

Wales Academy for Professional Practice and Applied Research

MA Neuro Coaching

**Approaches to Research and Academic Communication
Part 1: Written Assignment**

**Can Neuro Coaching Change Unconscious Bias?
Literature Review**

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Introduction

Beginning in the 1960's with the civil rights movement in the United States, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) activities have become a part of human resource management in North America, Western Europe, and Australasia. In the last decade, the rhetoric around EDI has intensified (Saba et al., 2021, p.765). In recent years, despite a global pandemic, a renewal of energy has occurred for the rights of women and racial minorities. For large companies, the concept of a 'social license to operate' has combined with greater public awareness of the existence of systemic racism and sexism. For the author, based in Western Australia, there is a sense of a new level of intent in large organisations to address equity for employees, and increased government and public expectations regarding this issue. The author has, herself, been engaged to coach leaders to support EDI positive change outcomes.

In parallel, it is important to note that the field of EDI in organisations is one in which there is a long history of activity, with little achievement of outcomes. This belief was articulated as follows in a recent editorial for the international journal, *Equity, Diversity and Inclusion*:

Despite all the research efforts and organizational and policy initiatives to promote diversity, inequalities persist. Workplaces claim to be paying more attention to diversity, yet the results are not forthcoming. Institutional and organizational change processes are often uneven and contested, producing both positive and negative outcomes: reinforcing or reducing inequalities, worsening or improving working conditions, increasing or reducing power asymmetries between actors, or making workplaces more or less inclusive, democratic and participatory. It is clear that, in many ways, institutions and organizations are not effective at addressing the challenges of creating a diverse workforce (Saba et al., 2021, p.765).

Against this background, the author's curiosity about the potential of Neuro Coaching to contribute to change was aroused. Turnbull (2016, p.19) writes as a

practitioner in the field that “when it comes to achieving the goal of an inclusive work environment, there are many interconnected variables and yet, simple solutions may be hidden in plain sight”. Within this system, the author is seeking to understand specific concepts that manifest at an individual level as behaviours, thoughts, and feelings and can be forces for, or against, inclusion at an organisational level. In the area of EDI, the most recent trainings for employees and leaders include raising awareness of unconscious bias. As changes in patterns of behaviour, thoughts and feelings that originate at an unconscious level are the core business of an NLP Coach, this raises a simple question, ‘Can Neuro Coaching change unconscious bias?’. This review aims to discover whether this issue has ever been explored in the literature and what may exist to support research in this area.

Unconscious Bias

Unconscious bias is also referred to as ‘implicit bias’ and ‘automatic bias’ and originates in the field of psychology. It is understood to have a micro-second impact on the judgements and decisions that we make about other human beings. The concept is based in cognition and originates in von Helmholtz’s description of ‘unconscious inference’ in 1878 (Greenwald and Banaji, 2017, p.864). The connection of the concept of implicit bias to the concept of the ‘stereotype’ from social psychology goes back to the original work of Helmholtz who described its role in the act of anticipating what others are thinking. The process described by Helmholtz aligns with concepts of the ‘deep structure’ or ‘first access’ in NLP and the application of a pre-existing ‘rule’, aligns with the role of ‘generalisation’ from general semantics, that is also integrated within NLP. Fundamentally, unconscious bias as a concept is compatible with NLP coaching, which actively subscribes to an understanding of both conscious and unconscious modes of cognition and the notion that meaning below conscious awareness is highly influential as a driver of behaviour.

Unconscious Bias as an EDI Problem

In the EDI practitioner literature, Turnbull (2016, p.21) identifies unconscious bias as one of three 'immutable forces of inclusion', meaning a force that it is 'fixed and cannot be changed'. This is not to say that Turnbull does not believe unconscious bias must be accepted. On her consulting company's website, organisations are encouraged to 'understand and mitigate' the following biases: confirmation bias, pattern recognition bias, and affinity bias (Turnbull, 2022). Gordon and Overbey (2022) list twelve unconscious biases as relevant to EDI in the workplace. For the sake of brevity, the author has discussed only two biases that both sources refer to here: confirmation bias and affinity bias.

