



Tenure as a Closed System: Subconscious Behavioral Characteristics of Coercion, Groupthink, Bias and Inherent Discrimination

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Abstract

Tenure and the tenure process in particular, has been criticized for being biased, prejudicial and inherently discriminatory. This based on numerous quantitative data and qualitative studies.

From a quantitative perspective, data provided by the Chronicle of Higher Education, Bureau of Labor Statistics, American Society for Engineering Education and others, support analysis of percent tenured to population availability within given races, genders, cultures and ethnicities. Given this, the broad-base of highly reputable quantitative findings, this paper will address the lesser discussed qualitative implications.

From a qualitative perspective, tenure, as it exists generally, is a closed system. As such, it has strong potential to promote groupthink, capitalize on coercion among lesser-seniority associate professors, and openly invite a natural bias and subsequent prejudice. The unconscious mind of individuals in a closed tenure system can and may, very naturally, extend their beliefs, biases, and prejudices against those who are not like them. This can contribute directly to the lack of “different” genders and underrepresented minorities in the tenured ranks of the academy. While it is easy, as a voting member to suggest otherwise, the data suggests this may be true.

Similar minds tend to think alike. In this scenario, similar minds in a closed system, through micro inequities and preconceived biases, and subsequently through coercion and the psychological phenomenon of groupthink, clearly provide the opportunity and apparent realities of discrimination.

This paper addresses the basic subconscious and unconscious qualitative behavioral characteristics at the root of tenure decisions. It looks at the process itself and how the process errors on the side of an often times referred to “collegiality”. This paper lays a foundation for making better, more informed decisions. It addresses the business case for inclusivity, and how it differs from the traditional training attendant to legal implications.

Of all the discussion around the tenure process, this paper addresses the most blatant, widely recognized, seemingly tolerated, marginally addressed and hurtful aspects of the tenure process.

Introduction

Cognitive psychological qualitative research founded in the nurture side of the discussion, begins with a suggestion we are born with two basic characteristics; the need to survive and the need to reproduce [1, pg. 23]. From these two basic instincts, psychologists and cognitive psychologists in particular, suggest we have both an unconscious mind and conscious mind. The unconscious mind, sometimes referred to as our gut feeling, steers us from unsafe situations (survival instinct). The

conscious mind, on the other hand, allows us to think through or rationalize the situation, perhaps creating a more informed decision. But, our gut feeling, that emanating from our unconscious mind, is always on, and providing that survival instinct. This concept of unconscious, intuitive or gut instinct, is argued to be premised in nurture-based activities from birth. The basis for this perspective is solidly founded in one study after the next and the premise for hundreds, if not thousands of articles and books. This animal and human ability to sense insecure initiatives, activities or people is developed out of experience and environmentally created scenarios. The literature suggests, "...there are basic evolved motivations and tendencies, operating exclusively automatically up to age four, when we begin developing conscious intentional control over our minds and bodies... [1, pg. 33]. Our primary, ultimate, deepest evolved motivation for survival and physical safety is at the root of our attitudes and beliefs [1, pg. 43]"

Feeling safe, or avoiding threats, can be extrapolated to our sense of others. Human beings, dating back to our cave man histories, were the most dangerous creatures around and the greatest threat to our survival. Bargh states [1, pg. 67]

"...these are cues about whether people are similar to us or not. Do they look and sound the same as those around us, such as our parents, siblings and close neighbors? There has been a tremendous amount of research on this in-group versus out-group distinction, and their consequences, in my own field of social psychology over the last fifty years. This research is showing that we are tuned into in-group/out-group distinctions starting at a very young age, indicating it is an innate tendency to do so...baby animals in general have an evolved general predisposition to stay close to those who are similar to them. They don't go off and play on the farmland or forrest with other baby animals; instead they stay close to their own kind, the animals who are most like them who will be the one's who take care of them, give them food, provide warmth and shelter, and, most important, don't try to eat them... human beings behave more or less the same way...infants only three months old, given the choice of looking at faces of people who are the same racial-ethnic group as theirs (Caucasian) or the faces of a different racial-ethnic group (African, Middle Eastern, Asian), preferred to look at members of their own group."

