Chapter 3

Social Psychological Evidence on Race and Racism

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The issue of diversity is central to the philosophy and mission of higher education. The purpose of higher education is not only to further the achievement and advancement of individuals within society, but also to further the economic and cultural growth of society as well. Institutions of higher education are uniquely situated to promote the values, norms, and ideals of society. American society was founded on principles of social equality, and today there is widespread support for racial equality and integration. It is through the process of racial socialization that these American ideals of racial equality and integration are transmitted. Institutions of higher education are powerful agents for racial socialization. In a diverse society, institutions of higher education have the opportunity to educate diverse groups of students and to incorporate the diversity of perspectives offered by these students into the curriculum. They also have the opportunity to create positive intergroup climates within which diverse groups of students can interact, learn from one another, and develop positive attitudes toward one another. The benefits of diversity impact not only the individuals on college campuses, but the society within which we live as well. If President Clinton is successful in his efforts to extend educational opportunity to all Americans and make at least two years of college as universal as a high school diploma is now, the role of higher education as a positive agent for improving racial dynamics both within and beyond the university environment will become even more important.

As institutions of higher education have become increasingly diverse, social scientists have become more intimately familiar with the issue of diversity and more personally invested in its resolution. Furthermore, as government officials and policy makers begin to rely more heavily on the knowledge base generated by social scientists, social scientists become ideally positioned to address this pressing social issue. Social scientists need to focus on the diversity issue in the 1990s with as much vigor as they addressed the issue of school desegregation in the Social Science Statement that was appended to the plaintiffs' briefs in the 1954 *Brown vs. Board of Education* case. In doing so, social scientists must promote the need for diversity in higher education by linking it to real world problems beyond the university environment.

Racial dynamics on college campuses are influenced by the same racial

stereotypes and group-based power differentials that operate in the real world. A variety of theoretical perspectives have been developed to understand the complexity of race relations in the U.S. Research on racial dynamics spans across many social science disciplines, including anthropology, education, sociology, and organizational and social psychology. Each of these fields offers a unique perspective on the dynamics of race relations. This chapter will use the social psychological research literature as a prime example of how the issue of diversity in higher education can be understood using the lens of social science.

Two critical questions in the policy debate regarding diversity in higher education are whether race matters in everyday life and whether race should matter in institutional policies. The first is an empirical question; the second, a prescriptive judgment. One cannot decide whether race should matter in policy decisions without first recognizing the many ways in which race matters in society. Social psychological research is rich with examples of how race adversely affects social perceptions, attitudes, and behaviors. This chapter will provide an overview of this research literature and demonstrate its relevance to the issue of diversity in higher education.

Racial Attitudes

As we look back over the years of the post-civil rights era, we see a positive trend in the self-reported racial attitudes of white Americans, especially in their attitudes toward African Americans. The demise of legalized racial segregation and discrimination was followed by a sharp decline in blatant, "old-fashioned" racism which centered on the notion of biologically-based black racial inferiority (McConahay, 1986). Today, national surveys show that white Americans overwhelmingly endorse the principles of racial equality and integration (Schuman, Steeh, & Bobo, 1985). This positive trend is also reflected in surveys of white college students, which show a steady decline in negative characterizations of blacks over the last 60 years (Dovidio & Gaertner, 1996). However, many researchers argue that while the fundamental norms with regard to race have changed, underlying negative attitudes toward African Americans and other minority groups persist, albeit in a new guise. While most whites no longer blatantly oppose the ideals of racial equality and integration, many show subtle and often unconscious biases toward members of minority ethnic groups. These newer forms of unintentional racial biases are exhibited by many whites who, on a conscious level, endorse egalitarian values and believe themselves to be nonprejudiced. These biases persist inconspicuously but can have grave effects on social perceptions, attitudes, and behaviors. Three contemporary approaches to racial attitudes highlight different forms of racial bias: aversive, symbolic, and modern.

Aversive racial attitudes

Gaertner and Dovidio (1986) propose that many people harbor negative feelings about blacks (or members of other minority groups) on an unconscious level. These biased judgments against blacks result from childhood socialization of the dominant racial biases in society and from the typical way in which individuals categorize people into social groups rather than expend limited cognitive resources to judge each person individually. Aversive racism refers to the unintentional expression of these anti-black feelings by people who sincerely endorse, on a conscious level, egalitarian values and principles. Rather than reflecting bigotry or hatred, the anti-black feelings held by aversive racists reflect fear and discomfort; their discriminatory behavior toward blacks is characterized more by avoidance than by intentional hostility.

Unlike more blatant prejudice which is expressed directly against people because

of their race, aversive racism is more likely to be expressed when it can be justified on the basis of some factor other than race; in this way aversive racists can maintain their nonprejudiced self-image. For example, in a study on personnel selection (Dovidio, 1995; reported in Dovidio & Gaertner, 1996), black and white job applicants were treated the same when the information provided about them was either uniformly positive or uniformly negative. However, white applicants were favored over black applicants when a combination of positive and negative information was provided about the candidates. That is, aversive racism was exhibited when the white evaluators were given more ambiguous information about the applicants; in this case, the evaluators were able to attribute their unfavorable evaluation of black applicants to the ambiguous information they received about the candidates rather than to their race.

