Assessing diversity climate: A field study of reactions to employer efforts to promote diversity

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Summary   Based on intergroup theory, this study examined relationships among group characteristics (racioethnicity, gender, and level), contextual organizational unit characteristics (gender and racioethnic heterogeneity, resource support for women and racioethnic minorities) and perceptions of diversity climate by faculty at a large university. Compared to white men, white women and racioethnic minorities placed greater value on employer efforts to promote diversity, and held more favorable attitudes about the qualifications of women and racioethnic minorities. The study found that group rather than contextual organizational unit characteristics were more strongly related to diversity climate. However, the organizational unit characteristic, gender heterogeneity, was significantly related to valuing diversity. The greater the ratio of women in a unit, regardless of the respondents' gender, racioethnicity or level, the more favorable diversity activities were viewed. In addition, units whose allocation of resources to racioethnic minorities were perceived as insufficient by respondents were more likely to have members who valued diversity and held favorable perceptions toward the qualifications of racioethnic minorities. Implications for organizations and future research are offered.

Introduction

A growing number of organizations have launched initiatives to actively promote new cultures and climates that are supportive of diversity (cf. Braham, 1989; Thomas, 1990; Cox, 1991a). Responding to projections that 85 per cent of the new entrants to the U. S. labor force during the 1990's will be female, minority or immigrant (Johnson and Packer, 1987), many firms have increased their emphasis on hiring, promoting, and retaining individuals of ethnically, racially, and gender diverse backgrounds. Toward this end, organizations have instituted multicultural training and activities to modify organizational systems and address root causes of institutional racism and sexism (cf. Thomas, 1990; Cox, 1991a). Typically, multicultural efforts seek to enhance relations between members of different ethnic and racial groups by finding ways to sensitize

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people to intergroup differences (Ferdman, 1992; Thomas, 1990). In this paper, enhancing organizational diversity, heterogeneity and multiculturalism refer to efforts to improve the integration of members of minority racioethnic groups and white women into all levels of employing organizations. Following Cox (1990, p.7), 'racioethnic' refers to 'biologically and/or culturally distinct groups'. He contends that while researchers tend to use race when referring to intergroup differences between whites and blacks and ethnicity when referring to Asians and Hispanics, often these groups include *both* biological and cultural differences.

Implications of intergroup theory for managing diversity climate

Alderfer (1986) theorizes that groups in organizations can be classified into two broad categories: identity groups and organizational groups. Identity group members share common biological (e.g. sex, race) and/or historical or social experiences (e.g. ethnicity, ideology), while organizational group members (e.g. hierarchical, job function) may hold similar positions, conduct similar tasks, and have similar work experiences and access to organizational resources (Alderfer, 1986). Because each person is viewed as a group representative, every individual's group memberships can influence interactions with other groups (Alderfer, 1977; Smith, 1977). Intergroup processes regulate how members treat and are treated by others, shape our perceptions, and help determine our socially constructed realities (Smith, 1977; Wells, 1990). Policies to increase or promote diversity seek to enhance the integration of identity groups, particularly racioethnic minority men and women and white women, into organizational groups that have historically been dominated by white men.

Reactions to diversity initiatives have implications for intergroup relations which are embedded in an organizational context (cf. Alderfer and Smith, 1982). These change activities have differing ramifications for groups, each with interests that may or may not overlap, thereby heightening intergroup conflict by creating increased competition for resources, and accentuating differences in goals, values and power (cf. Smith, 1982; Berg and Smith, 1990). Changing organizations to become more multicultural is likely to adversely effect the current dominant groups (white men) by altering the distribution of power and resources, and the dominant goals and values of the firm. The perceptions toward diversity efforts held by members of specific identity and organizational groups are critical to successful implementation of these largely voluntary initiatives. Members' resistance to change often hamper efforts to modify recruitment, promotion, and other policies to foster a multi-cultural work environment (Belfry and Schmidt, 1989). A major organizational problem with managing diversity stems not so much from an inability to hire racioethnic minority men and women and white women at the entry levels, as the difficulty in making better use of their potential, and retaining and promoting them after initial recruitment (Thomas, 1990). It is likely to be easier to mandate the hiring of white women and racioethnic minorities for entry jobs, as was the case with affirmative action programs, than to socialize members to value or respect differences, to seek out and enjoy interaction with those whose intergroup backgrounds differ from their own, and to work productively in those relationships.

Proposed relationships

The purpose of this study was to investigate attitudes and beliefs about an organization's diversity climate held by faculty at a large university. We wanted to explore the relationships between one's group memberships and contextual unit characteristics in explaining perceptions of diversity climate. As intergroup theory has demonstrated (cf. Alderfer, 1986), the way we perceive

our social reality is largely determined by our group memberships such as racioethnicity, sex and level. We also wanted to see if group perceptions mirrored the work environment, the organizational unit characteristics, in which members were positioned. Regarding organizational unit characteristics, the demographic composition of the unit (i.e. the racioethnic and gender heterogeneity, which is the proportion of racioethnic minorities and women in relation to the total number of faculty in the unit) and the allocation of resources within the work unit among representatives of racioethnic and gender groups were believed to be key variables reflecting intergroup contextual effects (cf. Alderfer and Smith, 1982).

The term 'diversity climate' used in this study is consistent with other research on organizational climate. Climate is generally conceived as the influence of work contexts on employee behavior and attitudes, which are grounded in perceptions (Schneider and Reichers, 1983). Climate research assumes that 'people attach meaning to or make sense of clusters of psychologically related events' (Schneider and Reichers, 1983, p. 21). Organizations can have a number of climates, each with a referent. Since intergroup relations are embedded in organizations (Alderfer and Smith, 1982) perceptions of diversity climate will be influenced by the balance of power of intergroup relations and pertinent organizational events in the larger system.

