Racial/Ethnic Discrimination in U.S. Workplaces

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Racial/Ethnic Discrimination in U.S. Workplaces

"Like it or not, to be human is to discriminate in one form or another," (Dipboye & Colella, 2005, p. 456). This striking sentence appears on the last page of the concluding remarks in Dipboye and Colella's impactful book *Discrimination at Work*. Although we (the authors of this chapter) personally do not like this sentence, we acknowledge that human beings do in fact have a tendency to differentiate and discriminate against others. Discrimination is defined as denying others equality of treatment based on their group membership (Allport, 1954). Differentiating individuals and things can be functional in that making quick categorizations and judgments can help people make sense of the world around them as they go about their days (Tversky & Kahneman, 1974). However, this same tendency to make quick categorizations throughout the day also leads to the activation of stereotypes and biases that can lead to discrimination (Gilbert, 1998; Gilbert, Pelham, & Krull, 1988). It is only when people recognize each other's differences that they can discriminate against each other based on those differences. Whether these categorizations and preferences occur intentionally or unintentionally, consciously or subconsciously, there is one thing that matters: they do occur, and perceived discrimination is often the outcome. In 2010, the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC, 2011) received 99,922 discrimination claims, and almost 36,000 of these were race-related. Clearly, many people in United States (U.S.) workplaces do perceive and/or experience racial discrimination (Tomaskovic-Devey, Thomas, & Johnson, 2005). Why do these phenomena occur?

A number of theories from social psychology have been applied to management research and have been particularly influential in explaining the process of discrimination. These theories

include: social categorization theory (Tajfel, 1981; Tajfel & Turner, 1986; Turner, 1985, 1987), social identity theory (Hogg & Abrams, 1988; Tajfel, 1978; Turner, 1982), and similarity-attraction theory (Byrne, 1971). Based on social categorization theory, people categorize themselves and others using readily accessible surface-level characteristics such as sex, race, and age. Social identity theory maintains that people derive their self esteem in part from their identity. Because one's demographic characteristics (i.e., membership in one's racial/ethnic group, one's sex, and one's age, among others) are a large part of one's identity and because people want to have a positive self-image, individuals tend to ascribe more positive characteristics to their own group than they do to other groups (Hogg & Abrams, 1988; Turner, 1982). This leads to the formation of in-groups (or those in the observer's same group) and outgroups (or those in a different group from the observer). These in-group and out-group differentiations in turn often trigger cognitive biases against out-group members as a result of the social categorization process (Pelled, 1997; Riordan, 2000; Riordan & Shore, 1997; Tsui, Egan, & O'Reilly, 1992). This can, consequentially, lead to discrimination (Dovidio & Hebl, 2005).

The logic of categorization and favoring one's in-group is consistent with a third influential theory called similarity-attraction theory (Byrne, 1971). This theory explains that people are more likely to be attracted to others who are similar to themselves than to others who are different from themselves. The reason for this is that similar attitudes, values, and beliefs shared by individuals facilitate interpersonal attraction and liking. Research supports the claim of similarity-attraction theory that similarities in surface-level characteristics including sex and race tend to predict attraction to and positive affiliation with others (Mannix & Neale, 2005).

Taken together, social categorization, social identity, and similarity-attraction theories have been highly influential in explaining why discrimination occurs in U.S. workplaces. Yet

regardless of why discrimination occurs, the fact remains that discrimination is morally wrong (Demuijnck, 2009; Dipboye & Colella, 2005; Jones, 1991) as well as illegal as Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 forbids discrimination in employment (U.S. National Archives, 2010). Furthermore, discrimination can have many negative outcomes on both employees and organizations. For instance, perceived discrimination at work negatively affects employee attitudes such as satisfaction and commitment and leads to higher turnover intent, which is a close indicator of turnover (Cox, 1993; Dipboye & Colella, 2005; Goldman, Slaughter, Schmit, Wiley, & Brooks, 2008; Griffeth, Hom, & Gaertner, 2000; Triana, García, & Colella, 2010). This could impact an organization's bottom line because employee commitment is related to performance (Mathieu & Zajac, 1990) and turnover is expensive (Hillmer, Hillmer, & McRoberts, 2004; Hinkin & Tracey, 2000). For these reasons, it is important to understand discrimination in every sense: its antecedents, its consequences, and what can be done about it in organizations.