Aversive racism has also been shown to influence ostensibly "colorblind" college admissions decisions. In a related study, white participants evaluated white and black applicants for university admission (Kline & Dovidio, 1982; reported in Dovidio & Gaertner, 1996). The credentials of the applicants were systematically manipulated to produce poorly, moderately, or highly qualified applicants. Discrimination against the black applicant was greatest when the qualifications were high: While applicants of both races were evaluated very positively under these conditions, the white applicant was judged even more favorably than the black applicant. Bias was even more pronounced when evaluations were made on items less directly related to the information provided in the application. That is, when evaluators took less relevant information into account in their admissions decisions, they were even more biased against blacks. Therefore, even when equal access to employment or educational opportunities is provided in principle, unintentional racial biases may undermine equal outcomes in practice.

Two other studies have demonstrated the impact of aversive racism on whites' opposition to affirmative action (Dovidio, Gaertner, & Murrell, 1994; Murrell et al., 1994). Consistent with the aversive racism framework, whites were more opposed to affirmative action for blacks than for other groups (Native Americans and handicapped persons in the Dovidio et al. study and elderly and handicapped persons in the Murrell et al. study), particularly when their opposition could be justified on the basis of unfair procedures (a factor other than race). If affirmative action opposition was truly motivated by non-racial principles of fairness rather than by aversive racial attitudes, then whites would equally oppose unfair policies designed to help all groups; however, they showed greater opposition to unfair policies designed to help blacks. Racial attitudes may therefore influence attitudes toward affirmative action. At the same time, however, it is important to point out that these findings do not imply that <u>all</u> opposition to affirmative action is motivated by racial attitudes. Other factors need to be considered. Before moving on to a discussion of other possible influences on attitudes toward affirmative action, two additional forms of contemporary racial attitudes will be introduced.

Symbolic and modern racial attitudes

Symbolic racism was defined by Sears (1988, p. 56) as "a blend of anti-Black affect and the kind of traditional American moral values embodied in the Protestant Ethic." According to the symbolic racism perspective, many whites acquire both traditional American values and negative feelings about blacks through early childhood socialization. Symbolic racists express anti-black feelings in adulthood through beliefs that blacks are violating the traditional values that they hold dear. The perceived failure of blacks to uphold traditional American values like individualism, hard work, and self-reliance provides symbolic racists with the rationalization they need for opposing redistributive social policies like affirmative action. Consistent with this approach, previous research has found that, among whites, higher levels of symbolic racism are

associated with greater opposition to equal opportunity for blacks, greater opposition to federal assistance for blacks, and greater opposition to affirmative action for blacks (Sears, van Laar, Carrillo, & Kosterman, 1997). In fact, symbolic racism is even more predictive of whites' opposition to affirmative action for blacks than are political partisanship and non-racial values like individualism and morality. When policy decisions are based more on racial attitudes than on non-racial principles, they directly contradict national ideals of equality and fairness.

Modern racism is similar in form to symbolic racism; both perspectives argue that contemporary racial attitudes involve negative affect attached early in life to blacks. According to McConahay (1986), modern racists do not consider themselves to be racists because they don't hold old-fashioned racist attitudes and they don't think their traditional values are inspired by racial beliefs; rather, they think their views reflect empirical facts. Like symbolic racists, however, modern racists have been found to discriminate against members of minority groups in subtle, rationalizable ways (McConahay, 1986). Because opposition to redistributive social policies like affirmative action is couched by modern and symbolic racists in terms of blacks' violation of traditional American values rather than blatant prejudice against blacks, these contemporary forms of racial attitudes are more subtle and insidious, but their impact can be as severe as that of old-fashioned racial attitudes.

What all three of the aversive, symbolic, and modern racism perspectives have in common is the notion that racism is deeply embedded in the culture in which we live. Although racism has changed in form from its traditional expression in direct and overt ways to its contemporary expression in indirect and subtle ways, racism is still part of U.S. culture. According to the cultural racism perspective, "the cumulative effects of a racialized worldview ... are suffused throughout the culture via institutional structures, ideological beliefs, and personal everyday actions of people in the culture, and these effects are passed on from generation to generation" (Jones, 1997, p. 472). As the cultural racism perspective implies, racism can occur not only at the level of the individual, but at the level of the institution as well.

Institutional racism

Institutional racism refers to "those established laws, customs, and practices which systematically reflect and produce racial inequities in American society" (Jones, 1997, p. 438). As Jones points out, when institutional practices or policies systematically create disadvantage for racial minority groups and their members, it doesn't really matter what any specific person's intentions were. From this perspective, remedying institutional racism does not involve changing individuals' racist intentions as much as it involves restructuring institutional practices in order to increase equality of opportunity. Evidence of institutional racism has been found in several different domains, including the criminal justice system, banking industry (e.g., housing loans), employment sector, educational system, and the media (see Jones, 1997). For example, members of minority groups have been found to face more severe legal sanctions than whites (e.g., more arrests, more convictions, and harsher prison sentences), even after taking into account all other legally relevant factors such as type and severity of crime and prior criminal record (Sidanius, Levin, & Pratto, 1998). An interaction between race and gender has also been found, indicating that black men experience more unfair treatment by institutions (e.g., police) than black women (Gallup, 1997; for a review, see Sidanius & Pratto, in press). Despite the difficulty of disentangling race from class (given that racial minorities have disproportionately low socioeconomic standing), racial inequalities are not reducible to class inequalities: disparities in racial outcomes persist even when differences in socioeconomic standing are taken into account (Sidanius & Pratto, in press). These

examples of institutional racism demonstrate the powerful ways in which race structures the society in which we live.

Social Psychological Theories of Racial Conflict

Given the pervasiveness of racism in our culture, four social psychological theories examine the individual and intergroup processes that drive racial conflict: realistic group conflict theory, social identity theory, optimal distinctiveness theory, and social dominance theory (see Table 1 for a comparison of the processes driving racial conflict proposed by these theories).

