Appendix E: Expert Interviews/Literature Review Takeaways

The following findings emerged from the expert interviews and literature review, which were used to inform the survey questionnaire. The findings are group according to the following categories:

- **Emerging trends** related to the workforce, work, and diversity, equity, inclusion, and discrimination issues;

- **Measurement and scales** used by researchers in survey questionnaires;

- **Organizational behavior** and psychology in the workplace;

- **Demographic characteristics** to include for analyses;

- **Terminology** to use to help reduce instrument bias; and

- The **role of government** in addressing workplace discrimination.

Emerging Trends

The interviews revealed several emerging trends that researchers later considered for the survey questionnaire, which included mega-events, remote work, allyship, intra-group discrimination, and the difference between diversity, equity, and inclusion (and other terminology, including belonging and equality).

1. Focusing on personal experiences or events that a worker may have experienced themselves or witnessed is one aspect of capturing discrimination experiences. Capturing the **impact of mega-events**, high-profile and widely covered events relating to race and ethnicity across the nation, such as the Black Lives Matter and Stop Asian Hate movements, as well as the role that companies and organizations played in speaking out (releasing public statements; asserting new financial, workforce, and other goals for the business) represent what has been top-of-mind and shapes how people feel while at work or are working. Questions asking about whether respondents were affected by these and other mega-events and whether they felt supported and respected around this topic at work were suggested by experts. **While this would entail incorporating several measures into the survey to operationalize those concepts, researchers instead asked workers to share if they felt that their company "actively speaks out" against racial and ethnic discrimination, and whether they want to work for a company that "speaks out" against racial and ethnic discrimination.**

2. Some experts discussed the relevance of **remote work** to experiences of discrimination in the workplace, and how that might be measured in the survey questionnaire. Experts recommended that researchers include questions about how respondents are working in terms of modality — that is, hybrid, remote, or in person — because each mode can harness unique types of discrimination for workers. Moreover, when considering the role that job quality plays in the discussion of inequality, workers have assumed that companies would "do the right thing" in terms of offering flexible work modalities, but some have been largely disappointed. **The survey asks workers to indicate whether**

remote work/telework is an important attribute of their job (in a battery of job attributes, including income and doing meaningful work), if they have access to remote work/telework, and whether they are satisfied with their experience in their current job.

3. Experts discussed the role that **allyship** plays at work. Many experts indicated that surveys ask about company policies, but fail to consider that people do not follow them. Experts suggested that the survey questionnaire include questions around whether company policies "guided" the respondents' behavior. **Because it is unlikely that a general population sample of workers would recognize the term "ally" when thinking about their work, researchers chose not to ask about their experiences, given that the project was not seeking to measure "inclusion" in this survey.**

4. Additionally, the interviews revealed that researchers should examine the role of **intra-group discrimination**, which refers to someone experiencing unfair treatment/discrimination from someone of the same race, but has a different ethnic and/or cultural background. These issues were revealed in the post-pilot individual interviews. Experts suggested that intra-group discrimination tends to be overlooked in surveys on discrimination in the workplace. The research team did ask the question, "At work, would you say most people are the same race and ethnicity as you are, or are most people a different race or ethnicity than you are?" in order to cross-tabulate this answer with the questions about discrimination experiences in the workplace. **Given the size of the sample, the research team chose instead to ask about this topic in the post-main survey individual interviews.**

5. Finally, while there are clear differences between **diversity, equity, and inclusion** (among the aforementioned additional terminology), these concepts are not necessarily understood by workers, especially how workers think about inclusion overall in the workplace. The survey questionnaire must "create a more contextualized picture" around inclusive and non-inclusive work environments, as company cultures often contain aspects of both, which are also different than the reality of diversity, equity, and discrimination in the workplace. **In the survey, workers were given definitions of diversity, equity, and discrimination to review and reflect on throughout the survey. In addition, a survey should attempt to capture how often these aspects occur — that is, whether they are just "one episode" or a regular occurrence. Furthermore, to address these considerations, it is important to recognize that the tone of the survey questions should not necessarily be slanted negatively ("I am treated poorly"), but instead ask workers to triangulate their experiences by using questions that are framed positively ("Where I work, people are treated the same, regardless of their race or ethnicity")** *and* **negatively ("Some people get better treatment because of their race or ethnicity").**

Measurement and Scales

Many of the experts provided recommendations around measurement and the use of scales in the survey questionnaire, which included commonly used measures and scales related to workplace discrimination and job satisfaction, U.S. Census categories for race and ethnicity, incorporating gender versus sex measures, open-ended responses, and how to measure different types of discrimination.