In the context of work, confirmation bias is considered a driver of information within the organisation that reinforces existing beliefs and does not actively look outwards for dissimilar opinions, beliefs, or information (Kalina, 2020 cited in Gordon and Overbey, 2022). This understanding aligns with NLP teachings that beliefs distort perception by acting as a 'cognitive filter or lens'. Belief change work in NLP Coaching is conducted on the assumption that it will result in changes in perceptions of the external world, meaning making, feelings and behaviours. In the context of NLP coaching, confirmation bias can possibly be addressed directly through belief changes that make generalisations about specific groups of people and lead to distorted perceptions by decision makers.

Affinity bias is described as occurring "when a person sees another person as someone with whom they feel an affinity" as an outcome of shared experiences or shared social identity. "It creates a level of comfort that may not be present when around others who do not share similar backgrounds or experiences" (Gordon and Overbey, 2022, p.172). Affinity bias particularly aligns with the NLP concept of the unconscious process of 'rapport' through 'matching'. This principle of NLP claims that similarity in either non-verbal or internal processes creates a sense of connection at an unconscious level, with matching at higher logical levels such as

identity, forming even stronger feelings of connection. Affinity bias, seen through this lens, would describe a degree of rapport that is effortless for some with the majority of decision makers, while putting others at a disadvantage. The mental load of 'masking', a problem of inclusion, could be understood in NLP terms as the effort of constantly 'pacing' members of the in-group. From just these preliminary conceptualisations on two of the biases believed to matter in EDI, the author believes that NLP has an existing conceptual framework that aligns with cognitive explanations of bias sufficiently to approach coaching individuals on unconscious bias, including specific 'types' of bias.

Measuring Unconscious Bias

The ability to quantify implicit bias is a result of the Implicit Association Test (IAT) and is considered a key factor in the popularity of unconscious bias as a topic in diversity management in recent years (Noon, 2018, p.199). The IAT is a measurement of unconscious bias that is freely available to the public to receive their individual results, via Project Implicit (Gonsalkorale *et al.*, 2011). The online survey uses response latency to indicate the level of association between two concepts. Banaji and Greenwald (2013, pp.48-52), two researchers involved in the development of the IAT, outline for the layperson the predictive ability of the IAT for discriminatory behaviour, claiming it has been upheld as being twice the average validity correlation of the self-report measures of bias used prior to the IAT. Perhaps the most compelling claim of the IAT is that the automatic White preference expressed on the Race IAT has a moderate correlation with discriminatory judgements and behaviour, even among research participants who espouse egalitarian beliefs (Banaji and Greenwald, 2013, p.47). While later meta-analysis refuted this connection to discriminatory behaviour, it did not dispute its suitability for 'awareness raising' (Carlsson and Agerström, 2016, p.278), which is how it is used in organisations.

Unconscious Bias Training

The IAT has been absorbed into 'Diversity Training' to create a wave of 'Unconscious Bias Training' (UBT) in organisations. The author would like to take a moment to understand what occurs in UBT, using an example from Googleⁱ. The Trainer uses the IAT in the form of a show of hands early in the session, with the explanation that "unless you are convinced that you are part of the problem, you are unlikely to think of yourself as part of the solution" (Google, 2014). In terms of suggestions for behavioural change, the training does offer several behavioural suggestions under the heading of 'holding yourself accountable'. However, it shares a lot more about the organisation's policy and process change initiatives. Importantly, the presenter also states that this is the difference between the impact that UBT training has had internally within Google, and UBT delivered in other companies where 'it goes nowhere' (Google, 2014). This comment is significant in that it raises the question of the organisational cultural and strategic context in which UBT is delivered. The assumption that a knowledge-based presentation as a stand-alone activity could change unconscious bias, is counter to standard expectations of adult learning from presentations. There is quite a body of research proving that this is also the case for UBT (EHRC, 2018).