Scientific historical accounts reflect Homo sapiens, essentially our human evolutionary ancestry, has only existed for a meager 200,000 years in the 4.6 billion years since the origin of the Earth. During this short stint in history, we have experienced an unending series of conflicts. History is proliferated with these many human recorded conflicts; conflicts premised on differences in religion, ethnicity, race, gender, geography and so many more. Our very limited circumference of trust is illustrated even here in our great United States, through a myopic lens and ethnocentric minds-eye. Who should we like? Who should we trust? Who should we not like and/or trust? In the end, who is the next person or group that individually or collectively threatens our survival?

Coercion, Groupthink, Bias and Inherent Discrimination

Recently, at a high research university, there was one-day symposium on faculty hiring of females and underrepresented minorities. The focus was on the built-in prejudice of current faculty search-and-screen committees. All associate deans, department heads, dean leadership teams, and deans themselves were invited to participate. During the workshop, Dr. Daryl Smith of Claremont Graduate University spoke [14] extensively about national issues of the built-in prejudice of search-and-screen committees. She discussed the manifestation of this today. This, she explained, is seen in ratios of females and underrepresented minorities on tenure track or as tenured faculty. Dr. Smith presented study after study on this most obvious national issue. One study showed how names alone influenced whether the committee thought a candidate was qualified or not. In that study, black sounding names were rated routinely lower for comparable qualifications versus candidates with white sounding names.

Dr. Smith produced university-specific numbers, reflecting below national averages across the board. She made an adamant point to suggest “**...tenure was broken... from every perspective – theoretical, practical, moral, and ethical, the tenure process and those participating in it are exercising prejudice and bias in their decision making...**”

At this tier 1, high research university, the issue is apparent. In a campus newspaper article, the interim vice provost for faculty affairs addressed the biases and discriminatory practices of the tenure process. Her premise was solidly founded in the number of females and underrepresented minorities [not] put forth as candidates for tenured positions and faculty searches. This Provost [2] stated,

“...this type of discrimination in hiring and promotion extends to our own community. At [university], 87 percent of tenured professors are male... there’s well-documented evidence of biases in the processes of hiring and promotion... most of our hiring isn’t blind. Hiring is supposed to be a merit process.”

Business Case for Diversity and Inclusivity: It’s All about Growth

A number of years back, most employees in business and industry were required to attend what was then referred to as diversity training. Diversity training, in almost every case, centered on the legal aspects of being sued for discrimination in the workplace. The topic was frequently presented by human resources or the legal department. Nobody wanted to go; there was absolutely nothing positive about the training, and from year to year it never really changed.

The problem with that previous training was that it never answered the fundamental question of what “benefits” might accrue the organization from thinking from a diverse perspective, or even valuing inclusivity (a term not then known or used). Company performance and profitability were tied to legal implications from lawsuits. There was a mounting recognition [4, pg. 333] there had

to be a better way to express the value of diversity in the workforce other than just to avoid litigation, after all we are all human beings with something to contribute.

Then, around the late 1990s, the concept of diversity in the workforce took a decidedly different turn. Organizations began talking about diversity as more than simply a race or gender issue and started looking at it as an array of diverse characteristics representative of the general employee population. The familiar characteristics associated with age, race, gender, religion, physical ability/disability, and national ethnicity were still identified, as they should be, but additional characteristics depicted in Figure 1, such as family situation, sexual orientation, veteran status, language spoken, work experience, education, thought, geographical location, functional discipline, and international experience all came into the fold, contributing toward a more complete perspective of diversity in the workplace.



Figure 1 - Organizationally Defined Characteristics of Diversity

The identification of these additional characteristics also ushered in new presentation material with a different slant. Now talking about:

- Diversity being an imperative for business survival
- Diverse teams making better decisions and better decisions making organizations more competitive
- Creating an atmosphere that helped great ideas thrive
- Celebrating uniqueness

During this time, organizations also began talking about creating an inclusive culture as well as metrics for measuring such. Strategic objectives were being created in most every organization.

These objectives talked about hiring and promoting at all levels; recognizing, developing, and using diverse employee talent; increasing the use of mentoring; building relationships and alliances with local communities and highly diverse colleges and universities; and building a bidirectional line of open and honest communication. All of this was backed by numerous programs and initiatives intended to support the stated strategic objectives. Things were starting to solidify in terms of actions and commitments. The entirety of all of these things was years beyond previous organizational training. Organizations had begun to move away from compliance-related training into logical reasoning attendant to increasing growth in organizations.