Out of all the discrimination claims filed with the EEOC, race discrimination has been the most common complaint, constituting over one third of all claims for the last 19 years in a row (or the 19 years of historical data available on the EEOC website). With this in mind, our purpose in this chapter is threefold. First, we review recent research findings on racial/ethnic discrimination in U.S. workplaces. We searched major research databases (Psychological Abstracts, ProQuest ABI/Inform, and Sociological Abstracts) for empirical articles that measured racial/ethnic discrimination at work in samples of employees. These articles spanned a range of disciplines (e.g., sociology, psychology, business, and medicine, among others). Below we present a review based on the findings from our search, focusing mostly on articles published from 2004 onward. We summarize the major themes found in these articles. In particular, we

present information about the outcomes of perceived racial/ethnic discrimination at the individual and the group level as well as some of the antecedents of discrimination at work.

Second, we discuss these findings as well as some recent research on diversity management that may help shed light on ways to prevent discrimination at work or mitigate its harmful effects.

Finally, we propose a few ideas for future research directions.

Findings from Recent Articles on Racial/Ethnic Discrimination in the U.S.

Perceived Racial/Ethnic Discrimination at the Individual Level

Perceived racial/ethnic discrimination has been shown to be related to various individual outcomes, including physical health, mental health, psychological stress, work-related attitudes, and work-related behaviors.

A review of recent literature is immediately indicative of a negative impact on the physical and mental health of individuals experiencing racial discrimination. Although minority groups are likely to experience discrimination with much greater frequency than the dominant racial group (Benokraitis & Feagin, 1995; Glick & Fiske, 1996; McConahay, 1983; Sidanius & Pratto, 1999), poorer mental health may result in Whites, Blacks, Hispanics, and all races alike experiencing perceptions of being discriminated against. Using longitudinal data on 1,722 African-Americans participating in a study of the evolution of cardiovascular risk factors among young adults, Borrell, Kiefe, Williams, Diez-Roux, and Gordon-Larsen (2006) demonstrated that perceived race discrimination was associated with lower physical and mental health outcomes regardless of differences in participant gender. This relationship persisted even when differences in age, income, and education were controlled and was found to be greater for female participants in comparison with male participants. Likewise, perceived racial discrimination at work was

positively and significantly related to participants' reports of various health conditions (i.e., asthma, high blood pressure, heart failure) among 1,652 Filipino-Americans working in the United States (de Castro, Gee, & Takeuchi, 2008). While perceived discrimination at work was found to be positively correlated with routine and/or everyday experiences of discrimination as well as participants' concerns regarding their job, the effect of work-related discrimination on physical health remained significant once these aspects were controlled.

Fujishiro (2009) also discovered that "racial privilege," or being treated better than other races in the workplace, unexpectedly led to lower self-rated physical and mental health among Whites. This relationship was weaker among Hispanics and non-existent among Blacks. These relationships were tested using data on 22,412 individuals across seven states and one major city that had taken part in an annual telephone survey of the Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System. For their part, Gee and Walsemann (2009) explored the less likely alternative that illness and debilitating health conditions may cause individuals to be more sensitive to incidents of discrimination and therefore more likely to report them upon occurrence. Using a sample of 7,858 individuals that had been a part of the National Longitudinal Study of Youth in 1979, they found that early rather than more recent reports of discrimination due to nationality, race, or knowledge of English positively predicted subsequent health-related work limitations. Additionally, repeated discrimination experiences were more likely than single reports of discrimination to give rise to chronic health conditions that lasted for a period of two years. Importantly, health-related work limitations were not predictive of individuals' reports of racial discrimination, suggesting that the relationship is likely not recursive.