Realistic group conflict theory

According to realistic group conflict theory (Bobo, 1983, 1988), group conflict and ethnocentric attitudes and behaviors are primarily functions of realistic competition between groups over scarce resources and perceived threats to group position. Whites, as members of the dominant group in the United States, develop attitudes and beliefs that defend their privileged, hegemonic social position. The dominant group seeks to legitimize the current inequalities through these group-interested ideologies and to perpetuate them by engaging in discriminatory behavior. In this light, whites' opposition to redistributive social policies like affirmative action is viewed not as a reflection of negative feelings or beliefs about minority groups per se, but rather as a reflection of defense of group privilege in a conflict over valued social resources, status, and power. From this perspective, the affirmative action debate is one about the place racial groups should occupy in American society. Consistent with realistic group conflict predictions, Bobo (1997) found that the more whites perceive that the advancement of blacks (in terms of employment and housing opportunities, political influence, and economics) comes at the expense of the advancement of members of other groups, the more they perceive that affirmative action for blacks has negative effects.

Social identity theory

According to social identity theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1986), individuals hold conceptualizations of the self at both an individual and a group level. Personal identity refers to those aspects of the self that differentiate one individual from others within a given social context. Social identity refers to those aspects of the self that relate to group membership, or that are defined in terms of the groups to which one belongs. When group boundaries are made salient, individuals categorize people as members of their own group (ingroup) or as members of another group (outgroup), and start to compare their group to other groups on the basis of some evaluative criteria. Individuals are motivated to achieve and maintain a positive image of their ingroup. One way they may do so is by comparing their ingroup with outgroups perceived to be inferior on some evaluative dimension. This preference or favoritism places their ingroup at an advantage relative to other outgroups. When there is a power differential, ingroup favoritism can have dramatic implications for the unequal distribution of economic and social resources. For example, social identities based on race will trigger evaluative comparisons with other racial groups. Individuals are motivated to achieve a positive social identity by favoring their own racial group over other racial groups. This ingroup favoritism may translate into resistance to affirmative action policies when these policies are perceived to benefit members of other racial groups at the expense of one's own racial group. Members of groups with greater access to resources may thus oppose redistributive social policies like affirmative action because such policies threaten to reverse the favorable evaluation of their group relative to other groups.

Table 1

Comparison of the Processes Driving Racial Conflict Proposed by Four Social Psychological Theories

Theory	Primary Force Driving Racial Conflict
Realistic group conflict theory	Competition between groups over scarce resources a perceived threats to group position
Social identity theory	Individuals' motivation to achieve a positive so identity by favoring their own group over other grou
Optimal distinctiveness theory	Individuals' motivation to identify with optima distinct groups, i.e., those that are large enough satisfy an individual's need for belonging and inclus and small enough to satisfy the need for distinctiven and differentiation
Social dominance theory	Individuals' desires for group inequality and domination of "inferior" groups by "superior" groups

Optimal distinctiveness theory

Optimal distinctiveness theory (Brewer, 1991) is an extension of social identity theory that views social identity as a compromise between opposing needs for similarity to others and differentiation from others. Social identification and group loyalty will be strongest for groups that are optimally distinct, i.e., those that are large enough to satisfy an individual's need for belonging and inclusion and small enough to satisfy the need for distinctiveness and differentiation. Groups that are in the numerical minority are more likely to be optimally distinct because they offer both a sense of being similar to fellow minority group members and a sense of being different from members of the majority group; minority group members are therefore more likely to exhibit strong ingroup identity and loyalty. The greater sense of belonging found among minority group members may explain the benefits derived from participation in racial/ethnic student organizations and minority support programs (Hurtado, Dey, & Trevino, 1994). Membership in the majority group of whites, on the other hand, is too inclusive an identity to stimulate feelings of belonging. From this perspective, members of the majority group are more inclined to identify themselves in individual terms rather than as part of an overly inclusive category (Tajfel, 1978). Since whites are less likely to identify themselves in terms of their racial group membership, they may be more opposed to affirmative action policies because such policies require the identification of people by race.

Social dominance theory

According to social dominance theory (Sidanius, 1993; Sidanius & Pratto, in press), individuals differ in the degree to which they desire unequal status relations between groups in society. Individuals who want groups at the bottom of the social hierarchy to be kept down and dominated by groups at the top of the hierarchy endorse a variety of ideologies which justify greater levels of social inequality, such as racism, individualism, and the Protestant work ethic. Racist beliefs reinforce the social hierarchy because they portray racial-status differences as being legitimately based on inherent differences in group members' ability and potential. Other ideologies like individualism and the Protestant work ethic lack specific racial content but still function to reinforce racial inequality because they attribute the lower status of blacks to lack of ability and lack of motivation. Individuals who desire group-based dominance are expected to show more support for ideologies like racism, individualism, and the Protestant work ethic, and their support for these "system-justifying" ideologies is expected to translate into greater opposition to redistributive social policies like affirmative action. >From this perspective, then, the primary driving force behind opposition to affirmative action is individuals' desires for group inequality and the domination of "inferior" groups by "superior" groups. This approach directly contradicts claims that opposition to affirmative action is rooted in "principled" adherence to ideologies like individualism and the Protestant work ethic. Rather, endorsement of these ideologies is viewed as a way for individuals who want to maintain the social hierarchy to justify their racially motivated opposition to affirmative action. Consistent with social dominance predictions, several studies have found that opposition to affirmative action is driven in large part by desires for group-based dominance (Sidanius, Levin, Rabinowitz, & Federico, in press; Sidanius, Pratto, & Bobo, 1996; Singh, Sidanius, Hetts, & Federico, 1997).