During this same time, a video emerged by Joel Barker entitled, “Wealth, Innovation and Diversity”, which explicitly depicted why organizations should value diversity in our many organizations. Barker presented something comparable to the figure below.

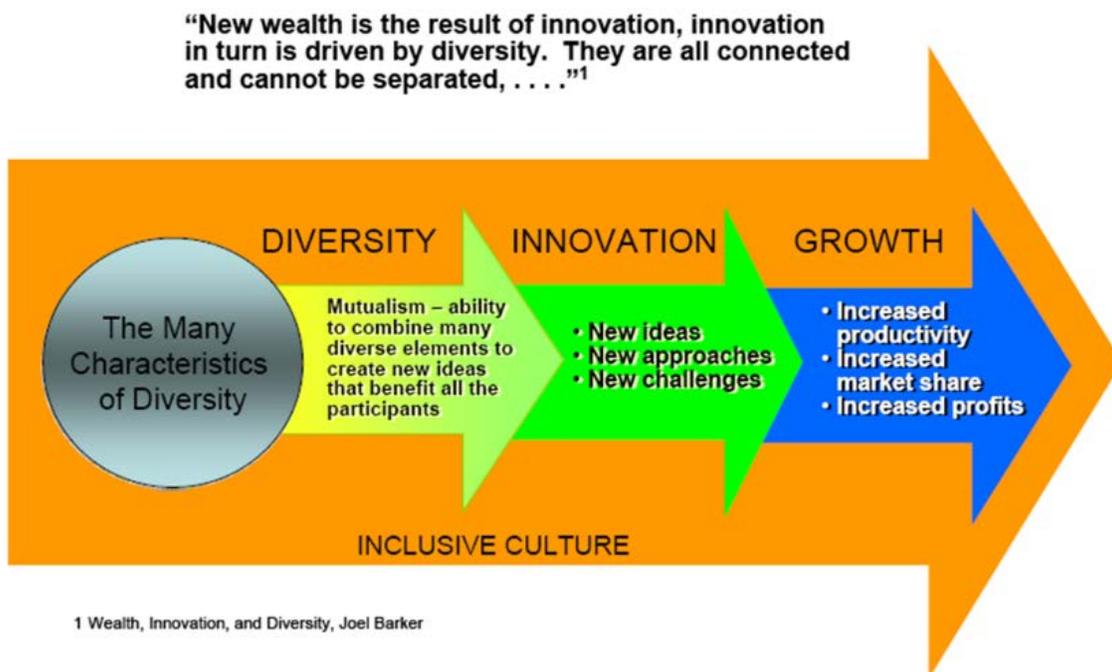


Figure 2 - Diversity Spurs Innovation and Growth [15]

In this video, Barker says the following:

“...Now it is time to begin to connect wealth, innovation, and diversity more clearly. We’ve seen how diversity sets the stage for new ideas and how mutualism manifests those ideas into new combinations. Another way to describe these new ideas is as innovations. And successful innovations add new value to the world. New value creates new wealth. And, according to the Economist magazine, as much as 40 percent of all the increased wealth in the world each year comes from innovation. So ongoing innovation enlarges the economic pie from which the whole world can dine. While there are several kinds of innovations, I have found that one kind in particular adds

the most new value and the most new wealth. I have labeled these “paradigm-shifting” innovations.”

What Barker refers to as “paradigm-shifting” innovations, are more generally discussed as “disruptive technologies.” Disruptive technologies are those technologies that exist in the gaps of pure disciplines, at the intersection of the brilliance of pure disciplines. In this scenario, disruptive technologies require the recognition of the value of other disciplines – one of our diversity characteristics.

From this perspective, organizational growth comes from innovation, innovation comes from ideas, ideas come from people; all people. Hence, the business case for diversity and inclusivity.

Closed Versus Open Systems

Seeing the bigger picture is very similar to the concept of open versus closed systems. In a closed system, the organization or unit only sees within itself, whereas in an open system, the organization takes into consideration the external environment. In the open system, the organization considers the multitude of outside factors that have an influence on the organization, from environmental to competition with other similar organizations within a given industry.