1. **Examples of scales and measures** that project researchers might consider for the survey questionnaire were discussed. Some examples include the Bowling Green Satisfaction Measure, the Workplace Prejudice/Discrimination Inventory, and Harvard's Implicit Racism Score. **Given the limitations associated with using these and other scales in a national population survey, researchers chose to incorporate various items taken from a selection of scales (see methodology section).**

2. The U.S. Census allow respondents to select any category that they **self-identify as in terms of race and ethnicity**. The ability to self-describe gives respondents more flexibility with how they identify, which is important because bi-racial and multi-racial people have different experiences than others. **In the survey, given the sample size, researchers utilized the racial and ethnic sampling data provided by NORC.**

3. **Think beyond traditional ways of measuring gender.** Though experts stated that most companies capture gender as sex (e.g., male/female), many experts recommended including additional categories to capture those outside of the "problematic" binary. **An additional gender identity question was included as part of the survey.**

4. **Open-ended questions** grant greater flexibility and permission to the respondent to describe experiences and opinions, but can often yield unhelpful responses. This is a common dilemma of prioritizing breadth versus depth of responses in terms of the survey questionnaire. **Researchers were careful in incorporating limited, but fortuitously useful open-ended questions.**

5. **Distinguish between the unique situations of witnessing/experiencing and reporting discrimination,** as well as whether workers can describe their perceptions of the "source" of that experience. **For these questions, the project team incorporated measures asking about witnessing, experiencing, and reporting discrimination, as well as the reason for the experience — intentional prejudice, existing workplace structure, or unconscious bias.** Finally, researchers considered the various types of discrimination in the survey. There are substantial differences between witnessed (ambient), perceived, and actual discrimination. While each type of discrimination has a different effect on the actors involved, they can influence how one experiences and/or perceives discrimination over the course of a lifetime, generally.

6. Consider **labeling** of these experiences and how that might affect responses. For example, "unfair treatment" versus "discrimination." **The survey sample was split into half-samples asking about "unfair treatment" or "discrimination" for select questions.**

Organizational Behavior and Psychology

The interviews highlighted various concepts related to organizational behavior and psychology to consider as researchers constructed the survey questionnaire, which included leading and lagging indicators, best practices, ambient discrimination, professional networks, formal and informal mentorship programs, targeted recruitment, work-life support, worker voice, intersectionality, and relationship dynamics.

1. **Leading and lagging indicators** represent "what managers can act on." An example of a leading indicator would be looking at how managers are sourcing candidates and whether they have a diverse slate, whereas an example of a lagging indicator would be hiring outcomes (e.g., diversity of hires, board diversity, etc.).

2. Researchers might collect **examples of best practices in diversity, equity, and inclusion practices** from companies like Bank of America, Alliance, Deutsche Bank, and Pfizer, and ask workers to rate their opinion of how helpful or unhelpful these policies and procedures might be generally, and in their own workplaces.

3. Additionally, experts highlighted the importance of including **ambient discrimination** in the survey questionnaire. Ambient discrimination, according to experts, refers to what people see in addition to what they experience in terms of discrimination. Capturing ambient discrimination in the survey questionnaire addresses the multi-layered aspect of harm — that is, the actual act or experience and what it is like reporting the experience. "Harm is compounded if people do not believe it," this expert said.