Popularity and Criticism of Unconscious Bias Training

The acceptance of Unconscious Bias Training as a solution to the problem of inequality in the workplace in the Western European world is illustrated in a 2017 independent review into employment and race, performed for the UK government. Unconscious bias was identified as the main barrier to racial equality in the workplace for employers and organisations (McGregor-Smith, 2017, p.10) in a report that goes on to recommend that the UK government fund free UBT for the public to access and make mandatory UBT for all employees in organisations (p.32). In response to this recommendation, a meta-analysis of research on the effectiveness of UBT was conducted by the UK Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC, 2018). The study concluded that UBT can increase awareness of bias, that there was no evidence that UBT can reduce bias to a

‘neutral’ preference, and insufficient evidence to indicate that UBT is effective for behaviour change (pp.15-18).

To explore criticism of UBT in greater depth, we look to the article by Noon (2018), *‘Pointless Diversity Training: Unconscious Bias, New Racism and Agency’*, in which criticism of UBT is offered from a sociological perspective. With a focus on unconscious white bias and based in the UK, Noon summarises two theories of modern racism, which he describes as ‘new racisms’. The first, is an explicit form and Noon hypothesises that the IAT result of participants will not have any impact on an individual within this ‘type’ of racism, because they would be unperturbed by their IAT result (2018, p.201). The second type of racism is ‘aversive racism’: the theory that some people are proud of being objective and yet, at a deeper level, they hold negative beliefs about racial minorities that originate from their own sociocultural influences. Noon states that it is aversive racists who would potentially benefit the most from UBT as they are more likely to be surprised by their IAT result and be motivated to change. Then, drawing on research by Gaertner and Dovidio, Noon questions if a positive outcome is probable from this. The research that he refers to concluded that one consequence of aversive racists being more self-aware is their withdrawal from other racial groups out of concern for possible offensive behaviour (Noon, 2018, p.202). This is the first of the two major criticisms posed by Noon.

The identification of a risk of UBT to aversive racists that is not useful is problematic as it is based on research that did not utilise UBT or the IAT, but some other mechanism for raising ‘self-awareness’ that is not discussed. It is also worth noting that the research that is pivotal to Noon’s argument was conducted in 1986. It is possible that during the thirty years, the response to ‘withdraw’ may have changed in aversive racists. Finally, the article focusses on a critique based on racism as a form of bias only, when UBT is implemented to address a broad range of biases. While this belief is acceptable, the article is widely cited as a criticism of UBT in general. At the time of writing, the article has been downloaded and

viewed from Sage Journals Collection, 49,272 times, and, according to Google Scholar, cited 247 times.

The next major criticism offered by Noon (2018, p.202) is that UBT has an inadequate treatment of agency and responsibility. That is, UBT allows a blame-free discussion of discrimination. The critique states that because the narrative of implicit bias draws on an explanation that attributes discrimination to an expression of a primeval fear of outsiders, threat to the group, or need for group membership and protection, UBT perpetuates the belief that discrimination is deeply embedded in our unconscious and, therefore, not really our fault. The author would agree with this statement that this narrative to explain unconscious bias could potentially not only legitimate unconscious bias as 'natural', but also as hard to change.

By contrast, it is also possible to talk about unconscious bias as arising from the socialisation of cultural stereotypes from a young age. It is interesting that the 'origin story' of implicit bias emphasises ancient survival mechanisms in our brain and not socialisation. From this perspective, the author believes that Noon's criticism of this psychological explanation as problematic is a useful one. At the same time, the author wonders if it would be possible to discuss both understandings of the origins of unconscious bias. Permission to discuss the role of 'fear' could be useful for a skilled coach seeking to support behavioural change. In the context of NLP Coaching, specifically, fear may be approached as a potential driver of 'secondary gain' to maintain the current state. If 'fear of difference' were to be made 'discussable' as part of coaching, it could be useful as a potential 'lever' for change to clear fear of people that are not familiar to the coachee. It is also worth noting that it is common in organisational settings to discuss stress in terms of a 'fight/flight/freeze' response with its origin in primeval survival mechanisms that are now 'out-dated'. In this context individuals are encouraged to 'over-ride' these over reactions to psychological stressors, rather than simply accept them.