Van Alstyne makes point of in his book, *Freedom and Tenure in the Academy* [5]:

The observation offered in this critique is that the installation, promotion, and “tenuring” of only those satisfying only such criteria as characterize the incumbent faculty’s judgments – of what counts as “relevant” work and what counts in being a “competent” candidate – make the system self-sealing (literally self-proving of its own criteria) [inward looking and potentially discriminatory]. The incumbent faculty was itself selected and advanced by prevailing notions of “relevance” of subject matter interest and prevailing notions of “competence” to do suitable work. Accordingly, succeeding generation of faculty may tend to be quite indistinguishable from the last generation. The structure of the system itself thus makes it more or less impervious to change [5, pg. IX].

Essentially, the individuals who make up the system itself are by definition the very individuals who make the decision on potentially new, tenured faculty. A system that is self-contained is by definition a closed system and by Van Alstyne’s definition, “**...succeeding generation of faculty may tend to be quite indistinguishable from the last generation...**”

It is this aspect of a closed system, e.g. the tenure system, which creates a subconscious element of bias and prejudice. Most literature on this topic suggests it may not even be a conscious consideration, although it may be. It may simply be under the umbrella of “collegiality” or “lack of collegiality”; the easiest manner to discard someone not liked, or, perhaps not like the voting individuals of the tenure committee. As discussed earlier, it may also be an unconscious behavior manifested from prior age cultural indoctrination.

How the Tenure Process Contributes to Coercion, Groupthink and Prejudice

Coercion ...is the practice of forcing another party to act in an involuntary manner (whether through action or inaction) by use of threats or intimidation or some other form of pressure or force, and describes a set of various, different, yet similar types of forceful actions that violate the free will of an individual to induce a desired response. These actions can include, but are not limited to, extortion, blackmail, torture, and threats to induce favors. In law, coercion is codified as a duress crime. Such actions are used as leverage to force the victim to act in a way contrary to their own interests. Coercion may involve the actual infliction of physical pain/injury or psychological harm in order to enhance the credibility of a threat. The threat of further harm may lead to the cooperation or obedience of the person being coerced (Wikipedia).

“...In law, coercion is codified as a duress crime...” – Who would push this issue from within the tenure committee? Certainly not the associate professors who wish to be promoted to full professors someday.

Perhaps the best way to present this section is to provide a real-life example. Assume an assistant professor wishes to go before the departmental tenure committee to ask for a promotion into the rank of associate professor, which comes with the much sought after guaranteed lifetime employment (tenure). The committee, in this scenario, is made up of tenured faculty who are both associate and full professors. These associate and full professors will be the ones voting on whether the assistant professor will be granted associate professor status and therefore receive guaranteed lifetime employment. Keep in mind the above discussion where “...to become tenured, a non-tenured faculty member must serve a life of silence against perceived challenges to faculty and tenure, servitude to those full professors who have direct influence over the non-tenured fate, and collusion against those who pose a challenge to the status quo...”

In the voting, departmental, faculty tenure committee, there is the mix of associate and full professors. The voting associate professors know that someday they will have to go before the full professors to be voted on for promotion into full professor rank. Moving from associate to full professor means an increase in salary and therefore higher annual incremental pay increases for time-in-position.

During the tenure committee discussion on whether an assistant professor should be allowed into the associate professor rank and subsequently given guaranteed lifetime employment, the full professor will make their opinions known, sometimes quite vocally. The full professors will then ask what, if any, opposition to their opinions might exist; this because everyone is allowed to have an opinion and to voice it. What happens, however, is as expected; not one of the associate professors speak out differently than the voices of the full professors. Why, might one ask? The answer is, to do so would potentially harm the associate professor’s chance for full professor when their time comes around. The tenured associate professors know this and the full professors know this; nothing more need be said.

Groupthink is a psychological phenomenon that occurs within a group of people, in which the desire for harmony or conformity in the group results in an incorrect or deviant decision-making outcome. Group members try to minimize conflict and reach a consensus decision without critical evaluation of alternative ideas or viewpoints, and by isolating themselves from outside influences.

