

**Title:** Antiracist Allyship in Management Education: Intersectional Approaches, Tensions, and Paradoxes

**Abstract:**

This roundtable is designed to engage how management educators work to address inequities within their classrooms, departments, schools, and colleges using allyship. Particularly how they can begin to center an antiracist intersectional allyship lens within their teaching and learning practices. The focus of the roundtable will be to imagine, discuss, and critically engage intersectional forms of antiracist allyship through intrapersonal, interpersonal, and institutional work. We begin by developing intersectional and critical self-reflexivity, leading to learning how to engage in prosocial behaviors and concluding with exploring tempered radicalism. The roundtable will emphasize experiential learning activities.

**Keywords:** Allyship, Intersectionality, Antiracism

## **Introduction**

The move to address diversity, equity, and inclusion concerns within classrooms and organizations has elevated discussions about allyship in workplaces across industries. Individuals have pivoted towards allyship as a potential tool to empower others to join in struggles to address systemic inequities, while also holding individuals and institutions accountable for redressing harm and creating tangible change. In light of the increased interest in the praxis of antiracism, allyship, and intersectionality, this roundtable seeks to assist management educators in thinking about, teaching, discussing, and addressing intersectional forms of antiracist allyship in various learning environments, including the classroom and the workplace. Specifically, this roundtable will inspire and challenge participants to bridge the learning chasm as well as build bridges to the future of business schools and management across sectors.

## **Theoretical Foundation/Teaching Implications**

### ***Allyship:***

There is a long history of allyship between advantaged group members lending their support to those perceived as marginalized and/or oppressed (Brooks & Edwards, 2009; Ostrove et al., 2009; ). Allyship requires that individuals in privileged positions recognize their privilege and actively work to deploy said privileges to break down systems of inequities that marginalize others (Erskine & Bilimoria, 2019). The discussion of privilege and individual actions based on advantaged group identity has been a large part of the narrative of allyship (Case, 2012; Radke et al., 2020; Warren & Bordoloi, 2021). Allies are often defined as individuals from privileged positions who advocate and support those that are marginalized (Foster-Gimbel et al., 2022) through the active disruption of inequitable systems; however, marginalized group members also engage in allyship (Brown & Ostrove, 2013).

There are various definitions of allyship that allow for the complexity of identity to be considered in the context of space and time. Generally, allies are individuals who are part of the dominant group as it relates to gender, race, class, sexuality, and other identities in dominant spaces (Swan, 2017; Warren & Bordoloi, 2021). For example, in the context of white institutional spaces, an ally can be any White individual who fights for equity and pushes for change that supports marginalized colleagues (Spanierman & Smith, 2017). Erskine and Bilimoria (2019) described allyship as a verb—not an identity or about proclaiming “I am an ally”; rather, a practice that involves critical self-reflexivity regarding covert and overt forms of privilege and power; an active, lifelong, and consistent practice of unlearning and reevaluating beliefs and actions; working in solidarity with a marginalized individual or group of people; and building relationships based on the ability of a dominant group member to support marginalized groups.

Other scholars have defined allyship as a strategic tool used to address systemic inequities, expanding the term to include accomplices, collaborators and coconspirators who actively “fight injustice and promote equity in the workplace through supportive personal relationships and public acts of sponsorship and advocacy. Allies endeavor to drive systemic improvements to workplace policies, practices, and culture (Melaku et al., 2020: 98).

***Intersectionality:***

Intersectionality refers to multiple, overlapping, and intertwined social dynamics that arise at the intersection of race, ethnicity, gender, class, age, sexuality, and injustices such as racism, sexism, classism, heterosexism, transphobia, xenophobia, and ableism (Crenshaw, 1989; see also Collins, 2019). These dynamics interact with power and impact social identities, social perceptions, relationships, and organizational experiences (Collins, 2019; Crenshaw, 1989;

Rosette, de Leon, Koval, & Harrison, 2018). Thus, intersectionality is a framework for understanding how social identities overlap with one another and with systems of power to oppress and advantage people in the workplace and the broader community.

***Antiracism:***

Scholarship emphasizing the impact of racism on the experiences of racially marginalized and subordinated groups across the U.S. call for the active naming of systemic practices that lead to disadvantageous outcomes for these groups (Bonilla-Silva, 1997; Feagin, 2006; Crenshaw et al., 1995). Antiracism has been defined as “a continuous, reflexive practice of proactively interrogating Whiteness from an intersectionality framework, leveraging one’s position of power and privilege, and courageously interrupting the status quo” (Erskine & Bilimoria, 2019: 1).

***Putting It All Together: Teaching Implications, Tensions, and Paradoxes for Intersectional Forms of Antiracist Allyship***

As Rabelo, Bonner, and Stewart (2023: 3) noted, management educators influence future generations of leaders and thus, “ought to have responsibility for helping students (and themselves) understand privilege and its personal, professional, and societal consequences.” One way to do so is by creating what Rabelo and colleagues (2023: 2) described as “consciousness-raising experiences” opportunities for management educators and students to better understand how our identities (and, we are adding emotions) affect our experiences, actions, and inactions that create, maintain, or disrupt injustice.