Unconscious Bias Training combined with Coaching

Training is just one of several adult learning methods available to Human Resource Development, coaching being another. It is a common design of learning and development to 'blend' training with coaching when knowledge needs to translate into new behaviours. For this reason, the author is surprised to find only one study of coaching in combination with UBT. The study by Moin and Nieuwerburgh (2021), *'The experience of positive psychology coaching following unconscious bias training: An Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis'* follows four professionals who engaged in positive psychology coaching, following an IAT and UBTⁱⁱ. Researchers state that the methodology used does not provide grounds for generalising about behavioural change, due to the limited sample of four people. The overall outcome was that participants "reported a clear motivation to take positive action and felt confident that they had the ability and resources to do so" (Moin and Nieuwerburgh, 2021, p.85).

My first criticism of this study would be the methodology, which makes no mention of a baseline measurement of self-awareness and motivation of participants pre-intervention to compare post-intervention levels with. As volunteers in the study, it is probable that participants were already aware that they had some unconscious bias. The study also raises a concern that IAT and UBT had created 'worry' that may impede goal setting. Again, without knowing how worried participants were before these experiences, it is difficult to ascertain whether the level of worry had increased. It is possible that this concern also contributed to the desire to participate. My next criticism is on the limited nature of the coaching: a single exercise and then a single coaching session is an extremely limited experience of coaching. Most of the article appears to be focussed on drawing connections between the coachees' experience and the specific Positive Psychology tools and theories utilised, to confirm other research with those tools. It is also of interest to the author that the study did not aspire to change unconscious bias, or even discuss whether change might be possible with Positive Psychology coaching.

A search for literature on the use of coaching for EDI outcomes revealed several articles regarding 'coaching for equity' from the education sector of the United States. In this context coaching occurs with teachers to enable equity outcomes for students. In the case of Blaisdell (2019), *'Beyond discomfort? Equity coaching to disrupt whiteness'*, the analysis applies a 'Critical Race Theory' (CRT) framework to analyse just one element of an intervention that took place over years: a dialogue between colleagues in trainings. The focus is on the 'white narrative of discomfort' that arose from white teachers as a narrative of 'white supremacy', in response to feedback delivered by other teachers who are also People of Colourⁱⁱⁱ.

The author would like to engage critically with the frame of CRT in the context of 'coaching'. As a coach, the author would like to contrast an alternative reading of the White teachers' statements that could arise from a coaching psychology frame. With humanistic psychology assumptions at its core, the idea that feedback about behaviour feels personal, and uncomfortable is not unexpected. Coachees are usually supported to 'move through discomfort' in a process of learning, so discomfort does not stop change. The article does not mention individual coaching and it would appear in this article that the 'coaching' could also be more accurately described as 'facilitation' of a dialogue in which powerful questions are asked about racism and whiteness in a large group (described at one point as 50 people), (Blaisdell, 2019, p.10).

For the author, reading this article raises the question of whether it is possible to have both an awareness of discourses competing over the subjectivity of individuals from a critical theory perspective and still maintain the assumptions of humanistic psychology (such as unconditional positive regard) that are so fundamental to the coach-client relationship and the facilitation of 'courageous conversations' in personal development. This is fundamentally a question of the theoretical frame in which 'coaching for social change' can occur. Another question that reading this article raises, is the level of choice for individuals participating in changes to their own behaviour in the workplace. The author feels

that the critical analysis approach applied here is so focused on a 'system/discourse' level and is so far removed from the 'individual/personal' level, as to dehumanise the process of personal change and learning. The analysis appears to break the 'non-judgemental' agreement that creates the psychological safety that is key to coaching as a reflective practice.

Holding Individual and Organisational Perspectives Simultaneously

Stephens et al. (2020), address the clear polarisation across the literature on bias between sociology/management for systemic/organisational level analysis and psychological personal/individual level analysis. They seek to address this in *'The cycle of workplace bias and how to interrupt it'*. Their primary thesis is that "biased attitudes and behaviour result in biased policies and practice and, in turn, biased policies and practices fuel biased attitudes and behaviour" (p.2)^{iv}. In this 'new conceptualisation' of bias as a mutually reinforcing cycle, Stephens et al. (2020) provide an explanation for why so many EDI efforts do not effectively interrupt workplace bias.