Loyalty to the group requires individuals to avoid raising controversial issues or alternative solutions, and there is loss of individual creativity, uniqueness, and independent thinking. Through groupthink, the dysfunctional group dynamics of the "in group" produces an "illusion of invulnerability" (an inflated certainty that the right decision has been made). Thus the "in group" significantly overrates their own abilities in decision-making, and significantly underrates the abilities of their opponents (the "out group").

Antecedent factors such as group cohesiveness, faulty group structure, and situational context (e.g., community panic) play into the likelihood of whether or not groupthink will impact the decision-making process.

Groupthink is a construct of social psychology, but has an extensive reach and influences literature in the fields of communication studies, political science, management, and organizational theory, as well as important aspects of deviant religious cult behavior (Wikipedia).

Whether coercion or groupthink is in play, it is easy to see how a closed system promotes a single-minded outcome. This outcome can directly result in bias and prejudice against those who do not meet the identity of the voting group; and most likely will result in a "no" vote based on "collegiality" or some other subjective determination of qualification.

Micro-inequity refers to the ways in which individuals are "either singled out or overlooked, ignored, or otherwise discounted" based on an unchangeable characteristic such as race or gender. A micro-inequity generally takes the form of a gesture, different kind of language, treatment, or even tone of voice. It is suggested that the perceptions that cause the manifestation of micro-inequities are deeply rooted and unconscious. The cumulative effect of micro-inequities can impair a person's performance in the workplace or classroom, damage self-esteem, and may eventually lead to that person's withdrawal from the situation (Wikipedia).

Prejudice is an irrational and inflexible opinion, formed on the basis of limited and insufficient knowledge. Stereotypes, often give rise to prejudice. Exposure to exaggerated and rigid images of a particular group might lead us to prejudice anyone we identify with that group [6, pg. 71].

...more often than not, talk about prejudice focuses on "them" rather than "us". Many of us can readily sense prejudice in others, but seeing it in ourselves is a challenge. When someone mentions the word prejudice, what comes to mind? Is prejudice something ordinary or extraordinary? Do prejudiced people look and act like you? It

is important to understand that we learn prejudice just like any other subject at school. The lyrics of a song from the Broadway musical South Pacific tell us that the learning process starts very early in life. "...you've got to be taught before it's too late, before you are 6 or 7 or 8, to hate all the people your relatives hate." Research indicates that children as young as 4 or 5 years of age begin to show signs of prejudice. We are more apt to simply believe what we hear. By the time we are adults, prejudging people for whatever reason can be almost an unconscious habit. Additionally, prejudice offers us a quick and easy way to categorize all the new and different people we meet each day. It takes much more time and effort to withhold judgment until we really know someone [6, pg. 72].

The unconscious mind of the individuals in a closed tenure system can and may, very naturally, extend their beliefs, biases, and prejudices against those who are not like them. This can contribute directly to the lack of "different" genders and underrepresented minorities in the tenured ranks of the academy. While it is easy as a voting member to suggest otherwise, the data suggests this may be true. Revisiting Van Alstyne's earlier words, a system that is self-contained is by definition a closed system and

"...succeeding generation of faculty may tend to be quite indistinguishable from the last generation..."

Similar (also great) minds think alike, is how the saying goes. In this scenario, similar minds in a closed system, through microinequities and preconceived biases, and subsequently through coercion and the psychological phenomenon of groupthink, clearly provide the opportunity and apparent realities of discrimination.

Quantitative and Qualitative Elements of Decision Making

Decision making can be discussed in terms of both a quantitative and a qualitative process. The literature on both is nearly insurmountable. Searching Amazon for books about "decision making" returns nearly one quarter of a billion hits.

The intent in this section is not necessarily to discuss tools and techniques for making good decisions, but instead, to lay a foundation for understanding the approaches to making better, more informed decisions.

The quantitative discipline for making better decisions is referred to as *management science*. Management science is an approach to decision making that makes extensive use of quantitative analysis according to authors David R. Anderson⁹, Dennis J. Sweeney, Thomas A. Williams, Jeffrey D. Camm, and R. Kipp Martin, in their book entitled "An Introduction to Management Science: Quantitative Approaches to Decision Making". In addition to *management science* another widely accepted name is *operations research*. Many use these terms interchangeably. The

scientific management revolution of the early 1900s, initiated by Frederick W. Taylor, provided the foundation for management science and operations research.