Contu (2020: 8) proffered that “business school academics are not expected to engage in radical work (i.e. to ask awkward questions about the current system, to forge progressive alliances and to build theories and practices that have a deep and intimate critical concern with social, economic and epistemic justice).” Thus, teaching implications for this workshop include addressing existing power dynamics as well as opening new possibilities for the future of work.

Additional teaching implications of this roundtable include the potential to create real, systemic change within the daily practice of management faculty. Particularly, as it relates to how they navigate tensions between business education and the ever changing landscape of diverse and vibrant student bodies. The antiracist intersectional allyship lens developed in the roundtable calls attention to the paradox of allyship rhetoric and diversity policies that do not address systemic inequities that challenge faculty pedagogical frames, as well as institutional dynamics around inclusion and equity. Another key teaching implication emphasizes the importance of tensions that arise from antiracist work that requires significant invisible labor, in the form of emotional and cognitive work. Through the intrapersonal, interpersonal and institutional work addressed in the roundtable, we create a frame to begin engaging critical thought around possible best practices in utilizing antiracist intersectional allyship as a tool for strategic change.

### **Session Description**

In this roundtable, participants will engage in three condensed versions of an antiracist allyship workshop designed to support management educators who simultaneously will develop intersectional forms of allyship skills while also preparing future generations of antiracist allies and leaders. The roundtable discussions will focus on three levels of development, including intrapersonal, interpersonal, and institutional forms of allyship. Intersectionality will be centered at all levels of development.

#### ***Topic 1 (Intrapersonal Work): Developing Intersectional and Critical Self-Reflexivity***

The dynamic nature of intersectionality work is where we develop a critical awareness regarding our various identities; different gradients of disadvantages and privileges associated with those identities; and an awareness of the implications of our multiple identity positions in

impacting our capacity to engage in allyship behaviors. Participants will engage in an experiential activity aimed at helping them explore their various and intersecting identities. Afterwards, they will engage in reflective journaling using prompts we provide about visible vs invisible and mutable vs fixed identities that are most salient to participants and how they currently navigate the classroom, workplace, and world given their various identities.

***Topic 2 (Interpersonal Work): Learning How To Engage in Prosocial Behaviors***

Prosocial behaviors are acts that benefit, promote, or protect the welfare of individuals, groups, or institutions (Erskine & Bilimoria, 2019). These behaviors may be intended to benefit colleagues, departments, students, stakeholders, and/or institutions, and often require courage and positive deviance to enact (as opposed to only espouse) intersectional forms of antiracist allyship. Some of these behaviors include challenging individuals in positions of power, supporting marginalized colleagues and students, and taking risks to interrupt routine and the status quo. Participants will engage in an experiential activity aimed at helping them explore prosocial behaviors that facilitate intersectional forms of antiracist allyship. Afterwards, they will engage in reflective journaling using prompts we provide about their various emotions, actions, inactions, motivations, risks, and how their department and institution (can better or already) support or hinder their engagement in prosocial behaviors in ways that facilitate intersectional forms of antiracist allyship.

***Topic 3 (Institutional Work): Exploring tempered radicalism***

Tempered radicals are “individuals who identify with and are committed to their organizations and also to a cause, community or ideology that is fundamentally different from, and possibly at odds with, the dominant culture of their organization (Meyerson & Scully, 1995: 596). Tempered radicals include quiet catalysts who are tempered in their approach to pushing

back against prevailing norms while not rocking any boats yet radical in their desire to disrupt the status quo (Erskine & Bilimoria, 2019). Participants will engage in an experiential activity aimed at helping them explore intrapersonal, interpersonal, and institutional strategies for engaging in tempered radical work that facilitate intersectional forms of antiracist allyship.

Aligned with research on institutional work, or “the purposive action of individuals and organizations aimed at creating, maintaining and disrupting institutions” (Lawrence & Suddaby, 2006: 215), participants will then engage in reflective journaling about engaging in intentional and purposively tempered radical actions using prompts we provide that will help facilitate intersectional forms of antiracist allyship.

**Session Overview:**

Introduction	10 minutes
Small Roundtable Discussions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Topic 1 (Intrapersonal Work): Developing Intersectional and Critical Self-Reflexivity (<i>12 minutes</i>)</li> <li>● Topic 2 (Interpersonal Work): Learning How To Engage in Prosocial Behaviors (<i>12 minutes</i>)</li> <li>● Topic 3 (Institutional Work): Exploring Tempered Radicalism (<i>12 minutes</i>)</li> </ul>	36 minutes
Reflexivity in Dialogue: Full Group Reflections, Questions, and Takeaways	10 minutes
Wrap Up: Community and Praxis	4 minutes

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