Shrier, Zucker, Mercurio, Landry, Rich, & Shrier (2007) examined the impact of the civil rights and feminist revolutions of the 1960s and 1970s on women in the medical profession by

comparing the frequency of racial discrimination experienced by physician mothers and daughters who experienced these major social movements. Physician mothers, who more frequently perceived being overlooked for opportunities for advancement because of race/ethnicity, were more likely to experience stress at home and at work. Even though they were less likely to experience racial discrimination than their mothers, physician daughters who perceived being treated unfairly due to race/ethnicity were more stressed at work and at home than their counterparts who did not experience discrimination. In a separate study, Fox and Stallworth (2005) linked racial/ethnic bullying to increased emotional strain (i.e., worry, anxiety, and feelings of shame or guilt) and emotional responses (i.e., experience decreased commitment, become intensely emotionally upset) among 262 full-time employees. They also found that racial group moderated the bullying effect such that Blacks experienced greater emotional strain and emotional responses in comparison with Whites.

The consequences of racial/ethnic discrimination also reveal themselves in the form of specific work-related attitudes and behaviors. For example, Roberts, Swanson, & Murphy (2004) studied 1,728 respondents to the General Social Survey and found that job satisfaction decreased among those who experienced discrimination regardless of differences in race/ethnicity.

Similarly, both cohorts of physician mothers and daughters from Shrier et al. (2007) experienced dissatisfaction in their careers as a result of being discriminated against. In a series of studies in which perceived ethnic discrimination was either measured as an individual difference or manipulated in an experimental setting, individual beliefs about the way the world works, or worldview, were found to moderate the influence of discriminatory experiences on self-esteem. Individuals with meritocratic views and beliefs that hard work results in success were likely to experience lower self-esteem following perceptions of prejudice or discrimination against their

ethnic group. On the other hand, since perceptions of discrimination serve to substantiate a rejection of a meritocratic worldview, such individuals rejecting the meritocratic view experienced growth in self-esteem. Using a sample of 529 physicians in the United States, Nunez-Smith et al. (2009) observed that minority physicians were more likely to voluntarily leave their jobs following an experience of discrimination. Furthermore, perceiving racial discrimination increased participants' dissatisfaction with their careers, causing them to contemplate changing careers. Fox and Stallworth (2005) found counterproductive work behaviors such as working slowly and starting arguments with co-workers to be positively associated with incidents of racial/ethnic bullying among African-Americans and Whites alike.

Racial/Ethnic Discrimination/Inequality at the Group Level

In addition to studies that have examined perceived discrimination at the individual level, a number of recent studies have investigated discrimination at the group level. Although a number of these studies do not necessarily measure perceptions of discrimination or disparate treatment, they do imply discrimination through disparate impact as they focus on inequality issues among racial/ethnic groups on outcomes such as managerial attainment (Elliott & Smith, 2004; Maume, 2004) and income (Agesa & Agesa, 2008; Bjerk, 2007; Neal, 2004).

The "glass ceiling," a term that was first coined in a 1986 *Wall Street Journal* article, is an invisible barrier said to exist and result in keeping minorities and women from advancing within the hierarchy of an organization and obtaining prestigious jobs at the organization's apex. Over the years, numerous studies have investigated this concept (see Cotter, Hermsen, Ovadia, & Vanneman, 2001, for a review). Recent research has focused on this phenomenon at all levels of the workforce, not just at the upper managerial levels, and on how it affects individuals over the