Problem solving can be defined as the process of identifying a difference between the actual and the desired state of affairs and then taking action to resolve the difference. For problems important enough to justify the time and effort of careful analysis, the problem-solving process involves the following seven steps:

- ❑ Identify and define the problem.
- ❑ Define the set of alternative solutions.
- ❑ Define the criterion or criteria that will be used to evaluate the alternatives.
- ❑ Evaluate the alternatives.
- ❑ Choose an alternative.
- ❑ Implement the selected alternative.
- ❑ Evaluate the results, and determine if a satisfactory solution has been obtained.

Decision making is the term generally associated with the first five steps of the problem-solving process. Thus, the first step of decision making is to identify and define the problem. Decision making ends with the choosing of an alternative, which is the act of making the decision.

Quantitative analysis truly provides a framework to evaluate selected alternatives based on sound rational and methodical thought processes. The management science approach is taught in colleges and universities around the world and usually involves one or more semesters of study.

Know thyself -

On the qualitative side of the decision-making discussion, there is probably nothing more read in recent times than the work by Daniel Goleman [7] entitled *Emotional Intelligence*. Emotional intelligence (EI) has been researched and reported on as the foundation from which solid, thoughtful decisions are made. In Goleman, Boyatzis, and McKee's book, *Primal Leadership*, the authors discuss the four dimensions of emotional intelligence and the six styles of leadership⁸. Within the four dimensions of emotional intelligence (self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, and relationships management), there are eighteen competencies. These competencies are the vehicles of primal leadership. Even the most outstanding leader will not have all competencies. Effective leaders, though, exhibit at least one competency from each of the domains.

The four domains and their competencies, from Goleman's *Emotional Intelligence* [7, pgs. 3-10], are self-awareness, self-management, social awareness and relationship management.

The best, most effective leaders act according to one or more of six distinct approaches to leadership. Four of the styles – visionary, coaching, affiliative, and democratic – creates the kind of resonance that boosts performance. The other two – pacesetting and commanding – should be applied with caution.

The Six Styles of Leadership

Visionary. The visionary leader articulates where a group is going, but not how it gets there, setting people free to innovate, experiment, and take calculated risks. Inspirational leadership is the EI competence that most strongly undergirds the visionary style. Transparency, another EI competency, is also crucial. If a leader's vision is disingenuous, people sense it. The EI competency that matters most to visionary leadership, however, is empathy. The ability to sense what others feel, and understand their perspectives, helps a leader articulate a truly inspirational vision.

Coaching. The coaching style is really the art of the one-on-one. Coaches help people identify their unique strengths and weaknesses, tying those to their personal and career aspirations. Effective coaching exemplifies the EI competency of developing others, letting a leader act as a counselor. It works hand in hand with two other competencies: emotional awareness and empathy.

Affiliative. The affiliative style of leadership represents the collaborative competency in action. An affiliative leader is most concerned with promoting harmony and fostering friendly interactions. When leaders are being affiliative, they focus on the emotional needs of workers, using empathy. Many leaders who use the affiliative approach combine it with the visionary approach. Visionary leaders state a mission, set standards, and let people know whether their work is furthering group goals. Ally that with the caring approach of the affiliative leader and you have a potent combination.

Democratic. A democratic leader builds on a triad of EI abilities: teamwork and collaboration, conflict management, and influence. Democratic leaders are great listeners and true collaborators. They know how to quell conflict and create harmony. Empathy also plays a role. A democratic approach works best when as a leader, you are unsure what direction to take and need ideas from able employees. For example, IBM's Louis Gerstner, was a computer industry outsider when he became CEO of the ailing giant. He relied on seasoned colleagues for advice.

Pacesetting. Pacesetting as a leadership style must be applied sparingly, restricted to settings where it truly works. Common wisdom holds that pacesetting is admirable. The leader holds and exemplifies high standards for performance. He or she is obsessive about doing things better and faster, quickly pinpointing poor performers. Unfortunately, applied excessively, pacesetting can backfire and lead to low morale as workers think they are being pushed too hard or that the leader doesn't trust them to get their job done. The EI foundation of a pacesetter is the drive to achieve through improved performance and the initiative to seize opportunities. But a pacesetter who lacks empathy can easily be blinded to the pain of those who achieve what the leader demands. Pacesetting works best when combined with the passion of the visionary style and the team building of the affiliate style.

