boost Productivity Even When Goal Progress Is Observable: A Field Experiment.
with Marissa A. Sharif, Edward H. Chang, Katherine L. Milkman, and Angela L. Duckworth (*Revise and Resubmit at Journal of Applied Psychology*)

Laboratory experiments suggest that when information about goal progress is readily observable, breaking distal goals down into subgoals can backfire by encouraging complacency and distracting from distal goals. We theorize that by increasing self-efficacy, reducing procrastination, and making committing to large goals less daunting, subgoals can still boost performance over the long-run even when goal progress is observable. We present evidence from a large ($N = 9,108$), pre-registered, longitudinal field experiment that supports this prediction. Our study was conducted over several months with a national crisis counseling organization whose volunteers had 24/7 access to their cumulative volunteer hours via an online dashboard. We found that reframing a distal goal of 200 hours of volunteering into proximal subgoals (4 hours of volunteering every week, or 8 hours every two weeks) increased hours volunteered by 8% over a 12-week period. While increasing subgoal flexibility did not boost productivity, it led to more durable benefits from subgoals.