course of a lifetime. For instance, Elliot and Smith (2004) studied workplace power inequality in a sample of 3,480 civilian labor force members who participated in the Multi-City Survey of Urban Inequality during 1992-1994. Specifically, these researchers sought to address two research questions: 1) whether minorities (Blacks and Hispanics) and women have an increasingly difficult time relative to White men attaining jobs with greater organizational power, and 2) what mechanisms lead to this inequality. Related to the first question, findings indicated that each major race-sex group experienced increasing inequality in workplace power relative to white men. However, after accounting for human capital factors (i.e., education, work experience, tenure) and the employment context (i.e., size of establishment, public/private sector, occupation, hours worked per week), only Black women continued to exhibit this pattern. This finding suggests that Black women experience this form of inequality to a greater extent as a result of direct discrimination, whereas the other groups are more likely to experience inequality through other, indirect processes affecting human capital attainment (e.g., access to education).

Elliot and Smith's finding is consistent with research on the "double jeopardy" phenomenon (Barnum, Liden, & Ditomaso, 1995; Beal, 1970; Berdahl & Moore, 2006; Bond & Perry, 1970; Chow, 1987; Epstein, 1973; Garcia, 1989; Jackson, 1973; King, 1975; Lorber, 1998; Reid, 1984), which predicts that minority women will be at a double disadvantage on account of both their sex and their race. For example, an African-American woman in the U.S. may have higher chances of experiencing discrimination because she may be discriminated against on the basis of her sex, her race, or both forms of minority status. Research findings on double jeopardy in workplace settings are largely supportive of the phenomenon, with studies showing that Hispanic and Black women earn the lowest wages (Browne, 1999), have the least workplace authority (Browne, Hewitt, Tigges, & Green, 2001; Maume, 1999), and are the most highly

segregated into undesirable positions (Aldridge, 1999; Spalter-Roth & Deitch, 1999. While Barnum et al. (1995) did not find a multiplicative effect of race and sex in their study, which investigated pay as the outcome variable, Berdahl and Moore (2006) did find that racial minorities experienced more racial harassment than Whites and that women experienced more sexual harassment than men. Furthermore, racial minority women experienced higher levels of harassment overall than did majority women, majority men, and minority men (Berdahl & Moore, 2006).

To address their second question, Elliot and Smith investigated two factors that potentially increase/decrease workplace power inequality for these groups: network assistance and ascriptively similar supervisor (i.e., a supervisor of same sex and race). Results indicated that network assistance is critical to Black women in accessing jobs with greater power. The odds of advancing from worker (i.e., employee with no subordinates) to supervisor (i.e., employee who supervises others) and supervisor to manager (i.e., employee who supervises others, sets wages, and has discretion to hire/fire) increase 39% and 500%, respectively, when black women receive network assistance. This is consistent with prior research stating that women and minorities advance more when they have broader networks (Ibarra, 1992, 1993). Finally, Elliot and Smith (2004) found that individuals in high power positions tended to fill positions with ascriptively similar others. Because White men hold a greater percentage of positions of power, they have a greater opportunity to exercise this practice, in turn sustaining workplace power inequality for women and minorities.

In another related work, Maume (2004) uniquely took a longitudinal approach to studying inequality in managerial attainment. Specifically, Maume studied workers' managerial status over a 12-year period in a sample of prime-age workers from the Panel Study of Income

Dynamics (PSID). Evidence of disparate treatment toward women and minorities was found as these groups' predicted probabilities of holding a managerial job were less than those of White males. Interestingly, Maume also found that inequality in managerial attainment was more severe over the course of one's life.

One potential consequence of the glass ceiling is differences in income across minority groups. Yet, wage inequality has also been attributed to other factors. For instance, Bjerk (2006) found that Black male workers earned on average 28% less than their White male counterparts in 1990-1992. However, this racial wage gap was accounted for by differences in academic skill and occupation (white- versus blue-collar jobs). For white-collar jobs, the wage gap was largely explained by academic skill. However, for blue-collar jobs, academic skill only accounted for about half of the wage gap, suggesting that discrimination is potentially more prevalent in blue-collar jobs. Neal (2004) contested the traditional belief that the black-white wage gap was larger among men than women. Arguing that past studies ignored the potential effects of selection bias, Neal factored in the relationships between family structures, income sources, and market participation behavior and found that the median black-white gap in potential wages among women in 1990 was in fact 60% larger than that reported in past studies and about two-thirds larger than that for men.