In sum, given the current racial status hierarchy, "colorblindness" will perpetuate the racial status quo due to the operation of unintentional racial biases, group identity processes, group competition, and group dominance motives. These processes contribute to the unequal treatment of minority groups and generate opposition to redistributive

social policies designed to ameliorate their condition. Social psychological research therefore suggests that a race-neutral or colorblind approach is unfair because it ignores the many ways in which race matters in society. A mound of social science evidence thus supports Justice Harry Blackmun's opinion in the Bakke case that "in order to get beyond racism, we must first take account of race. There is no other way. And in order to treat some persons equally, we must treat them differently" (438 U.S. 407, 1978).

Fairness Beliefs

As Justice Blackmun's opinion indicates, responses to affirmative action reflect underlying notions of fairness. For some, fairness requires treating people as individuals, and for others, fairness requires taking into account the collective representations that matter in society. Ferdman (1997) frames this fairness debate in terms of a distinction between the "individualistic perspective" and the "group perspective." Proponents of the individualistic perspective argue that it is unfair to pay attention to ethnicity because ethnic group memberships should not influence the opportunities and outcomes of individuals in society. Proponents of the group perspective, on the other hand, argue that it is unfair <u>not</u> to take ethnicity into account because of the power differentials that exist between ethnic groups in society. According to this latter perspective, ignoring ethnic group membership obscures the significant ways in which these power differentials influence the opportunities and outcomes of members of different ethnic groups.

Individualistic perspective

The individualistic view is deeply rooted in American values of meritocracy. A meritocratic reward structure is one in which advancement is determined by individual ability and talent. From the individualistic perspective, selection procedures and outcomes are fair when all individuals, regardless of ethnicity, are judged by the same established criteria of competence. Individual skills and achievements are viewed as legitimate criteria by which to judge individual competence because they are thought to be objective and orthogonal to ascribed characteristics like race. Because race is considered to be irrelevant to judgments of individual competence, proponents of the individualistic perspective argue that race should not be taken into account in merit-based selection procedures.

The problem with this view of meritocracy is, as Haney and Hurtado (1994, p. 239) argue, that the very concept of "merit" and the associated notions of "ability" and "qualification" are socially constructed categories. How we define, measure, and value these concepts, as well as the specific manner in which they are applied in any given setting, are not determined by objective criteria, but rather by subjective criteria established by the dominant culture. As Gumperz (1983, p. 117) argues, "failure to understand that these criteria are themselves necessarily culture and convention bound, and that the conditions under which we live prevent many individuals from learning what these conventions are, leads to a vicious cycle of miscommunication, stereotyping, and indirect discrimination which is difficult to break." Proponents of the individualistic perspective support notions of equity at the individual level; that is, if individuals receive rewards in proportion to their inputs, then equity exists and inequality between individuals with different inputs is justified. However, as Ferdman (1997, p. 201) comments, "equity at the group level can only exist when alternative cultural definitions of competence are given equal weight." That is, because definitions of "input" are socially constructed and culture bound, notions of equity at the individual level disadvantage members of cultural groups for whom "input" is defined differently, thereby precluding equity at the group level.

Group perspective

An alternative system of allocating opportunities and rewards is advocated by the group perspective (Ferdman, 1997). From this view, a fair system is one in which all groups are afforded equal opportunity. In order to ensure equal opportunity at the group level, group membership must be taken into account in comparisons between individuals because group-based power differentials and the long history of discrimination against minority groups have restricted minority access to the vital resources necessary to compete along individualistic lines. According to the group perspective, using the same standards to judge individuals from majority and minority groups is unfair because differences in power prevent the two groups from having equal opportunity.

Power differentials also reinforce negative stereotypes about less powerful minority groups. One domain in which negative stereotypes about African Americans and Latinos are prevalent is academic performance: black and Latino students face group stereotypes of poor academic performance. Claude Steele and his colleagues (Steele, 1997; Steele & Aronson, 1995) have proposed a theory of stereotype threat that explains the reactions of individuals who face the predicament of stereotypical expectations of low performance. When an individual is threatened by a negative stereotype about one's group, the individual becomes fearful that he or she will confirm or be judged by the stereotype, and may reject the setting in which the threat occurs. These two reactions to stereotype threat -- anxiety and disidentification with the academic domain -- result in reduced effort, lower academic performance, and rejection of academic performance as an indication of self-worth. It is important to point out that the threat is posed by group ability stereotypes, not beliefs about one's own ability. The threat of negative group stereotypes can actually impair academic performance so that individuals perform at a level below their true ability. If merit is tied to performance in a domain in which minority groups suffer from the threat of negative stereotypes, then ignoring race in merit-based selection procedures unfairly disadvantages members of these minority groups.

Eberhardt and Fiske (1994) take the argument in favor of the group perspective one step further by asserting that existing power differentials not only disadvantage minority groups, but also privilege majority groups because they create the illusion that the qualifications of majority group members are more merit-based than are those of minority group members. That is, the authors argue that, contrary to popular belief, merit-based selection is not independent of group membership. Rather, absent an explicit affirmative action policy targeting minority groups, members of majority groups are conferred a competitive advantage by the implicit assumption that their achievements are more merit-based than are those of minority group members.