Examples of attitudes and behaviors that comprise diversity climate might include the extent to which members: (1) generally value efforts to increase the representation of diverse groups (i.e. racioethnic minority men and women, white women, and/or individuals with disabilities) and (2) believe that individuals who are white women or racioethnic minority men and women in *their* work group are as qualified as white men. Thus, diversity climate includes an abstract component, which is a general perception toward the importance of employer efforts to promote diversity, and a specific component which refers to attitudes toward the probable beneficiaries of these efforts (i.e. white women and racioethnic minority men and women) in one's unit.

Group membership variables moderating attitudes toward diversity

White women and racioethnic minorities have historically been excluded from the middle and upper levels of many organizations (cf. Morrison, White and Van Velsor, 1987; Greenhaus, Parasuraman and Wormley, 1990), and while some improvement has been made in upward mobility, it is well documented that institutional racism and sexism persist in the workplace (cf. Kanter, 1977; Fernandez, 1985; Ilgen and Youtz, 1986; Martin and Pettigrew, 1987; Harris, 1991). The current emphasis on diversity is more likely to be welcomed by white women and racioethnic minorities, since members of these groups are most likely to believe that the work environment needs changing to better accommodate diverse employees and are also most likely to directly benefit from change in the short run. A common rationale used to justify creating multicultural organizations is that such change will result in many benefits, such as better decision-making, greater creativity and innovation, and increased business competitiveness (cf. Houghton, 1988; McIntyre, 1989; Cox, 1991a). This rationale clearly is framed in a 'win–win situation'. However, changing organizations toward the multicultural model means changing the way in which power and rewards are currently distributed in organizations across gender, racial and ethnic groups. Because white men are currently in favored organizational positions, they are likely to be the group most negatively effected by the implementation of diversity policies.

Efforts to enhance diversity are currently taking place in the context of the generally hostile economic environment of downsizing, delayering and slower upward mobility and shrinking pay increase allocations. White men are likely to displace internal hostility by using other groups as scapegoats. Via the process of projective identification in groups (cf. Wells, 1990),

white men may blame racioethnic minorities and white women who are likely to be the main immediate beneficiaries of diversity and affirmative action policies, for their woes on the job or the fact they may not be advancing as rapidly as in the past. White men are more likely to hold negative attitudes toward diversity efforts, because such efforts to change the status quo might be viewed as resulting in a decrease in their positions of power and receipt of rewards (Cox, 1991b; Alderfer, 1991). Specifically:

> Hypothesis 1: White women and racioethnic minority men and women are likely to hold more positive values toward organizational efforts to promote diversity than white men regardless of their organizational level.

In addition to valuing diversity in the abstract, diversity climate also concerns attitudes toward the qualifications of white women and racioethnic minority men and women in one's department, since these perceptions will be largely determined by one's intergroup memberships. Historically, assuming two candidates met the *minimum* qualifications of a position, in order to meet affirmative action or equal opportunity objectives, some firms would give preference in hiring and promotion to white women and racioethnic minorities over white men. These staffing efforts are often interpreted by white men as a compromise of organizational standards and unfair favoritism which results in scapegoating of white women and racioethnic minorities (Thomas, 1990).

Compared to white men, white women and racioethnic minorities have more recently gained access to coveted managerial and professional positions. However, barriers to senior hierarchical positions still exist for white women and racioethnic minorities, as most senior organizational groups are still largely white male. Historically, a common reason that was used to deny access to middle and upper positions to a white woman or racioethnic minority was that he or she wasn't as qualified as other candidates, the latter often being white men. Given this history of experience and the off-balance context in which intergroup relations are embedded, women and racioethnic minorities today are likely to believe that a two-tier qualification system exists: one for white men and one for their groups (Fernandez, 1985). White women and racioethnic minorities are likely to believe they have to have qualifications *better than*, those of white men in order to be promoted (Fernandez, 1985). Members of these groups are likely to view themselves as being at least as qualified as white men and consequently, would view others who are similar to themselves to be qualified as well.

Alderfer (1986) writes that the term 'women' when juxtaposed with the term 'minorities' is often interpreted to mean 'white women'. Similarly, in the current study on diversity climate, an attempt was made to assess intergroup differences in perceptions of women and racioethnic minorities. Consequently, it is likely that 'women' may be interpreted by many to refer to white women as a group, thereby unconsciously excluding minority women. Although there may be a wish that all disadvantaged groups might unite in their struggle for equality, historically one can find examples of both cooperation and competition between white women and racioethnic minorities (Alderfer, 1986). As a result, it is predicted that:

> Hypothesis 2a: White women will tend to hold positive views toward the qualifications of women. Although slightly less favorable than their ranking of women's qualifications due to an in-group bias, white women will hold more positive views toward the qualifications of racioethnic minorities than white men.

> Hypothesis 2b: Racioethnic minority women will view racioethnic minorities as qualified. Although slightly less favorable than their ranking of racioethnic minorities qualifications due to an in-group bias, racioethnic minority women will rank the qualifications of women

more favorably than minority men. Overall, however, racioethnic minority women will rank the overall qualifications of racioethnic minorities as a group as higher than those of women as a group.

Hypothesis 2c: Racioethnic minority men will view the qualifications of women slightly more favorable than white men do. However, racioethnic minority men will perceive racioethnic minorities as generally more qualified, as a group, than women, as a group.

Hypothesis 2d: White men will hold the least positive views toward the qualifications of racioethnic minorities and women.