Researchers have also begun to tackle new questions in this area. One particular topic that is catching research attention is the impact of racial/ethnic discrimination charges on workplace segregation. Recently, Hirsh (2009) investigated the effects of racial discrimination charges formally filed with the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) on changes in establishment-level occupational segregation by race. Examining three overarching factors leading to racial desegregation (i.e., direct EEO enforcement, industry environment, and

organizational characteristics), Hirsh, interestingly, found that EEO enforcement resulted in little change in occupational segregation within organizations. By contrast, organizational factors (e.g., organization size, greater female representation in managerial positions, occupational heterogeneity, percentage female, and percentage minority) were predictive of the degree to which organizations desegregated. Furthermore, in relation to the industry environment specifically, results indicated that greater media coverage of racial discrimination within the industry led to greater occupational desegregation. Next, using the supermarket industry as a context, Skaggs (2009) studied African-American managerial representation following a lawsuit filing. Importantly, she found that in the year following a lawsuit, supermarkets increased the representation of African-Americans in managerial positions. Skaggs also investigated the legal and political environment surrounding the supermarkets. Specifically, she found that in supermarkets located in federal court districts with a diverse set of judges (based on race and sex), African-American representation in managerial positions increased. Skaggs argued that a more diverse legal environment would promote greater workplace diversity. Finally, another topic of interest is the effect of workplace segregation on employee outcomes. In a study of workplace racial composition, Sørenson (2004) found that when the race of the employee is more similar to that of the workplace, the employee is less likely to leave. Although, this study did not investigate racial discrimination directly, the findings suggest that having a homogenous workforce of one race potentially leads to greater difficulty in retaining minorities of another.

Antecedents of Perceived/Actual Racial/Ethnic Discrimination

In addition to the consequences of racial/ethnic discrimination and inequality, research has also tried to better understand the underlying antecedents of perceived racial/ethnic

discrimination. Recently, Avery, McKay, and Wilson (2008) examined how demographic similarity in the workplace and community affects employee perceptions of discrimination.

Using a sample of 763 White, Black, and Hispanic employees in the United States, Avery et al. found that, overall, Blacks and Hispanics had higher perceptions of discrimination than Whites. Furthermore, perceived racial/ethnic discrimination was lower for Black and White employees with a supervisor of the same race/ethnicity. However, this effect was moderated by employee-community racial similarity: when employees were racially similar to those in their community, Black employees with Black supervisors were less likely than those with White supervisors to perceive discrimination. Conversely, when employees were racially dissimilar to those in their community, White employees with White supervisors were less likely than those with Black supervisors to perceive discrimination. Overall, the implication of this study is that the context (i.e., workplace and community racial composition) surrounding employees influences their perceptions of racial/ethnic discrimination.

In another study of potential antecedents of racial/ethnic discrimination, Harrison and Thomas (2009) examined preferential treatment among Blacks. Specifically, they studied the influence of Black applicants' skin tone on discrimination in job selection. Although the study did not measure perceptions of racial/ethnic discrimination directly, Harrison and Thomas did find that light-skinned applicants received higher selection ratings and had a higher likelihood of being hired than dark-skinned applicants. Interestingly, this study also found that employee qualifications moderated the effect of skin tone: dark-skinned Blacks with more qualifications were less likely to be hired compared to light-skinned Blacks with fewer qualifications, a finding that suggests that discrimination is potentially more severe for dark-skinned Blacks.