The author's first criticism of this article is that it appears to reflect a gulf between academic literature and management practice. The premise that this statement is a 'new conceptualisation' only makes sense if the reader has no basic knowledge of Change Management or Organisational Development. Within these fields, a change in an organisation is treated as a change within a complex system. The 'McKinsey's 7S Model' is just one example of a management theory about how to create change that integrates both individual and organisational level 'levers' for change. This model has been available to guide management practice since its creation by Peters and Waterman in 1982 (Perkins, 2015, p.262). This idea is also illustrated in the field of practice in the UBT from the 'Rework at Google Guide' already discussed^v. The recommendation that organisations commence with a multilevel assessment (gathering data) and include both individual and organisational level interventions to ensure balance across the two levels attracts

the same criticism from the author. The concept of an integrated EDI strategy is an established practice in large organisations (Anderson 2021), although not necessarily the norm. The author assumes that organisations that are aware of cultural change, or just behavioural change and its challenges, are also aware of the usual practices for supporting success. If these are not used, it would seem to the author, as a consulting practitioner, to reflect how low priority EDI outcomes are to senior decision makers.

Another possibility to explain this 'gap' between practice and research is that co-ordinated interventions and their outcomes for EDI in organisations may be taking place in isolation from academic research in EDI. Practitioner literature by management consultants specialising in EDI speak of sophisticated approaches that do not take training as a stand-alone activity (Anderson 2021, Turnbull 2016).

Stephens et al. (2020) include a useful summary of literature on interventions for bias that do work at both individual and organisational levels (pp.3-7). For empirically supported individual interventions in the psychological literature, they refer to increasing intergroup contact, countering stereotypes, encouraging perspective taking, finding common ground, and leveraging social influence (pp.4-5). In this review of the literature, and in other meta-analysis (EHRC, 2018), coaching is not mentioned for creating changes in bias in the workplace in conjunction with, or instead of, UBT. This gap supports the finding that, at the time of writing, Moin and Nieuwerburgh (2021) is the only study to have experimented directly with coaching as part of an EDI intervention for unconscious bias.

Although it is not mentioned in peer-reviewed work, in academic writing on emerging trends in coaching 'coaching for diversity' is discussed as a current practice in organisations. In *'Diversity in Coaching'*, Filsinger (2021) identifies a 'spectrum' of approaches in the field of practice where coaching is used to support organisational level change, to help 'balance the playing field' for minorities, and

for cultural change (Filsinger, 2021, accessed online 13.10.22). It is noticeable that Filsinger does not mention changing unconscious bias as one of the activities currently taking place. Filsinger speculates that the reliance on a 'business case' for diversity, rather than 'a real commitment to social justice' might be a limitation to coaching for diversity being offered more broadly to minorities (beyond the top level of leaders). This point is an interesting one regarding the framing of 'coaching for diversity' that is worth considering. Diversity Critical Theory is consistent in the criticism of both 'diversity management' as a discourse, and 'the business case for diversity' as apoliticising equity in the workplace (Gotsis and Kortezi, 2015, Loc 707-708). In the context of coaching for diversity, the author believes it is unlikely that an individual would be motivated to change their unconscious beliefs (something very personal) with the hope that their employer would experience greater innovation, higher share prices, or a better brand. In contrast, appealing to a moral imperative to not impede the progress of another person's career feels more personal. With this being the case, organisations discussing equity outcomes as a social and moral responsibility may be a necessary consequence of seeking to motivate individuals to change unconscious bias. In summary, reading Filsinger brings to the author's attention that a conceptual framework to make sense of coaching to change unconscious bias at for the coachee may be lacking.

Western (2012), in the book 'Coaching and Mentoring: a critical text' offers a conceptual map of coaching discourses. He refers to an individual and social axis and writes that at the intersection of the two is where 'how the individual is shaped by the social' would fall. Further, he notes that coaching has not developed a common language for coaching at this axis, focussing on the individual and the social as if they were separate, "when in reality there is no individual self without the social, and no individual change without social change" (Western 2012, p.216). It seems to the author that this statement summarises the problem of where coaching to create a change in unconscious bias falls: an individual level change in the subjective experience that would be a response to rapid changes in social expectations and, simultaneously, contribute to cultural change outcomes in the workplace. Western's application of critical discursive theories to Coaching offers a

potential way to conceptualise coaching to change unconscious bias that is outside of the psychological discourse itself, yet able to recognise this discourse as existing within the practice of coaching.