Organizational and work group influences on diversity climate

Intergroup relations are embedded in organizations and will be influenced by the degree to which the power differences between groups in the immediate setting are congruent with those reflected in the suprasystem or larger organizational context (Aldefer and Smith, 1982). When there is an imbalance in the power differences between groups at the local level and those in the larger system, more dysfunctional relations will occur between groups (Alderfer and Smith, 1982). Thus, reactions to employer actions to manage diversity must be viewed against the organizational context that the senior hierarchical groups of most employing organizations are still largely occupied by white males. Similarly, the ways in which power and rewards are currently allocated and the ways in white human resource policies are currently designed still largely favor senior white males over other groups (cf. Ragins and Sundstrom, 1989). Efforts to create a 'dominant heterogeneous culture' (cf. Thomas, 1990) at all levels of the firm are introduced against a backdrop of a dominant white male culture. And as Ferdman (1992), argues, the assumptions of multicultural programs are often based on views that can be somewhat contradictory to traditional research on prejudice, categorization and stereotyping, which he believes would attempt to manage diversity by finding ways to de-emphasize intergroup boundaries. By promoting multiculturalism and accentuating differences between groups that have imbalanced representation across their larger organizational systems, it is likely that members of white male groups might resist such efforts and engage in increased categorization, labeling and stereotyping. Similarly, white women and racioethnic minority men and women might tighten their own internal group boundaries and negatively categorize the white males in power and each other.

This intergroup context has ramifications for organizational climates, which can arise from the interactions that work group members have with each other, and in turn create varying work group climates that influence perceptions of organizational events (Schneider and Reichers, 1983). In large firms, the climate for diversity is likely to be influenced by the way in which organizational policies pertaining to the distribution of resources and opportunities across racioethnic and gender groups in the department are key events shaping diversity climate and members' perceptions of intergroup relations. Resources critical to advancement might include access to support staff, computer equipment, release time and funds. Opportunities relate to unit hiring practices across racioethnic and gender groups as position openings occur.

Under conditions where white women and racioethnic minority groups believe that their access to resources and opportunities are restricted, a view that is congruent with their historical underutilization in powerful organizational positions, groups are more likely to engage in defense routines (Smith, 1982; Ely, 1990). Given that conflict among groups is produced by scarce resources and that some groups may attend more to their political and psychological environments than others (Berg and Smith, 1990), white women and racioethnic minorities are likely

to be aware of the existence of a glass or 'teflon' ceiling and related barriers to advancement such as unequal access to resources (Morrison *et al.*, 1987; Cox, 1991b). Although today, few institutions are consciously racist, many universities continue to be designed in a way that supports the persistence of institutionally-based racism (Porras, 1991). Members who are white women and racioethnic minorities are most negatively affected by not altering the current resource allocation systems and are most likely to be aware of continuing institutional barriers.

Although racioethnic minorities and white women are expected to carry the same teaching, research and service loads that white men do, the former groups often have the additional burden of helping the university manage issues of racism and sexism, even if they have never done research on these issues and often their jobs are usually designed with more tasks than those of white men (Porras, 1991). They frequently have extra work by serving on committees specifically targeted to female or minority issues or general university committees necessitating multicultural representation, by serving as counselors/role models/mentors to students, by being spokespersons for their respective gender or racioethnic groups or by providing advice to administrators when racial and gender problems occur on campus (Porras, 1991). Because they may perceive that their faculty jobs have more responsibilities and demands than the jobs of white men, white women and racioethnic minorities may feel they aren't getting adequate resources to enable them to do the 'core' features of their jobs that the university normally rewards.

White women, because of their greater probability of having directly experienced these barriers, will be more sensitive than white men to institutional discrimination. However, on matters of organizational barriers based on race, white womens' perceptions of discrimination will more closely resemble those of white men than they will racioethnic minority women (Alderfer, 1986). In contrast, racioethnic minority women may be likely to view their experiences with institutional discrimination as being based on race as opposed to gender. This view is consistent with findings that minority women students were more likely to view discrimination that they faced in the classroom as being more strongly based on race and ethnicity than gender (Zonia, 1989). While racioethnic minority men and women will tend as a group to hold less favorable attitudes regarding the fairness of resource allocation to minorities, racioethnic minority women will hold the least favorable attitudes, given the added pressures created by their bicultural lives and 'two for two' token status (Bell, 1990).

White men may see resource distribution differently, given the current, very visible programs adopted by many firms to enhance organizational diversity. White men are likely to believe that women and racioethnic women and men have at least an equal, if not better chance, of receiving organizational support as they do. They are less likely to believe that discrimination exists in the form of unequal resource support for white women and racioethnic minorities, reflecting an in-group bias and a perception that enough actions are already being made to address previous discrimination.

Hypothesis 3a: Men respondents believe that women have the same chance as men of receiving organizational support. Women respondents believe that they have less than the same chance as men of receiving support.

Hypothesis 3b: White men and white women believe that racioethnic minorities have the same chance as whites of receiving organizational support. Racioethnic minority men and women believe that they have less than the same chance as whites of receiving support.

Hypothesis 3c: An interaction between race and gender will occur regarding perceptions of organizational support for racioethnic minorities. Racioethnic minority women will hold

significantly more negative views regarding the equality of support to racioethnic minorities than white women.

Recruitment practices and experiences across racioethnic and gender groups effect intergroup processes by shaping members' perceptions of opportunities for their groups. Hiring practices have a direct impact on the demography of work units, which are viewed in the larger organizational context as dominated by senior white males. In universities, the largest employee group is that of professional/faculty staff who generally must possess a PhD even to be considered for an entry level position. Although historically white women have had greater access to advanced degree programs than racioethnic minorities (Pomer, 1986), they often did not enter the labor force, because they were socialized to take on volunteer and mothering roles. In the early sixties, however, this pattern started to change. Currently, white women are substantially better represented at the PhD level than racioethnic minorities (De Palma, 1988), however, imbalances in representation still exists in some disciplines. For example, white women are under-represented in the natural sciences (Wycliff, 1990), and over-represented in social science fields such as education and liberal arts (De Palma, 1988).

Access to many institutions of higher education for racioethnic minorities was not permitted until the passage of the U. S. Civil Rights Act of 1964. Implementation of the Act took many years, and as a consequence, the pool of minority applicants with higher education credentials did not enlarge significantly until the mid-1970s (Steele, 1990). Currently, the increase in minority faculty presence at major research universities has not kept up with the increase in minority student enrollment (Porras, 1991). The within racioethnic group representation of specific minorities is extremely uneven. In some disciplines, such as the natural sciences, Asians are better represented than blacks and Hispanics (Wycliff, 1990). The extent to which white women and racioethnic minorities are represented across the university is skewed.