Antecedents predicting group level outcomes have also received attention. For instance, in a study of 2,163 U.S. organizations, Hirsh and Kornrich (2008) investigated the organizational context and institutional environment as potential contributors to workers' discrimination charges filed with the EEOC. Arguing that organizational and institutional environments affect workers' perceptions of discrimination and willingness to file charges, Hirsh and Kornrich proposed that the context surrounding workers ultimately influences the incidence rate of race discrimination charges filed. Specifically, they considered a number of workplace contextual variables (e.g., formalization, level of supervisory control, occupational segregation, and percentage of minority managers) along with several institutional environment variables (e.g., federal contractor, industry, subsidiary/parent, and client interaction). They found that workplace characteristics do in fact explain variation in the incidence of workers' charges of race discrimination. However, results suggested that the external institutional environment mattered only for predicting the number of claims that the EEOC actually verified as discrimination. Finally, in a study of 142 banks, Pugh, Dietz, Brief, and Wiley (2008) investigated the effects of workforce and community racial composition on banks' diversity climate. Although workforce and community racial composition were not significant predictors of banks' diversity climate, a significant interaction was found. When community racial composition was low, workforce racial composition had a strong and positive effect on banks' diversity climate. This finding suggests that organizations in communities with few minorities will be perceived more favorably in terms of their diversity climate when the workplace is more diverse.

Discussion

The preceding review of recent findings on racial/ethnic discrimination in U.S. organizations suggests that perceived workplace discrimination remains a problem today. Given these findings, we next discuss two questions: What can organizations do about it? and Where should research on discrimination at work go next to help us solve this problem?

Suggestions for Reducing the Occurrence and/or Impact of Workplace Racial/Ethnic

Discrimination

Regarding what organizations can do to prevent discrimination and attenuate the harmful outcomes of perceived discrimination, first and foremost, organizations should adopt a zerotolerance policy toward discrimination. Racial discrimination is illegal (Title VII of the Civil Rights Act), and organizations need to make it clear to their employees that discrimination will not be tolerated. One option would be for organizations to use diversity training programs to educate employees and remind them that biases and prejudices can have effects in organizations. According to a diversity management benchmarking report from Catalyst (2006), commonly used diversity management practices target race, sex, sexual orientation, disability, age, nationality, and religion as well as other forms of diversity. In particular, programs that target race include techniques such as stereotype training and bias avoidance as well as honoring important holidays for various ethnic groups (Catalyst, 2006). Such efforts may help employees become aware of biases, prevent such biases from affecting their daily actions at work, and send a message of inclusion indicating that all racial/ethnic groups are valued in the organization. Used in conjunction with a zero-tolerance policy toward workplace discrimination, these tactics could help prevent discrimination from happening.

However, beyond simply implementing diversity management practices to avoid legal consequences of perceived discrimination, organizations should ideally show that they value diversity and have a pro-diversity climate. Several recent studies on diversity management have shown that there can be benefits to diversity management programs. For example, McKay, Avery, Tonidandel, Morris, Hernandez, and Hebl (2007) found that a pro-diversity work climate was positively and significantly related to affective commitment. This relationship was true for white males, white females, African-Americans, and Hispanics. McKay et al. (2007) also found that a pro-diversity climate was negatively related to turnover intent for each of these four demographic groups. This suggests that a pro-diversity orientation in an organization can help employees of different demographic backgrounds (i.e., whether they are majority or minority members) develop a strong attachment to the organization. While research has shown that minorities (i.e., women and racial/ethnic minorities) do tend to care the most about and have the most positive attitudes toward diversity management programs (Mor Barak, Cherin, & Berkman, 1998; Mor Barak & Levin, 2002), McKay et al.'s (2007) research suggests that even members of the majority group can derive attitudinal benefits from a pro-diversity climate.