Critical Diversity Theory

Western (2012) offers a critical theory perspective on coaching and a similar perspective is available within the EDI academy in the form of Critical Diversity Theory (CDT). Gotsis and Kortezi (2015, Loc 892) write that critical diversity approaches are based on the premise of a non-essentialist, non-positivistic view of socio-demographic identities, as socially reproduced categories embedded in context-specific processes. Within this theoretical frame, Villesèche *et al.* (2018, p.55), writes in *'Reclaiming Identity: The Critical Diversity Project'* of a gap in research described as “the active role of the practices through which dominating realities are enacted... [and] how the possibilities of agency could be opened up” (referring to Hock 2016; Zanoni, *et al.* 2017). The notion of ‘agency’ appears to the author to align with the core concept of ‘empowerment’ in the personal development discourse. Should this discourse be politicised to discuss social identity and active roles in competing discourses and structures of power, it seems that it is possible that coaching for diversity could enable greater possibilities for new behaviours that might include ‘noticing’ power structures, embedded bias, receiving and processing feedback on behaviours, and thinking creatively on how to improve processes and policies.

Gannon, (2021), in *'Applying the Lens of Social Movements to Coaching and Mentoring'*, draws on social movement theory to reflect on the maturity of coaching and mentoring and its potential to deliver social change (p5). Using the common focus on change by both coaching and New Social Movement Theory^{vi} (NSMT), Gannon refers to a classification of social movements developed by Aberle in 1966 as a potentially useful model for reflecting on the different types of change possible. This model consists of two intersecting axes: the locus of change, being

individual versus wider society, and the level of change sought, ranging from partial to radical (Gannon 2021, p.13). The author agrees that there is potential for rich exploration by individual coaches on their assumptions about the level of individual change sought, as well as the potential impact of change on society more broadly. Through a model such as this, discussions could move on from either/or criticism of individual vs systemic change to allow individuals to reflect on their own beliefs and assumptions and to be aware of where they are positioned within different approaches to social change.

Based on Gannon's (2021, p.8), analysis that coaching and social movement theory share a focus on challenging (or defending) existing institutions and practices, she suggests a further distinction from NSMT that may be useful for coaching for social change. This time, a distinction in the roles that individuals can play. These roles, originally developed by Gamson in 1975, are 'challengers', 'incumbents', and 'internal governance units'^{vii}. These distinctions appear to align with the social psychology concepts of 'in-group' and 'out-group' membership, while adding greater detail in terms of the relationship to structures of power and their maintenance. Distinctions in roles within a system perspective appear to the author to offer a framework for both coaches and coachees to reflect on 'their part' in a larger system, including existing and new opportunity for agency, as described by Gannon (2021).

This reflection of agency within a larger system seems to be crucial to coaching enabling a change that is fundamentally chosen by the coachee for themselves. It is also interesting to note that movements have been able to work with industries and companies to achieve social change through the development of 'allies' across challenger and incumbent groups (Rojas and King, 2019, cited in Gannon 2021, p.19). The fact that NSMT is based in current activity for social change seems to offer a frame of 'possibility' for social change in which for-profit organisations can play an active role based on moral grounds, rather than 'the business case'. The author agrees with Gannon (2021) that NSMT may provide a

valuable theoretical framework for Coaching to evolve from 'neutrality' into a practice that can be employed for social change.