Commanding. The command leader demands immediate compliance with orders, but doesn't bother to explain the reasons. If subordinates fail to follow orders, these leaders resort to threats. They also seek tight control and monitoring. Of all the leadership styles, the commanding approach is the least effective. Consider what the style does to an organization's climate. Given that emotional contagion spreads most readily from the top down, an intimidating, cold leader contaminates everyone's mood. Such a leader erodes people's spirits and the pride and satisfaction they take in their work. The commanding style works in limited circumstances, and only when used judiciously. For example, in a genuine emergency, such as an approaching hurricane or a hostile take-over attempt, a take-control style can help everyone through the crisis. An effective execution of the commanding style draws on three EI competencies: influence, achievement, and initiative. In addition, self-awareness, emotional self-control, and empathy are crucial to keep the commanding style from going off track.

The literature on decision making is significant. The number of books on quantitative to qualitative foundational skills is proliferate. The discussion on decision making very naturally progresses into a discussion on leadership traits and/or characteristics themselves. It's hard to not make mention of leadership when talking about decision making. The very essence of leadership, and management for that matter, is premised on characteristics of qualitative descent.

As stated in the beginning of this section, it isn't the intent of this section to go any further with this discussion than to heighten awareness to the basic elements of effective decision making and better understanding ourselves through the readings on emotional intelligence. Understanding the tools, techniques, and methodologies in practice can be further understood once the reader better acquaints himself or herself with the information above.

Reexamining our unconscious mind

Quantitative data exists to suggest we are not proportionally or fairly represented by females and minorities in our tenure-track and tenure ranks within higher education.

Given this, what suggestions might exist to fix this issue? Bargh [1, pg. 57] provides eight rules for when, or when not, to trust your gut (unconscious mind).

Rule #1 – supplement your unconscious gut feeling with a minimal level of conscious reflection.

Rule #2 – when you do not have the time to consciously reflect on the situation, do not take big chances for small gains.

Rule #3 – when you do not have time to adequately reflect through your conscious mind, or do not have the data in hand to make an informed decision, then take your gut feelings seriously; i.e., not casually.

Rule #4 – when you trust your gut (unconscious mind), be careful to recognize what you are asking for. Your goals and objectives may taint your mind's eye.

Rule #5 – when our initial gut reaction to a person of a different race or ethnic group is negative, we should recognize it and stifle it.

Rule #6 – we should not trust our appraisals of others based on their faces alone, or on photographs, before we have had an interaction with them.

Rule #7 – you can trust your gut about other people, but only after you have seen them in action.

Rule #8 – it is perfectly fine for an attraction to be one part of a romantic equation, but not so fine to let it be the only, or even the main, thing.

Protecting what does not have an economic right to exist

There are numerous alternatives put forth as replacement strategies for the current tenure employment practices. The following seem to recur within mainstream literature: unionization [10], contractual term limits [11] or phasing out tenure over time [13].

Twenty-five years of literature suggests there is yet another discussion on an alternative solution to the inequitable representation of females and minorities in the tenure-track and tenure ranks; that being significantly changing or eliminating guaranteed lifetime employment (tenure) all together [12].

What does Apple Computer, Nike, Microsoft, Samsung, Starbucks, and Facebook all have in common? They are just a few of the 50 most innovative companies in the world. What does Comcast, EBay, Mattel, Home Depot, MasterCard, and News Corp all have in common? They are just a few of the top performing United States companies. What does Mars (maker of M&Ms), Google, Boston Consulting Group, Qualcomm, DreamWorks, and Intuit all have in common? They are just a few of the top 100 best companies to work for. Surprisingly enough, none of these companies, the most innovative, top performing, or best companies to work for, offer guaranteed lifetime employment (tenure) – none of them!

Interestingly as well, not one of these companies has a problem recruiting their share of the best and the brightest employees; again without offering guaranteed lifetime employment. Their challenge is not getting their fair share of the best and the brightest; it is finding enough qualified individuals with the right skills to perform the many additional tasks of their organizations. There is a difference. The best and brightest are very few of the many employees our organizations require to hire. In fact, no organization, if they did hire only the best and brightest, could even remotely hope to retain such a high-end staff of people. Truth being, there are levels of players, and all are necessary to run an organization.