Other research combining perceived workplace racial discrimination with diversity management efforts has also suggested that organizational efforts to support diversity can sometimes help reduce the harmful effects of perceived discrimination. For example, Triana and García (2009) studied the relationships between perceived workplace racial discrimination and procedural justice, or the fairness of procedures used by the organization to arrive at the employees' work outcomes (Colquitt, 2001; Thibaut & Walker, 1975). In particular, Triana and García examined how the relationship between perceived racial discrimination and procedural justice could be modified by organizational efforts to support diversity (defined as "employee").

perceptions that the practices of the organization indicate that valuing and promoting diversity is a priority in the organization" (Triana & García, 2009, p. 942). This definition was based on work by other scholars on organizational diversity climates, a similar but broader topic (Cox, 1993; Gelfand, Nishii, Raver, & Schneider, 2005; Kossek & Zonia, 1993; Mor Barak, Cherin, & Berkman, 1998; Nishii & Raver, 2003). As expected, findings showed that perceived racial discrimination was negatively related to procedural justice. However, this relationship became weaker when organizational efforts to support diversity were high.

This finding is consistent with Thibaut and Walker's (1975) seminal work on procedural justice, which found that even when people did not receive ideal outcomes from court cases, they were still relatively satisfied and thought that the process was fair as long as they believed that the authority figures reached the decision in an unbiased and impartial manner. Similarly, the findings from Triana and García (2009) suggest that when participants believe that the organization is making efforts to support diversity, they are less influenced by individual acts of discrimination at work and more likely to perceive that their treatment by the organization as a whole has been fair. This has important practical implications for organizations because it suggests that negative feelings that result from a discriminatory encounter at work may not generalize to harm employee feelings about the organization as a whole provided that the organization's leadership and policies are supportive of diversity. Therefore, maintaining fairness and procedural justice is something that organizations may do, in addition to diversity training, to prevent workplace discrimination from happening.

Another study that examined organizational efforts to support diversity was conducted by Triana et al. (2010). This study investigated whether the harmful effects of perceived workplace racial discrimination on affective commitment could be weakened by perceived organizational

efforts to support diversity. As expected, the data showed that perceived workplace racial discrimination was negatively related to affective commitment. However, in two out of three substudies (a sample of mostly Whites and a sample of mostly Hispanics), the negative effect became weaker when employees perceived high organizational efforts to support diversity. This implies that if the organization values and supports diversity, employees who have experienced acts of racial discrimination from certain individuals at work may not let those negative feelings generalize to the organization as a whole provided that their organization values and supports diversity.

However, it is important to point out that in the third sample collected by Triana et al. (2010), a sample of African-Americans, the negative relationship between perceived workplace racial discrimination and affective commitment actually became stronger when organizational efforts to support diversity were high. It is interesting to note that African-Americans tend to have the strongest levels of racial identity (Phinney, 1992), experience the highest levels of discrimination (Utsey, Chae, Brown, & Kelly, 2002), and file the most race discrimination claims with the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission each year (Goldman, Gutek, Stein, & Lewis, 2006). It is possible that organizational efforts to support diversity may be better able to offset lower levels of discrimination compared to higher levels, particularly if employees who experience higher levels of perceived discrimination see diversity management efforts as hypocritical. For example, research by Chrobot-Mason (2003) found that minority employees were cynical toward organizations when they felt that the organization was insincere in its diversity support and had not fulfilled its diversity promises.

Taken together, these findings reiterate the view that any diversity management program should be implemented together with a zero-tolerance policy for workplace discrimination. This

is consistent with research showing that diversity management practices are most effective when they have top management support and when managers are held accountable for diversity (e.g., Catalyst, 2006; Cox, 1993; Kalev, Dobbin, & Kelly, 2006; Kossek & Zonia, 1993).