As it impacts attitudes toward affirmative action, this debate between the individualistic and group perspectives must be placed in the context of normative beliefs about fairness. The dominant ideology in the United States is described by Kluegel and Smith (1986) as a belief in widespread opportunity, individual responsibility for achievement, and the equity principle (equity at the individual level). According to Clayton and Tangri (1989), affirmative action policies are perceived to violate two basic principles underlying the dominant ideology of individual achievement: equal access to opportunities and equitable assignment of rewards based on individual merit rather than on group membership. The authors argue that "it is this appearance of incompatibility with equality of opportunity and equity of rewards which has led some to conclude that affirmative action policies are fundamentally unfair" (Clayton & Tangri, 1989, p. 177). Contrary to appearances, however, Clayton and Tangri (1989) argue that affirmative action is in fact a fair policy, in that it meets or exceeds normal standards of distributive

justice (fairness of the distribution of benefits), procedural justice (fairness of the procedures that guide decision-making), and macrojustice (fairness of the distribution of outcomes within a society).

Distributive justice

According to the equity principle of distributive justice, a relationship is equitable when all individuals receive the same relative outcomes in proportion to their inputs. In order for members of all ethnic groups to receive equitable outcomes in terms of college admissions decisions, the "inputs" of members of all groups must be judged by the same standard. One "input" variable which factors into college admissions decisions is an individual's performance on standardized tests. Standardized test scores must be equally predictive of future academic success for members of all ethnic groups in order to measure equity of outcomes in terms of these inputs. Another "input" variable which should be valued in the admissions process is the diversity in background and perspective offered by minority applicants (see Chapter 4). Given the bias against minority applicants in terms of "objective" input criteria such as standardized test scores, and the value of diversity offered by their admission into colleges and universities, fairness dictates that race be taken into account in the input side of the equity equation. According to Clayton and Tangri (1989, p. 181), "including such a factor [as race] does not unbalance an equitable state, but rather restores balance by adjusting for the positive weighting of majority group membership that is ingrained within the system."

Procedural justice

Procedural justice refers to the fairness of the procedures that guide the distribution of outcomes. Equality of opportunity is the most important criterion used to define a just procedure (Nacoste, 1987). Previous research indicates that if procedures are judged to be fair, individuals will not object to unfair outcomes (Tyler & McGraw, 1986). However, Clayton and Tangri (1989) argue that various forms of systematic bias may only be revealed by an examination of the differential outcomes of whites and minorities, and not by an examination of the procedures that were used to distribute the outcomes. Chapter 1 documents the persisting inequalities between whites and minorities that permeate institutions of higher education. An examination of these disparate outcomes reveals the degree to which inequalities have been introduced into the procedures of "equal opportunity." Clayton and Tangri (1989) argue that outcomes must be assessed in order to determine whether or not a procedure which looks fair actually is fair. As described in Chapter 2, standard admissions procedures have not been fair in the case of minority access to higher education. One way in which affirmative action programs can help make the decision process more fair is by monitoring the outcomes of procedures to make sure that the criterion of "equal opportunity" is being met.

Microjustice vs. macrojustice

A final consideration of fairness beliefs that underlies the affirmative action debate involves the distinction between micro and macro levels of justice. Microjustice concerns the fairness of individual outcomes, while macrojustice concerns the fairness of the distribution of outcomes within a society (Brickman et al., 1981). Opponents of affirmative action argue that the policy is unfair at the individual (microjustice) level because the policy unfairly disadvantages certain qualified white men or unfairly advantages certain unqualified people of color. On the other hand, proponents of affirmative action argue that the policy is fair at the macrojustice level because the policy provides a fair distribution of outcomes within society. According to Clayton and Tangri (1989), affirmative action programs deserve to be evaluated on the macro level because

that is the only level at which the effects of discrimination can be clearly perceived. Crosby and her colleagues (Crosby, Clayton, Hemker, & Alksnis, 1986; Twiss, Tabb, & Crosby, 1989) have shown that when discrimination exists, it is more likely to be detected when an aggregate of cases is presented (in the form of a single fact sheet systematically summarizing all the instances of discrimination) than when single instances of discrimination are presented serially, one by one. If the goals of affirmative action are to eliminate societal inequalities (see Chapter 1), and to foster diversity in institutions of higher education (see Chapter 4), then the fairness of affirmative action programs should be judged at the macro rather than the micro level. Judged at the macro level, affirmative action is indeed a fair policy.

Social Categorization

Objections to affirmative action stem not only from beliefs that the policy is unfair, but also from beliefs that treating people differently on the basis of their group membership is antithetical to the goal of achieving a society in which opportunities and outcomes are independent of group membership. From this perspective, categorizing people into ethnic groups highlights group differences and thereby engages people's natural tendency to identify with their group, favor their own group over other groups, and defend their group's interests in conflicts over resources like university admissions. A great deal of social psychological research has demonstrated the profound effects of social categorization. Creating group boundaries or highlighting existing ones can strongly influence the perceptions, evaluations, and judgments of both members of one's own ingroup and members of other outgroups. For example, categorizing people into ingroups and outgroups causes people to view members of outgroups as more similar to one another (Wilder, 1981), and generates more negative evaluations (Tajfel, 1981), stereotypic perceptions (Rothbart, 1981), and negative attributions (Pettigrew, 1979) for the behavior of outgroup members than ingroup members.