Those that argue in public higher education that any given college or university can't recruit top talent without offering guaranteed lifetime employment are oblivious to what's going on in the "real-world" and in other very reputable colleges and universities; Olin College as an example. If you offer something great, then you will get great people who want to be part of it. To suggest that a college or university has to offer guaranteed lifetime employment to someone to entice them to

come screams that the college or university has nothing better to offer. It cannot be argued that there are only a few top talents who can teach mathematics or liberal arts; that has been disproved when discussing the quantitative oversupply of highly educated PhD/doctoral talent who can't find jobs because the more senior among tenured faculty refuse to move on into retirement, even at age 65, 70, 75, 80, and above. Colleges and universities, just like business and industry, do not need to hire one hundred percent of the top talent any more than those companies listed above.

For over twenty years, highly notable authors have offered their perspectives on what should be the next evolution of guaranteed lifetime employment. While many push in an area ripe for change, no one seems naive enough to believe it will happen overnight; nevertheless, literature suggests guaranteed lifetime employment should be reevaluated for many reasons and possibly eliminated¹³. Failure to do so, it is argued, will certainly stymie any hope for transforming public higher education.

Concluding thoughts

The unconscious mind has been formed from birth by our surroundings; people, places, comforts and securities. These same familiarities bring with them a very natural desire to perpetuate the same; the same friendly people, cultural expressions, ethnic, racial and gender comforts. This sameness, has led to common themes - bias, prejudice and discrimination against those who are different; those who do not fit the mold of our secure and comfortable world; those who threaten our status quo, our survival of sameness.

While these many qualitative unconscious behaviors have been proven time and again, there are potential topic areas, once considered, that may mitigate the impact of this desire for sameness. An awareness of the topics of this paper, as listed below, may help to heighten our awareness to what we may unconsciously be considering in our decision making processes.

- ❑ A fundamental understanding of human instincts.
- ❑ An understanding of the definitions and manifestations of coercion, groupthink, bias and discrimination.
- ❑ The synergy and value add of the business case for growth through inclusion.
- ❑ A process approach to improved decision making.
- ❑ A better understanding of ourselves through the domains of emotional intelligence.

While this paper focused on those behavioral characteristics attendant to the flaws in the tenure process, it should be noted in closing, that there are attempts to improve these deficiencies. Many universities are working to heighten awareness to the unconscious behaviors contributing to the discussion topics of this paper. These same universities, and others, have taken positive steps to heighten awareness to diversity and inclusivity through our search and screen committees, and, our promotion and tenure practices. While the data reflects a past and current discrepancy in the

tenure and tenure-tracked ranks of the academy, there are those colleges and universities that have given diversity extra consideration, and in fairness, this should be noted.

In the final analysis [4, pg. 252], we are nearly identical from a biological perspective. As humans, we have one human genome, made up of approximately 21,000 genes, with roughly 100 trillion cells, where each cell contains 23 pairs of chromosomes. Stated another way, for every cell with a nucleus, there are 23 pairs of chromosomes, where the pairs contain the 3.2 billion base pairs of “T,” “A,” “C,” and “G.” Combinations of these base pairs form our roughly 21,000 genes. Genes (DNA) transmit information to our cells through RNA to tell them which proteins to create. Proteins, then, are what keep us functioning. Understanding the makeup of each gene is an enormous first step to disease control.

Interestingly, however, we actually share 51 percent of our genes with yeast, the stuff used to make bread rise. We share 98 percent of our genes with monkeys. And, most impressively, we share 99.9 percent of our entire genome with other human beings. That means the only thing that separates my brown hair from your blond hair, my five-foot-nine-inch stature from your six-foot-tall stature, and my blue eyes from your hazel eyes are 0.1 percent of the entire human genome. That’s one-tenth of one percent that differentiates each of us. In other words, *we are more alike than different* — at least from a chemical composition perspective. The thought of that is so profound that it reverberates and should simultaneously magnify the historical significance of our biases and prejudices, or more precisely, perhaps the insignificance they should have been and why they should not have existed at all.

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