The demographic composition of employees in the unit will influence the amount of direct contact that occurs both between and within gender and racioethnic groups in the department. As Homans (1950) maintains, there is a positive relationship between frequency of interpersonal contact and attraction. Demography also effects members' interpretations of the extent to which the firm is actively pursuing its espoused mission of enhancing diversity, thereby creating a context for assessing intergroup processes (Alderfer and Smith, 1982).

Likewise, structuralists assume that similar contexts help foster similar attitudes among members (Schneider and Reichers, 1983). Recent research on the linkages between individual attitudes and organizational demography has reaffirmed the importance of similarity in context and attitudes (cf. Konrad and Gutek, 1987; Tsui and O'Reilly, 1989; Gutek, Cohen and Konrad, 1990).

Blau's (1964, 1973, 1977) research on groups suggests a positive relationship between increased heterogeneity of society and increased contact between groups with status differences. In her discussion of tokenism, Kanter (1977) also found that the numerical representation of women and minorities in organizations influenced climate and how members of these groups are viewed. Using the concept of embedded intergroup relations (Alderfer and Smith, 1982), Ely (1989) specifically links individual measures of interpersonal relations with group and organizational variables. She found that the greater the proportion of women represented in middle and upper levels of organizations, the more positive the relations between all women, regardless of level. However, in work environments where women were less well represented, relationships were less supportive and more dysfunctionally competitive. Using this research as a guide, we propose a relationship between the composition of a member's unit (e.g. the percentage women faculty and percentage racioethnic minority faculty in the unit) and diversity climate.

Hypothesis 4a: The greater the gender heterogeneity (i.e. the greater the ratio of women to men) in a department, the more favorable the diversity climate (i.e. valuing efforts to promote diversity, and high regard for the qualifications of women).

Hypothesis 4b: The greater the racioethnic heterogeneity (i.e. the greater the ratio of racioethnic minorities to whites) in a department, the more favorable the diversity climate (i.e. valuing efforts to promote diversity, and high regard for the qualifications of racioethnic minorities).

Methods

Organizational setting

This study was conducted at a large public sector university in the Mid-West United States. The central administration, which was predominately white male, had been engaged, for some time, in trying to increase the recruitment and retention of women and/or racioethnic minorities among the faculty and academic staff ranks and to promote a climate favorable to a diverse workforce. Recently, the administration published a lengthy and widely-disseminated document which not only affirmed the University's commitment to diversity, but maintained that the future reputation of the institution, as well as its scholarly activities, were dependent on the organization's ability to recruit and retain more women and racioethnic minorities. The administration also established several task forces to investigate ways to improve recruitment and retention of under-represented groups, as well as monitor current efforts to recruit new members to the organization. To this end, a survey was developed to examine the following issues: (1) What is the current organizational climate regarding diversity and pluralism, and (2) how successful has the administration been in fostering a climate that places a high value on diversity.

Like many other institutions of higher education, the organization in this study has been suffering from diminishing resources. Many departments have had vacant positions frozen due to the lack of resources. Other units have only been allowed to fill these vacant positions by appointing a racioethnic minority or a woman to the position. In some cases, the successful recruitment of a women and/or racioethnic minority has required an increase in the salary offer over the amount initially posted, which could be viewed as a premium. Typically, these increased funds have been provided by the central administration against a background where many other requests for increased funding have been denied. Offering differential salaries to white women and racioethnic minorities has resulted in some reverse discrimination complaints from white men.

Procedure and sample

Since little empirical study has been conducted on the issue of diversity climates (Thomas, 1990), a new survey was developed for this study. Based on a review of the literature and previously developed surveys used to assess attitudes toward diversity at other universities, an instrument was developed by the authors, two untenured white women, and submitted to a group of senior administrators, who had requested the study, for review. The administrators included white, black and Hispanic men and white women. The questionnaire was also sent to several racioethnic minority women and men, and white men and women, all of various academic ranks, for comment.

Due to the comparatively small numbers of white women and racioethnic minorities in the

Table 1. Populations sampled for survey

Population group	Total population	Number sampled	Number returned	% returned
Racioethnic minority women	87	87	40	46
White women	629	629	318	51
Raciothnic minority men	191	191	83	43
White men	1842	600	281	47
Identification deleted by respondent	—		53	—
	2749	1507	775	51

organization, the survey was mailed to all of office addresses of white women and racioethnic minorities with faculty and academic staff status. Given the larger number of white men, a random sample from this group was drawn. New employees with less than a year's tenure were not included in the survey since they were unlikely to have sufficient experience to draw upon. A total of 1529 individuals received the survey. From this 775 usable questionnaires were returned. As Table 1 shows the response rate was 51 per cent, without significant differences among identity groups.

Measures

Exploratory factor analysis was conducted on 20 items pertaining to diversity. After inspecting the scree plot, it appears that four distinct factors accounted for most of the variance among the items. These factors had eigen values between 1.5 and 5.9, explaining 66 per cent of the variance. The factor pattern matrix is based on oblique rotations, since it was assumed that several dimensions of diversity climate were likely to be correlated. An item was included in a scale if its factor loading exceeded 0.4 and the loading for that item was larger than the loading on any other factor by 0.2. (Nunnally, 1978).

Table 2 shows the factor loadings for all items that met these statistical criteria. For conceptual reasons we separated responses toward scales regarding the allocation of unit resources to women and minorities into separate measures for these groups. Even after separating these items, the alpha values remain sufficiently high to warrant such action. A complete listing of the specific items used to construct the measures, which used five-point Likert type scales, can be found in the Appendix. All questions were recoded so that the higher the score, the greater the agreement.