However, other research has shown that there may be advantages to recognizing the social category membership of individuals. For example, Ferdman (1989) found that, in an organizational setting, making people in the dominant group pay attention to categorical information about people in the subordinate group (i.e., information related to their group membership) did <u>not</u> lower evaluations of subordinate group members. Rather, white managers evaluated Hispanic managers most positively when they were presented with both individuating and categorical information, and least positively when they were presented with individuating information alone. In another study, Clayton (1996) examined attitudes toward social categorization among two samples of college students and found that, while students were generally opposed to categorizing people on the basis of their group membership, opposition to affirmative action: (1) varied depending on whether the group of beneficiaries was a racial, gender, religious, sexual orientation, or college major group, and (2) was not based solely on objections to social categorization. Affirmative action for ethnic minority group members received more negative ratings than did affirmative action for women, replicating earlier findings (Clayton, 1992; Smith & Kluegel, 1984).

These results disconfirm the view that objections to affirmative action policies are based on a reluctance to identify people according to their social group. They also indicate that resistance to affirmative action, while apparently based on objective standards of justice, is actually influenced by subjective reactions to the group who will benefit from the policy. Consistent with these findings are those indicating that among the most important predictors of opposition to affirmative action are negative racial attitudes, in the form of modern racism (McConahay, 1986), symbolic racism (Jacobson,

1985; Kinder & Sears, 1981), aversive racism (Dovidio, Mann, & Gaertner, 1989), social dominance orientation (Singh, Sidanius, Hetts, & Federico, 1997), and perceived threat to the privileged position of whites (Bobo, 1997). The preponderance of empirical research therefore suggests that fairness requires taking race into account in affirmative action policies, because race influences social perceptions, attitudes, and behaviors in ways that disadvantage members of minority groups.

In sum, the social psychological research literature presents two main predictors of affirmative action opposition: racial attitudes and fairness beliefs. Dovidio and Gaertner's aversive racism framework further contends that racial attitudes and fairness beliefs are intimately related: Their research demonstrates that "although concerns about the fairness of affirmative action programs may be articulated as reasons to oppose these programs, subtle [racial] biases may be operating by influencing these perceptions of fairness, which in turn affect the intensity of the negative reactions" (Dovidio & Gaertner, 1996, p. 68). Sidanius, Levin, Rabinowitz, and Federico (in press) drew similar conclusions from a comparison of the social dominance and principled conservatism approaches to affirmative action opposition. While proponents of the principled conservatism model argue that political conservatives are ideologically opposed to affirmative action because the policy violates ideals of fairness and individual responsibility, Sidanius and his colleagues (in press) found that conservatives' opposition to affirmative action was driven primarily by their desires for group inequality and group-based dominance, rather than by their political ideology per se. If beliefs about fairness are driven by racial attitudes, then some people who claim to oppose affirmative action policies because they are unfair may be using the fairness argument in order to justify racially motivated opposition to affirmative action policies.

Dimensions of Diversity in Higher Education

Given what we know about theories of race relations and fairness, the challenge that we face today is how to use these theories to facilitate the goals of diversity in higher education. Smith (1995) has developed a framework outlining four important dimensions of diversity in higher education: representation, campus climate and intergroup relations, education and scholarship, and institutional transformation. The dimension of representation focuses on the inclusion and academic success of previously underrepresented groups, particularly African Americans, Latinos, and American Indians. Efforts to increase the access and success of members of these groups have been motivated by social justice and equity concerns. The second dimension, campus climate and intergroup relations, addresses the campus setting within which diverse groups of students interact. The focus of this dimension is on creating a positive learning environment and intergroup atmosphere for the benefit of all groups of students. The dimension of education and scholarship focuses on ways to incorporate diverse perspectives and knowledge bases into teaching methods, curricula, and areas of scholarly inquiry so as to better educate all students to live in a multicultural society. Lastly, institutional transformation focuses on the ways in which institutions must be restructured in order to fulfill the educational mission of diversity in all of its dimensions.

Theories of race and race relations have tended to focus narrowly on issues of representation and climate. Perhaps the most influential theory to emerge from social psychological research on race, the contact hypothesis, was developed primarily to address the dimension of campus climate and intergroup relations. The contact hypothesis, formulated by Gordon Allport (1954), focuses on ways to improve relations among groups who come into contact with one another. The theory specifies a number of critical conditions that must be present in order for intergroup contact to reduce prejudice

and lead to positive intergroup relations: members of different groups must have equal status within the contact situation, they must work together cooperatively in the pursuit of common goals, contact must be close enough to lead to perceptions of common interests and common humanity among the group members, and the contact must be sanctioned by institutional supports (e.g., by university administrators and policies). Contact theory was originally formulated during the era of legalized school segregation, when a primary concern was how to reduce prejudice and hostility between members of segregated groups when they come into contact with one another in desegregated environments.

The issue of diversity that we face today raises different questions than those addressed by the contact hypothesis. In the post-civil rights era, there is a widespread belief in the equality of opportunity, despite the reality of persisting racial inequalities. The challenge that we face today is how educational institutions can treat people as individuals in order to ensure equality of opportunity, while at the same time acknowledging the persisting inequalities that demonstrate how race continues to matter in society. This issue involves all four dimensions of diversity: (1) how to incorporate both individual characteristics and group membership into selection and evaluation procedures in order to promote access and success for underrepresented groups on college campuses; (2) how to facilitate positive intergroup relations by recognizing that individuals assimilate into larger groups to meet needs for identity and belonging, but that individuals within groups vary widely from one another and should therefore not be subject to group stereotypes; (3) how to educate students to live in a society in which individual differences and collective representations contribute to a diversity of perspectives; and (4) how to restructure institutions of higher education so that they fulfill their mission of diversity.