Next, looking at Chiu (2022), *'Conceptualising Allyship for Coaching to Promote Social Change'*, in which the researcher conducted a Critical Interpretive Synthesis from many other fields that already utilise the concept of allyship, to conceptualise allyship for coaching. Chiu writes of allyship inside of an intention to address a lack of theory in coaching to support coaching for social change. Chiu conceptualises 'levels' of Allyship that capture the complexity of an individual with privileges moving away from a socially acceptable ignorance of power structures and their own role in these, for the benefit of others who have less access to power, visibility, or voice. In NSMT terms already discussed, an Ally would be an 'incumbent' who utilises their position to progress social change for the benefit of 'challengers'. Chiu proposes that coaches with privileged identities work on their own development as allies, and then support others to be allies (p.48). Chui's levels of allyship capture the difference between 'performative allyship' (virtue signalling for social acceptance) and genuine allyship, along with the different challenges for the individual on the journey of allyship 'maturity'. She conceptualises four stages, from 'immaturity', 'adolescence', to 'maturity' and 'in solidarity'.

At its most basic level, the concept of 'ally' could offer incumbents a 'why frame' for the work of changing their unconscious bias. Of particular interest to the author is stage four, 'in solidarity', when the ally recognises that solidarity is "everyone work[ing] together to build momentum toward a shared end goal of large-scale societal change" (Edwards, 2020, quoted in Chui, 2022 p.48). Based on Robert Dilts's Logical Levels of Change, the level above identity, Vision/Purpose/Spirit, is a powerful source of internal resource, able to support change at lower logical levels. According to this theory, if beliefs regarding others exist at the level of 'beliefs and values', or at the Identity level (a.k.a. 'who I am', according to 'who I

am not') then the highest logical level would be the ideal level at which to motivate change.

In Chui (2022, p.48) the 'in solidarity' stage of allyship is where the concept of 'intersectionality', as "overlapping systems of oppression on individuals who have multiple marginalised identities" is also addressed. According to the concept of intersectionality, "each of us simultaneously has advantages and disadvantages" (Curtin et al., 2016, cited in Chui 2022, p.48). It is the author's belief that this concept of an individual having experiences of privilege due to one social identity (e.g. being White), whilst experiencing disadvantage due to another (e.g. being female), could assist coachees' to reflect on both becoming an incumbent ally for others, and the choices available as a challenger to use their own agency. The author believes that Coachees' may approach 'coaching for social change' with two different perspectives: on behalf of self-emancipation and on behalf of the emancipation of others (allyship). For the purposes of a coaching 'frame' for changing unconscious bias, a sense that the coachees' own effort towards social change is reciprocated by others could provide a powerful 'shared vision' of working towards social change. Such a shared vision would allow the allyship that develops from the coaching to avoid falling into the trap of the second stage that Chui (2022, p.47) describes as 'saving minorities'. In summary, Chui's conceptualisation of allyship for coaching appears to have a great deal of richness to contribute to the theoretical frame for working with coachees' on the individual level, for the purposes of creating social change.

In conclusion, the Literature Review reveals a gap in research regarding the ability of coaching to change unconscious bias, despite a massive investment by organisations into raising awareness of unconscious bias and research showing how little return on investment this delivers. The author can speculate on possible reasons for this, including:

- Most of the coaching methodologies in the organisational context do not include routine engagement with the unconscious mind. This approach may make changing unconscious bias seem unattainable, or in the realm of ‘therapy’.
- Neurolinguistic Programming, a methodology that already incorporates cognitive change processes that may be suitable for coaching unconscious bias beyond awareness, is outside of the academy where research in coaching psychology has occurred in the past.
- Coaching itself has been lacking in a theoretical frame to enable ‘coaching for social change’ and the ‘neutral’ stance of coaching may be impeding research on practices that create changes such as these.
- EDI as a practice in most organisations has a long history of being driven by a compliance-only agenda. It is possible that a lack of experimentation in changing unconscious bias may be due to a lack of motivation to create EDI outcomes.

Although these problems may have been barriers in the past, it is possible that this situation has changed in recent times. Even though it is difficult to include in the scope of this Review, the problem of a lack of ‘theoretical framework’ for coaching for social change has shifted recently (Shoukry, 2016; Louis and Fatien Diochon, 2018; Shoukry and Cox, 2018). Shoukry (2016) seeks to provide a foundation for coaching for social change as an emerging field and it is the author’s belief that this creates options for framing the activity within an organisation that genuinely wishes to change unconscious bias. In practice, ‘coaching for diversity’ is also a growing niche service area in organisations where there is a more significant commitment to equity outcomes. Finally, through the MA Neuro Coaching, research utilising Neurolinguistics as a coaching methodology in work-based research can now be conducted.