Value efforts to promote diversity
This scale assessed perceptions of the extent to which institutional excellence was related to the recruitment and retention of faculty who are female, minority, or disabled, and on the importance of gender and racial diversity to promoting increased cooperation and understanding.

Attitudes toward qualifications of racioethnic minorities
This scale assessed perceptions of the research productivity and scholarly qualifications of minority faculty compared with white faculty.

Attitudes toward women's qualifications
This scale measured perceptions regarding the research productivity and scholarly qualifications of women faculty compared with men faculty.

Table 2. Factor loadings of rotated (oblique) factor pattern matrix

	F1	F2	F3	F4
Factor 1—Value efforts to promote diversity				
Organization should recruit more minorities	0.88	0.07	−0.06	0.05
Organization should recruit more women	0.86	−0.04	−0.13	0.04
Organization must recruit more handicappers	0.85	0.03	−0.13	0.02
Gender diversity is important	0.80	−0.09	0.09	−0.06
Racial diversity is important	0.78	0.05	0.20	−0.06
Making academic areas accessible to handicappers is important	0.56	0.10	0.09	−0.02
Factor 2—Qualifications of racioethnic minorities				
Research productivity of minority faculty	0.01	0.81	−0.09	0.02
Scholarly qualification of minority faculty	0.08	0.78	−0.11	−0.05
Factor 3—Qualifications of women				
Research productivity of women	−0.07	0.16	0.88	0.09
Scholarly qualifications of women	0.01	0.13	0.81	−0.24
Factor 4—Dept support for women and racioethnic minorities				
Release time support for women	0.10	0.23	0.05	0.78
Graduate assistant support for women	−0.00	0.14	0.09	0.76
Graduate assistantd support for minorities	0.04	−0.21	−0.09	0.67
Release time support for minorities	−0.05	−0.33	−0.14	0.67

Equality of department support of racioethnic minorities
This scale assessed perceptions regarding the equality of receiving graduate assistants, release time from teaching, and receiving salary increases above the average merit rate for minorities compared with whites.

Equality of department support of women
This scale assessed perceptions regarding the equality of receiving graduate assistants, release time from teaching, and receiving salary increases above the average merit rate for women compared with men.

Gender, racioethnicity and level
Three main group variables were used in the analyses: gender, race and level. While we recognize that important differences may exist not only between racioethnic minorities and whites, but also within racioethnic minority groups, the small numbers of racioethnic minorities precluded subgroup analyses. As a result, two categories of racioethnicity are used in our analysis: White and racioethnic minority. Individuals who identified themselves as African-American, Hispanic, Asian or Pacific Islander, or Native American Indian were considered racioethnic minorities. Individuals who identified themselves as Caucasian were considered white. Hierarchical level was used in our analysis, since a great deal of research has found that level is often correlated with workplace attitudes (cf. Kossek, 1989) and that identity groups are often correlated with organizational groups (Alderfer, 1986). The respondent's type of appointment was used as a proxy to measure hierarchical level. All faculty with tenure and job security were combined into one category, and faculty without tenure or job security were grouped into the other.

Gender and racial heterogeneity

Unit heterogeneity was measured in the following way. To each respondent's record, we appended the actual number of women, racioethnic minorities and total faculty in his/here unit. These data were supplied by the University's Personnel Office. Drawing on the work of Blau (1977, p.9), heterogeneity was operationalized as:

$$2 - \left(1 - \frac{\Sigma X_i^2}{(\Sigma X_i)^2}\right)$$

where x is the number of persons in each group. The formula was adapted to permit the heterogeneity measure to range from 0 to 1 so that the correlation is -1.0 to 1.0. For the gender heterogeneity measure, the larger the figure, the greater the representation of women in the unit. For the racial heterogeneity measure, the larger the figure, the greater the representation of racioethnic minorities in the unit.

Analyses

In order to investigate differences in attitudes towards diversity proposed for the first three hypotheses, a three-way analysis of variance technique was used. This also permitted exploration of interaction affects of independent variables on the scales. The independent variables were defined as race, gender and level. In order to test hypothesis 4, which is essentially a test of the entire model, we used ordinary least squares regression. For each dependent variable (valuing employer efforts to promote diversity, and attitudes toward the qualifications of women, attitudes toward the qualifications of racioethnic minorities), separate regression models were run to investigate the effects of unit characteristics (i.e. gender heterogeneity and racioethnic heterogeneity, and the amount of resource support for women, amount of resource support for racioethnic minorities) as well as group memberships (respondent's race, gender and level).

Results

Table 3 shows the inter-scale correlations, means, and standard deviations and alphas for the scales, all of which showed high reliability and ranged from 0.90 to 0.71. Although the factor analysis showed that these measures are conceptually distinct from each other, it is clear that significant relationships do exist between these scales. For the sample as a whole, the means suggest that individuals were generally favorable toward employer efforts to promote diversity ($\bar{X} = 3.89$) and while still favorable, were slightly less positive toward the qualifications of women ($\bar{X} = 3.13$) and racioethnic minorities ($\bar{X} = 2.80$). Respondents believed that women ($\bar{X} = 1.91$) and racioethnic minorities ($\bar{X} = 1.99$) had almost the same chance of receiving department support as white men.

Table 4 shows the results of the multivariate analyses of variance for each scale, the corresponding significance levels for the three main effects (i.e. racioethnicity, gender and hierarchical level) and the three two-way interaction effects (i.e. racioethnicity and gender, level and gender, and level and racioethnicity). All the significance levels for the main effect variables as well as all two-way interaction effects are reported to show the contribution of main effects and interaction effects in predicting attitudes. Table 5 shows the means only for those scales in which significant differences were found between groups.