4. **The role of professional networks**, which can give researchers a sense of the "structure of people's interconnections," including formal and informal mentorship programs, the latter of which are more likely to build genuine networks to support an employee. Experts indicated the importance of developing mentorship programs based on interest, rather than race, ethnicity, or cultural background — formal and informal programs having different implications. Several experts addressed targeted recruitment as a topic to consider in the survey questionnaire. According to experts, this topic involves looking at historically Black colleges, associations, and so on. In addition, experts discussed work-life support within the context of the survey questionnaire, stating that work-life support looks "very different for women and people of color, which exacerbates gender inequality."

5. **The role of worker voice, intersectionality, and relationship dynamics** emerged as other organizational behavior and psychology concepts for researchers to consider. A handful of experts discussed the importance of addressing worker voice, which captures employee engagement and listening practices, in the survey questionnaire. An example of centering worker voice may be when employees have regular conversations with senior executives. An expert recommended that researchers ask, "Is the worker voice being included and acted upon?" Related to worker voice is the intersectionality of discrimination. Experts emphasized that the survey questionnaire should frame questions about discrimination within the context of identities. For example, researchers could ask respondents whether they experienced discrimination "based on _____ identity." Additionally, many experts discussed how to capture relationships between employees and managers. It was important for researchers to consider, for example, whether the respondent has any direct reports and how many. Experts suggested several questions to include to capture those relationship dynamics.

6. Using the terms "person" or "people" rather than "group" — especially when describing communities of color. Related to this, refraining from using the word "minority." Finally, acknowledging the distinct terms of **race versus ethnicity**, as well as color — how these terms are described by the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, and how people describe themselves.

Demographic Characteristics to Include

The interviews often involved explicit recommendations as to which characteristics to include in the survey questionnaire to cross tabulate and disaggregate survey responses, either in the project team's report or in future research endeavors:

1. **Company size:** the size (and thereby available resources at the company) matters because larger companies will have more success developing and implementing diversity plans in the short term. There is a limitation to how much the respondent might know about the size of the company, versus the size of the team that they work in, or the number of employees at their respective location, which may be one of many. *Included in the survey.*

2. **Union membership:** past or present. *Included in the survey.*

3. Whether the worker is a **supervisor** of others, and if the worker has a supervisor, manager, or other superior to whom they report. *Included in the survey.*

4. **Length of time** the employee has spent at the company or organization. This question was asked in individual interviews only.

Theory and Terminology

There is an important role that terminology plays when asking survey questions about economic mobility, inequality, and discrimination.

1. **Acknowledging instrument bias** in relation to using "discrimination" in the survey questionnaire. Many experts recommended that researchers consider refraining from the use of the word "discrimination" because different people have unique perceptions of what it means, based in their own knowledge and experiences. Some people may label a certain experience as discrimination, for example, whereas another person may not. As a result, there could be potential instrument bias. When asked about how to circumvent instrument bias, an expert recommended that the survey questionnaire focus on "workplace experiences" and refrain from using language such as "discrimination" or "affirmative action." *As previously discussed, researchers chose to use the word "discrimination" as a prompt for select respondents and in select questions.*

2. Related to instrument bias are the **legal implications of feeling marginalized and disrespected**. "Discrimination has legal implications," an expert said. "Feeling marginalized or disrespected in workplace may not be illegal." Based on both findings, the terminology that researchers ultimately use in the survey questionnaire is important, particularly when describing perceived discrimination experiences. and whether (how) that is different from "actual" discrimination experiences.

3. **Testing terminology describing discrimination experiences,** including unfair treatment and discrimination.

The Role of Government

1. It is important to consider **the role of the government, the courts, and the law** in terms of discrimination in the workplace, especially to make clear that implications of the legal definition from perceptions, as the "discourse around diversity and discrimination is very disconnected from law and policy," which thereby affects the outcomes. These positive outcomes around diversity "only start to appear when there is increased public pressure." This expert referred to California labor laws as an example. Namely, there are new laws that regulate schedules and shifts, which prompt companies to change their behavior out of fear that they will be held legally and financially accountable. This often occurs from class-action lawsuits. These lawsuits, according to this expert, have been very effective in getting companies to look into increasing diversity and equity. "Companies that lose class-action lawsuits tend to increase diversity in highly visible areas in order to align with the law," this expert said.