An Integrated View

The fundamental question, then, is whether people should be categorized and treated as group members, or whether they should be decategorized and treated as individuals within institutions of higher education. According to the group perspective, group memberships must be taken into account in decisions of access because of power differentials between groups, and they must be taken into account in terms of climate because they meet basic human needs for group identity and belonging. According to the individualistic perspective, on the other hand, group memberships must <u>not</u> be taken into account in decisions of access because they are irrelevant to more objective merit criteria, and they must <u>not</u> be taken into account in terms of climate because they exaggerate group differences and thereby exacerbate intergroup conflict. The problem with traditional research paradigms is that they have couched these two perspectives as a false dichotomy, and they have focused on one perspective to the exclusion of the other. Ferdman (1997) proposes that one way to reconcile these seemingly contradictory individualistic and group perspectives is to integrate them into a new view of fairness that promotes both the protection of group rights and the acknowledgment of individual differences. This integrated view offers a new framework for understanding the complexity of contemporary race relations. Rather than focusing on either the individualistic or the group perspective, or on one dimension of diversity rather than another, this new paradigm attempts to incorporate both the individualistic and group perspectives into an integrated framework that can be applied to all four dimensions of diversity.

Previous research on the first dimension, representation, demonstrates the utility of factoring both group membership and individual characteristics into selection and evaluation procedures in order to increase minority access and success on college

campuses. For example, Nacoste (1990, 1994, 1996) has examined how psychological responses to affirmative action vary as a function of the weight given to group membership and individual characteristics in selection procedures. Affirmative action procedures which give weight to group membership, but give more weight and consideration to individual achievement-related characteristics are evaluated as procedurally fairer than those which give the most weight to group membership. Therefore, individual characteristics and group membership should be combined, though differentially weighted, in the selection process so that the procedures used to enhance minority access to higher education are considered fair. Furthermore, universities should reveal the nature of their weighted selection procedures so that these procedures will be perceived to be fair by both beneficiaries and nonbeneficiaries of affirmative action. As the research literature consistently demonstrates, perceptions of fairness are important determinants of support for affirmative action policies (Clayton & Tangri, 1989; Nacoste, 1989).

The criteria used to guide selection procedures have also been found to influence self-evaluations and performance expectancies among beneficiaries of affirmative action (Major, Feinstein, & Crocker, 1994). Cognitive theories of emotion posit that when people achieve positive outcomes like college admission and successful academic performance, they are likely to experience more positive affect and evaluate themselves and their attributes more favorably when they can attribute these outcomes to internal factors like ability or merit (Weiner, 1985). When positive outcomes are attributed to benefits based on group membership, beneficiaries are less certain that they could have achieved these outcomes based solely on their personal merit or deserving. This "attributional ambiguity" about personal deserving is expected to reduce self-evaluations and performance expectancies. However, Major and her colleagues (1994) found that affirmative action procedures that were perceived to be based on both individual merit and group membership reduced ambiguity about the extent to which selection was deserved and enhanced the self-evaluations of the competence of beneficiaries. These increased feelings of competence may then lead to enhanced academic success among minority beneficiaries of affirmative action. Once again, in order for affirmative action selection procedures to be successful in enhancing minority access and success, it must be made clear that selection is based on individual merit as well as group membership. Incorporating both selection criteria increases perceptions of fairness and reduces attributional ambiguity about the personal competence of those selected, thereby reducing negative responses to affirmative action procedures.

Brewer's optimal distinctiveness model provides another theoretical framework which integrates both the individualistic and group perspectives. As described previously, this perspective emphasizes that human beings have basic needs for both assimilation with others (as groups) and differentiation from others (as individuals). People become uncomfortable when they are too individuated, and they become uncomfortable when they are lumped together and categorized on the basis of some group membership when such categorization denies their cherished individuality. These opposing needs for assimilation and differentiation have important implications for procedural justice concerns. Just as some minority group members feel that procedures which ignore their group membership are unfair because they fail to take into account group-based power differentials that impede individual advancement, individuals also feel that procedures which treat them solely on the basis of their group membership are unfair because such procedures do not take into account individual variation within their group. Individuals belong to many different groups and these multiple group identities both influence and are influenced by unique life experiences, opportunities, and outcomes. In order to enhance minority access and success, then, both group differences

and individual uniqueness should be taken into account in selection and evaluation procedures.

Two additional dimensions of diversity, institutional viability and institutional goals to educate students to live in a diverse society, will also be promoted to the degree that unique perspectives derived from the intersection between individual and group identities are represented on college campuses. In order for an institution to be viable, it must promote both the individual and group interests of members of the university community (i.e., students, faculty, staff, board of trustees) and society at large. And in order for an institution to fulfill its mission of educating all students to live in a multicultural society, it must expose students to the breadth of perspectives offered not only by members of different ethnic groups, but also by different individuals within the same ethnic group whose life experiences vary dramatically. Exposure to the tremendous variation between individual members of the same ethnic group will reduce the use of racial stereotypes and increase perceptions of similarity among members of different ethnic groups based on common individual interests. Students will be better prepared to live in a diverse society if they learn to appreciate similarities with and differences from others based on both individual and group characteristics.