As can be seen in Table 4, gender, racioethnicity and level were related to perceptions of diversity climate. In regard to hypothesis 1, valuing employer efforts to promote diversity,

Table 3. Characteristics of measures

Scales	1	2	3	4	5
1. Attitude toward racioethnic minorities' qualifications		0.18*	−0.42*	−0.13*	0.28*
2. Attitudes toward women's qualifications			−0.13*	0.23*	0.62*
3. Equality of dept. resource allocation to racioethnic minorities				0.49*	−0.62*
4. Equality of dept. resource allocation to women					−0.47*
5. Value employer efforts to promote diversity					
6. Mean	2.80	3.13	1.99	1.91	3.89
7. Standard deviation	0.70	0.62	0.37	0.37	0.85
8. Alpha	0.77	0.71	0.72	0.74	0.90

* Significance $p < 0.01$.

Table 4. Results of multivariate analysis of variance

Independent variables	Value efforts to promote diversity F value	Attitudes toward qual. of racioethnic minorities F value	Attitudes toward qual. of women F value	Equality of department support of racioethnic minorities F value	Equality of department support of women F value
Main effect					
Racioethnicity	12.74 (0.000)	14.02 (0.000)	4.50 (0.034)	40.87 (0.000)	11.31 (0.001)
Gender	41.57 (0.000)	1.21 (0.272)	8.31 (0.004)	18.28 (0.000)	70.49 (0.000)
Level	0.64 (0.591)	0.55 (0.651)	1.18 (0.318)	0.31 (0.821)	0.13 (0.943)
Two-way interaction effect					
Racioethnicity by gender	1.18 (0.277)	2.32 (0.128)	6.11 (0.014)	6.63 (0.010)	2.95 (0.086)
Level by gender	1.16 (0.326)	0.37 (0.771)	2.36 (0.071)	1.26 (0.286)	1.14 (0.331)
Level by racioethnicity	1.32 (0.266)	0.45 (0.720)	0.59 (0.620)	1.40 (0.242)	1.38 (0.249)
	$r^2 = 0.09$	$r^2 = 0.11$	$r^2 = 0.23$	$r^2 = 0.16$	$r^2 = 0.15$

* Significance levels are indicated in parentheses.

response differences to this scale were noted by racioethnicity ($p \leq 0.000$) and gender $p \leq 0.000$). While both racioethnic minorities and whites report that diversity is important to the institution, as Table 5 shows, racioethnic minority respondents rated the importance of diversity efforts considerably higher ($\bar{X} = 4.65$) than did whites ($\bar{X} = 3.74$). Similarly, women ($\bar{X} = 4.35$) held significantly more favorable attitudes toward diversity than men ($\bar{X} = 4.05$). However, women scored slightly lower in their commitment to diversity than did racioethnic minorities ($\bar{X} = 4.35$ for women as opposed to $\bar{X} = 4.65$) for minorities. No significant variation in response to valuing efforts to promote diversity could be attributed to hierarchical level.

Regarding hypothesis 2, we found that differences in attitudes about the qualifications of racioethnic minorities accounted for only by respondent's racioethnicity ($p \leq 0.000$). Racioethnic minorities rated the qualifications of racioethnic minorities higher ($\bar{X} = 3.47$) than white respondents ($\bar{X} = 2.75$) did. Regarding the qualifications of women, we noted statistically significant differences in response to this scale by respondent's racioethnicity ($p \leq 0.34$), by gender

Table 5. Summary table of means* of significant main effects (gender, race/ethnicity and level) and two-way interactions for scale variables

Dependent variable	Value employer efforts to promote diversity	Attitudes toward qual. of racioethnic minorities	Attitudes toward qual. of women	Equality of department resource allocation to racioethnic minorities	Equality of department resource allocation to women
Racioethnicity					
Racioethnic minorities	4.65	3.47	2.96	1.78	1.82
Whites	3.74	2.75	3.14	2.08	1.91
Gender					
Men	4.05		2.97	2.08	2.05
Women	4.35		3.31	1.97	1.72
Race and gender					
Racioethnic minority women			3.00	1.57	
White women			3.35	2.02	
Racioethnic minority men			2.94	1.88	
White men			2.97	2.13	

* Only $\bar{X}$ of significant differences shown.
No significant differences were found by level, so these results are not reported.

$(p \le 0.004)$, and an interaction effect of racioethnicity and gender $(p \le 0.014)$. In general, white respondents rated the qualifications of women higher $(\bar{X} = 3.14)$ than did racioethnic minorities $(\bar{X} = 2.96)$. As predicted, we also found that men rated the qualifications of women lower $(\bar{X} = 2.97)$ than women rated themselves $(\bar{X} = 3.14)$. However, as the interaction effect shows, it is almost exclusively white women who account for the differences in attitudes by gender. Racioethnic minority women believed that women and men were equally qualified $(\bar{X} = 3.00)$. However, white women rated women (3.35), in general, as being slightly more qualified than men faculty.

Turning to hypotheses 3a and b, for the equality of department support of woman scale, two main effect differences were noted: by racioethnicity $(p \le 0.001)$ and by gender $(p \le 0.000)$. White respondents $(\bar{X} = 1.91)$ believed more strongly than racioethnic minorities $(\bar{X} = 1.82)$ that women faculty have an equal chance with men of receiving department support. Men also reported $(\bar{X} = 2.05)$ that women, as a group, have the same chance as men do of department resources. However, women were less likely to believe that women had an equal chance with men of receiving support $(\bar{X} = 1.72)$.

We noted main effect differences of racioethnicity $(p \le 0.000)$ and gender $(p \le 0.000)$ as well as an interaction effect of racioethnicity and gender $(p \le 0.01)$ for perceptions of the equality of department level support for racioethnic minorities. Racioethnic minorities were less inclined to believe $(\bar{X} = 1.78)$ that they have the same chance as white faculty $(\bar{X} = 2.08)$ of receiving support equal to whites. We also noticed a slight difference by gender to this scale. Men were more likely to believe that racioethnic minorities have a slightly greater chance than whites do to receive department support $(\bar{X} = 2.08)$. In contrast, women tended to believe that racioethnic minorities have slightly lower chance than whites do to receive department support $(\bar{X} = 1.97)$.