What remains to be done, in the words of Freire, is “reflection and action directed at the structures to be transformed” (1970, quoted in Shoukry, 2016, p.12) concludes. In this case, the author proposes that NLP Coaching should be used

within a single organisation where there is a 'will' to create EDI outcomes, with volunteers who wish to change their own unconscious bias. In recognition that the 'framing' of change at an individual unconscious level is deeply personal and that organisational benefits (such as the 'business case for diversity') are not motivating for an individual, the author believes the research should also offer a 'frame' that could be compatible with humanistic psychology assumptions, whilst also capable of discussing personal change for social outcomes. The fundamentals of such a 'why frame' at the coachee level for this work could come from the concept of Allyship. In this regard, the author is not only influenced by the work of Chiu (2022), but also by personal experiences of both 'doing' and 'leading' allyship personal development work in her own practical experience within Re-evaluation Counselling in the 1990s and early 2000s. Finally, since not all employees' unconscious bias has equal impact on an organisation as a system, it would be ideal if this coaching could occur with decision-makers in the area of recruitment and talent management. Using the IAP, it would be possible to measure the impact of the coaching over a short period of time at an unconscious level on race and gender bias separately. The intention of the research would be to measure whether it is possible to change unconscious bias through coaching, if multiple unconscious biases are possible to change, and, if so, to what extent.

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Endnotes

ⁱ It is possible to view an entire hour of 'Unconscious Bias @ Work' training presented by Google to members of the Silicon Valley start-up community (Google, 2014). The training is similar to a TED talk in style, in its reference to 'the science' regarding the problem.

ⁱⁱ The study involved four women aged 30 – 59, who had never experienced UBT or the IAT before. It is important to note that the researchers did not seek understanding on anything more than the conscious experience of participants who complete an IAT and UBT, a specific reflection exercise, followed by a single Positive Psychology Coaching session.

ⁱⁱⁱ The narrative that is identified is one in which White teachers complain that the conversations between staff at the Equity Training Session about their behaviour are 'uncomfortable' and 'negative'. This is understood as a White narrative because it acts to shut down the discussions (referred to as courageous conversations) by 'personalising racism'. Within CRT this narrative is then understood as a narrative of 'white supremacy' (meaning it acts to maintain 'whiteness' as the most powerful voice, or dominant norm). The primary complaint of the White teachers who utilise this narrative in the article appears to be that they feel 'blamed' for being racist. The solution to this, as described by Blaisdell, is for the rise of an alternative narrative from the teachers of colour in which their experience of racism is positioned as (also) 'uncomfortable' and that the ability to discuss it with energy is an expression of 'passion'.

^{iv} A simple example is provided of a bias towards men as leaders that is reflected in stereotypically masculine criteria for hiring is embedded in a 'merit-based' recruitment process, should individual level interventions lead to a lessening of bias decision makers would still be faced with a homogenous pool of candidates. Similarly, individuals who do not support EDI efforts to create equity through policies and procedures in the organisation can essentially 'resist' the intention of these interventions (Stephens et al. 2020, p.3).

^v Here the presenter provides a caveat that without broader activities in the organisation, UBT cannot be expected to have a real impact.

^{vi} New Social Movement theory arose in the mid 1980s and 1990s. It was a move away from Marxist roots, highlighting the new identity definers of gender, sexuality, race and age. New Social Movement Theory is based in social constructivist thinking (Gannon 2021, p8-9).

^{vii} An incumbent has disproportionate influence, and their interests are heavily reflected in the dominant organisation (this might be described elsewhere as the position of privilege). A challenger has little influence and "despite being able to identify the injustices they reinforce and opportunities to address them" are "rarely in open mutiny with incumbents" (p18). An 'internal governance unit' looks after conformity to the rules for the functioning and reproduction of the system (Gannon 2021, p18-19).