A fourth dimension of diversity, intergroup climate, will also be enhanced to the degree that individuals are able to recognize similarities with and differences from members of other ethnic groups. Previous research has shown that one way to improve relations between different groups is to create a superordinate or common ingroup identity which emphasizes what everyone has in common and meets needs for assimilation, while at the same time respecting individuals' needs for differentiation into smaller ethnic subgroups. In their research on the common ingroup identity model, Gaertner and his colleagues (1994) found that intergroup bias among students attending a multicultural high school was lower when students perceived the student body as one superordinate group than when they perceived the student body as being composed of separate subgroups. Importantly, the researchers also emphasize that the development of a common ingroup identity does not necessarily require each group to completely give up its subgroup identity, just so long as diverse group members conceive of themselves as members of different groups that are all playing on the same team. For example, Gaertner and his colleagues (1994) found that intergroup bias was lower when students thought of themselves simultaneously as "Americans" (superordinate group) and as members of their particular ethnic/racial subgroup, compared to when they thought of themselves just as members of their particular ethnic/racial subgroup. The final conclusion to be drawn from this research is that sharing a superordinate ingroup identity with members of other ethnic groups decreases intergroup bias, even when the superordinate identity (e.g., American) and ethnic subgroup identity (e.g., white, black, Asian, Hispanic) are both important to individuals.

Huo and her colleagues drew similar conclusions in their research on the group-value model of justice (Huo, Smith, Tyler, & Lind, 1996). According to this model, people will accept decisions made by authorities when they feel that they are being treated fairly, even when they do not obtain desired outcomes. When evaluations of an authority figure are based more on relational issues (treatment with respect and honesty) than on instrumental issues (outcomes), then conflicts are less likely to arise when people receive unfavorable outcomes. Consistent with the model's predictions, Huo and her colleagues (1996) found that when employees described conflicts with supervisors from different ethnic backgrounds than their own, they were more satisfied with the interaction the more they felt they were treated with respect and benevolence, regardless of whether or not the conflict situation was resolved in their favor. Important to our discussion of intergroup climate are findings that even people who identified strongly with their ethnic

subgroup focused more on relational issues than on instrumental issues in their evaluations of authorities, just so long as they also identified strongly with the superordinate group (i.e., the work organization). These findings suggest that intergroup conflict on multicultural college campuses will be minimized, even when there are disparities in outcomes, when the diverse groups of students identify with a superordinate ingroup (regardless of whether or not they also identify with their particular ethnic subgroup).

Both of these identity and justice models suggest that identification with a "common ingroup" or "superordinate group" will result in a more positive intergroup climate. They also emphasize that the development of a common ingroup identity will still have positive effects, even when people identify strongly with their ethnic or racial subgroup. In practice, Gaertner and his colleagues (1994) suggest that a common ingroup identity may be activated by increasing the salience of an existing common group membership (e.g., as Americans), or by introducing factors that are perceived to be shared by group members (e.g., a common enemy of the state). This recategorization of different groups into one group is viewed as a particularly powerful and pragmatic strategy for improving reactions to affirmative action (Dovidio & Gaertner, 1996; Murrell et al., 1994). For example, Smith and Tyler (1996) found that middle-class whites who identified more strongly as Americans than as Caucasians had more positive attitudes toward affirmative action than those who identified more strongly as Caucasians. In terms of process, the salience of a common ingroup identity may reduce the degree to which opposition to affirmative action is driven by ethnic group identity, competition, and dominance motives. That is, if people derive a sense of belonging and identification from a common ingroup, then their social identity will not be bolstered by feelings of superiority to fellow ingroup members (rather, their identity needs will be fulfilled through favorable comparisons with people outside the common ingroup), they will not view their interests as competing with those of fellow ingroup members, and they will not view their position of dominance as being threatened by the demands of fellow ingroup members. Rather, recategorizing different racial groups into a common ingroup would focus on the need for affirmative action policies in terms of the beneficial consequences for the society as a whole in meeting the demands of all four dimensions of diversity: increasing the inclusion and academic success of minority groups, improving the campus climate within which diverse groups of students interact, better educating all students to live in a pluralistic society, and restructuring institutions in order to fulfill their commitments to diversity.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the dominant ideology in the United States is one which encompasses a belief in widespread opportunity, individual responsibility for achievement, and equity principles of justice (Kluegel & Smith, 1986). According to this dominant ideology, fairness requires treating people as individuals. However, social psychological research suggests that fairness requires taking race into account, because race influences social perceptions, attitudes, and behaviors in ways that disadvantage members of minority groups. Research on unintentional racial biases, group identity processes, group competition, and group dominance motives demonstrates the need for affirmative action. The challenge of future research on diversity in higher education will be to establish how educational institutions can treat people as individuals, while at the same time acknowledging the collective representations that matter in society. Promising research directions are offered by empirical studies on successful selection and evaluation procedures which take into account both individual characteristics and group

memberships, and successful ways to improve campus climate by creating a superordinate or common ingroup identity which emphasizes what everyone has in common, while at the same time respecting individuals' needs for differentiation into smaller ethnic subgroups. These studies suggest that an integrated framework which incorporates both the individualistic and group perspectives will enable us to understand the complexity of contemporary race relations in a way that traditional research paradigms which focus on a single perspective have failed to do.

In this chapter, the social psychological research literature is used as a prime example of how social scientists have advanced our understanding of racial dynamics. This knowledge base is highly relevant to the public debate about diversity in higher education, but is usually found only in scholarly journals. In order for this rich knowledge base to help university administrators, public policy makers, lawyers, and other members of the public understand the complex issue of diversity, social scientists must learn how to package relevant research findings for public consumption, and find outlets that have wide circulation. In turn, administrators, policy makers, and others must seek out relevant social science findings and apply them to debates in the public forum. In order to promote the view of higher education as a public good, knowledge gained from social science research must be applied to serve the public good.

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