Much of the variance in response to the scale measuring support for racioethnic minorities

can be accounted for by the interaction effect of racioethnicity and gender. Racioethnic minority women responded very differently ($\bar{X} = 1.57$) from white women ($\bar{X} = 2.02$). While white women believed there is equality in department support for racioethnic minorities; racioethnic minority women disagree. White men believe that there is equality in support provided to racioethnic minorities within their department ($\bar{X} = 2.13$); racioethnic minority men were somewhat less inclined to believe in equality of support ($\bar{X} = 1.88$). We should note that the major differences in response to the scale were not as great between men of different racial/ethnic groups (minority and white) as they were between women (minority and white).

Regression model of relationships between contextual and group characteristics

The regression analysis summarized in Table 6 shows that when considering the contribution of both unit and group characteristics predicting diversity climate, gender and racioethnicity tended to account for most of the variance. An individual's hierarchical level was not an important predictor of diversity climate. However, contextual variables were significant in accounting for at least some of the variance for each scale. Gender heterogeneity was significantly related to valuing efforts to promote diversity, and attitudes toward the qualifications of women in the department. The greater the presence of women in the unit, the more likely respondents are to hold positive views toward these diversity climate subscales, regardless of their own race/ethnicity, gender or level. Although racioethnic heterogeneity was not significant in any of the regression models, another unit variable, resources for racioethnic minorities, was significantly related to valuing diversity and holding favorable attitudes towards racioethnic minorities. Consequently, hypotheses 4a and 4b are only partially supported. Contextual measures of gender heterogeneity, and racioethnic heterogeneity do not explain attitudes toward diversity as much as group membership variables.

Discussion

Our results are influenced by the juxtaposing of items assessing attitudes toward women and racioethnic minorities on the same survey that was distributed in a largely white male university. It is likely that some respondents construed items regarding women to refer to white women, as Alderfer (1986) suggests. It would have been preferable to have separate items regarding racioethnic minority women, racioethnic minority men, white men and white women. Indeed, a number of our significant findings showed an interaction between racioethnicity and gender. Researchers who study race and gender need to reflect on how their own identity group memberships shape the data they collect (Alderfer, 1986). The researchers in this study are untenured white women who may have subconsciously viewed the term women to refer to white women and minorities to refer to minority men and women. Alternatively, we may have subconsciously assumed that white women and minority women as 'sisters' would unite and hold similar attitudes regarding diversity climate. This misconception is consistent with Van Steenberg's (1983) view that white women can be naive to racioethnic differences between women and often fail to recognize that on issues of race their attitudes tend to more similar to those of white men than to racioethnic minority women (Alderfer, 1986). Similarly, qualitative data voluntarily supplied by the respondents indicate that some respondents were unclear about which groups are considered a 'minority', a term used in many of our items. Determining who defines themselves and is defined by others to be a minority is becoming increasingly less clear in *many* organizational contexts.

Table 6. Regression analyses for the effects of individual background and organizational unit variables on diversity climate

Independent variable	Standardized beta	F	Significance F
Dependent variable: Valuing diversity			
Racioethnicity	−0.18	20.36*	0.000
Gender	−0.25	31.68§	0.000
Level	0.01	0.01	0.957
Racioethnic heterogeneity	−0.01	0.04	0.842
Gender heterogeneity	0.10	5.27*	0.022
Resources for women	−0.08	2.58	0.110
Resources for racioethnic minorities	−0.11	5.73*	0.017
Model $F = 17.11*$, significance $= p < 0.000$			
Model $R^2 = 0.17$, number of cases $= 575$			
Dependent variable: Attitudes toward qualifications of women in dept			
Racioethnicity	0.09	4.67*	0.031
Gender	−0.18	14.44*	0.000
Level	−0.03	0.53	0.469
Racioethnic heterogeneity	−0.06	1.84	0.176
Gender heterogeneity	0.11	5.98*	0.015
Resources for women	−0.08	2.35	0.126
Resources for racioethnic minorities	−0.07	1.81	0.179
Model $F = 8.93*$, significance $= p < 0.000$			
Model $R^2 = 0.10$, number of cases $= 546$			
Dependent variable: Attitudes toward qualifications of racioethnic minorities in dept			
Racioethnicity	−0.18	16.65*	0.000
Gender	0.03	0.33	0.562
Level	0.02	0.09	0.764
Racioethnic heterogeneity	0.05	1.28	0.258
Gender heterogeneity	−0.01	0.07	0.791
Resources for women	0.06	1.12	0.292
Resources for racioethnic minorities	−0.22	18.42*	0.000
Model $F = 7.61*$, significance $= p < 0.000$			
Model $R^2 = 0.09$, number of cases $= 516$			

*$p < 0.05$.

Keeping these limitations in mind, this study examined the contribution of group characteristics and contextual unit characteristics to diversity climate. We found that identity group membership variables were generally more powerful than contextual characteristics in explaining differences in diversity attitudes. We acknowledge that differences between groups were often

slight. Yet the fact that we found many significant differences is important, given that our sample is a highly educated one that has a great deal of experience with completing and analyzing surveys and our items were highly socially desirable. Also, research historically suggests that the higher the education level of an individual, the more tolerant he or she tends to be of others (Steele, 1990). Yet we found subtle evidence that racism and sexism persists in this university. Similarly, a recent study posits the existence of a 'new racism' in organizations and suggests that discrimination has shifted from one of crude bigotry to a more subtle, amorphous form (Howitt and Owusu-Bempah, 1990).

While organizations have often stressed representation, in terms of sheer numbers in the organization, they have often overlooked the issues of upward mobility and glass ceilings. Numbers alone will not create the type of climate in which diversity will flourish unaided by policies and official mandates. As some organizations that have recently, and dramatically, increased their racioethnic minority populations have found, the growth in representation has been accompanied by increasing incidents of racial harassment, heightened separatism and splintering among racial and ethnic groups (DePalma, 1991). Yet racioethnic minorities in a unit in which they are the numerical majority may still experience racism; women in units where women are over-represented may still experience sexism. These dynamics are especially likely to occur when local intergroup relations are viewed in the larger organizational context that is still dominated by a senior white male group. The lack of permeability of the upper organizational ranks may heighten the polarization between racioethnic and gender groups (cf. Alderfer, 1986). Climate and context, not numbers, are the real issues pertaining to the implementation of diversity policies.