Suggestions for Future Research

Future research on workplace discrimination should aim to explore the circumstances in which diversity management efforts can be most effective. For instance, in what way might a company's attitudes toward diversity affect the successful implementation of a diversity management program? If a company appears to be implementing diversity management practices not because the leadership cares about diversity but rather simply to avoid being sued, employees will likely think that the effort is hypocritical and that it may be ineffective or even make things worse. Conversely, if the organization really seems to have a positive attitude toward diversity from the top leadership down to lower levels, the diversity management effort will probably be a success. This phenomenon could help explain why some findings show that diversity management initiatives improve employee attitudes while others do not (e.g., McKay et al, 2007; Triana & Garcia, 2009; Triana et al., 2010).

Another avenue for future research is to investigate how individuals' traits are related to their perceptions of and responses to racial/ethnic discrimination at work. For example, social dominance orientation is a trait characterized by support for the "domination of 'inferior' groups by 'superior' groups" (Sidanius & Pratto, 1999, p. 48). Having a high level of social dominance orientation means that one will have hierarchy enhancing beliefs that endorse the current social order, in which some groups enjoy power over others (e.g., males over females, Whites over racial minorities). Research shows that individuals high on social dominance orientation have a

tendency to discriminate against qualified women and minorities in selection situations and that this discrimination can be attenuated by directives from leaders instructing them to focus on job qualifications during selection (Umphress, Simmons, Boswell, & Triana, 2008). This suggests that one way to reduce instances of racial discrimination at work is to give clear directives to keep employees focused on job qualifications instead of irrelevant factors (such as the candidate's demographics), which they may focus on due as a result of social categorization processes. Future research may investigate whether the same directives may help reduce discriminatory tendencies among individuals with other traits, such as modern racism (McConahay, Hardee, & Batts, 1981), or in other types of employment settings, as in awarding promotions or making job assignments or annual review decisions.

Finally, another potential avenue for future research is to investigate how demographic changes in the racial/ethnic makeup of the U.S. workforce will change the way we think about race discrimination at work. For instance, the growing number of multi-ethnic people in the U.S. may change the nature of employees' future racial identities and perceptions of discrimination.

U.S. Census Bureau data for 2009 report that over 5.3 million people in the U.S. are of two or more races. As more multi-ethnic employees enter the workforce, how will this change the meaning of discrimination at work? Will multi-ethnic employees be less readily accepted by other racial groups at work because they do not fully fit into either group? Will they be more readily accepted and valued if they provide a means of bridging differences between employees from different groups? Furthermore, while Whites are still the largest ethnic group in the U.S. (U.S. Census Bureau, 2009), Hispanics are now the largest minority group in the U.S. and are expected to make up over 24% of the population by 2050 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2007). In what ways will the influx of Hispanics change the ways that we think about diversity at work? Will

workers be ostracized for speaking multiple languages at work? Will multilingual employees be seen as an asset since they can better communicate with diverse customers? Will Spanish phrases make up a new vocabulary of catch phrases at work the way that texting acronyms (LOL for "laughing out loud," for example) are spoken today? Future research may uncover the answers to all of these questions.

Conclusion

The U.S. is a very diverse country in terms of its racial/ethnic makeup. The country has been referred to as a Melting Pot because of the great demographic diversity within its borders. One of its most famous landmarks, the Statue of Liberty, stands on Ellis Island in New York Harbor. A famous poem by Emma Lazarus inscribed on the pedestal on which Lady Liberty stands reads: "Give me your tired, your poor, your huddled masses yearning to breathe free ..."

There is no doubt that the great diversity found in the U.S. also comes with great responsibility. Diversity is a fact of life and one that must be managed (Cox, 1993). Managing diversity well can be facilitated by approaching diversity as an opportunity, not as a problem (Cox & Blake, 1991). Workplace racial/ethnic discrimination is a persistent problem (Dipboye & Colella, 2005), probably as a result of the human tendency to categorize the world around us. However, the more we can study racial/ethnic discrimination and learn about its antecedents, its consequences, and the factors that can help mitigate its negative outcomes, the better able we will be to manage diversity in U.S. organizations.

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