Over time, however, we anticipate a follow-up study might show that increasing the numeric representation of white women and racioethnic minorities will have an impact on attitudes, as Blau's (1977) research suggests. Similarly, Alderfer, Tucker, Alderfer and Tucker's (1988) findings suggest that a temporal dimension must be added to the intergroup theory of changing relations in organizations. Attitudes form slowly over time and are not easily modified. Only recently has the organization under investigation, and the society in which it is embedded, established as a priority increasing the representation of white women and minorities at all levels. Our study is based on data collected at one point in time. It could well be that attitudes have already become more positive with increased heterogeneity. For example, organizational units generally have had more experience with gender heterogeneity than racioethnic heterogeneity. Perhaps this longer time period may explain why we found a significant relationship between valuing diversity for gender heterogeneity and not racioethnic heterogeneity. Another possible explanation for the lack of results showing a relationship between racioethnic heterogeneity and valuing diversity is due to the fact that some units may be racially heterogeneous, yet may also have drastic under-representation of specific racioethnic minority groups. In particular, the degree to which individuals who are African-American are represented in a unit may be a powerful predictor of the climate for diversity, given the history of slavery in the United States and the prominent role of African-Americans in the U.S. Civil Rights movement. It is possible that the widespread integration of African-Americans into prestigious research institutions of higher education in America may have a key impact on perceptions of diversity climate. Indeed, write-in comments by approximately 10 per cent of the respondents indicated that the term 'minority' was often interpreted as pertaining solely to 'African Americans'. Still another reason for the lack of significance for the racioethnic heterogeneity variable may be due to the fact that some of the minority respondents are foreign-born. It is likely that the attitudes of minorities who were foreign-born may systematically differ from the attitudes of U.S. minorities (Porras, 1991). Because the researchers did not have access to records concerning

the distribution of foreigners across racioethnic groups compared with Americans, we were unable to control for this.

Given our belief that intergroup attitudes are slow to change over time and were embedded in an organization that was predominately white male, it is not surprising that contextual variables did not explain as much of the variance in diversity climate as group variables. Ultimately, however, structural characteristics create contexts that result in different climates in organizations and work groups. The size of the F values for the regression model and the F values for unit characteristics were significantly larger for the 'valuing employer efforts to promote diversity' subscale than 'attitudes regarding qualifications' subscales. Our sample was currently more favorable toward diversity in the abstract sense than in terms of their views toward specific women and racioethnic minorities in their unit, which may be indicative of heightened stereotyping and splitting of other groups.

The other contextual variable that performed well in the regression model for two out of the three subscales (qualifications of racioethnic minorities and valuing employer efforts to promote diversity) was the resources for racioethnic minorities scale. More positive attitudes toward diversity climate were held by members of units that were giving less than equal support to racioethnic minorities. Providing at least equal or greater resources to racioethnic minorities than white men is perhaps one of the most visible departmental forms of supporting diversity. Members of units providing inadequate support may experience heightened awareness of the gap between the University's visible rhetoric of the importance of diversity and the way their unit's policies still help to perpetuate institutional racism via resource allocation. Members may psychologically deal with this gap and compensate for the lack of support by becoming more accepting of diversity. The gap may cause discomfort and may help move attitudes in a direction favoring employer efforts to improve diversity. Because our resource subscales are based on perceived level of support, in future studies, it would be preferable to collect concrete data such as the actual allocation of research assistants, release time from teaching, internal research dollars, and so forth.

The study also points to the need to better understand issues of backlash and perceptions of equity regarding employer activities to promote a diverse work force. In an era of shrinking resources and downsizing, the competition between groups for scare organizational resources will intensify. As our findings showed, racioethnic minority women believed they had the least access to organizational resources. This finding is consistent with Bell's (1990) conclusions that career-oriented black women experienced greater barriers to becoming fully integrated into the workplace than white women.

Our results show that employer efforts to enhance diversity are more embraced by white women and racioethnic minorities, most of whom are not high up enough in the organization to effect change. The results for the white men in our study may be partially attributed to defensive routines and their questioning the fairness of currently being disadvantaged by having different recruitment and rewards structures for individuals from historically under-represented groups. Our results suggest that conducting cosmetic diversity activities in an organization that is still overwhelming dominated by white males may, in fact, exacerbate negative intergroup processes such as hostility and splitting. The findings show that there are varying perceptions over the extent to which racioethnic and gender groups are given the same treatment. Effectively fostering organizational diversity may be difficult to achieve, particularly if such efforts are perceived by white men as penalizing them while benefiting white women and racioethnic minorities. Contributing factors to these results is the fact that racioethnic minorities and white women are still vastly under-represented in this firm, which may also heighten the proclivity of members of these groups to engage in negative projective routines. In addition little interven-

tion, such as training or face-to-face communication, had been done to communicate the reasons for employer efforts to enhance work force diversity and demonstrate how such efforts will enhance organizational effectiveness. Mandated efforts to foster diversity will are likely to fail without such actions.

Porras (1991) contends that the process of diversification has six stages: denial, recognition, acceptance, appreciation, valuing, and utilization. We believe that the organization studied is at the recognition stage. In terms of organizational learning, the institution, like many, is still stuck on the problem of getting individuals to 'value diversity' and has not yet determined ways to 'utilize and exploit it', as Porras recommends.

Future research across organizations is needed that would collect data similar to those in this study, but would take care to understand how the diversity policies are operationalized for each organization. The research should use items that have scales regarding white women, racioethnic minority women and minority men, so that confusion about a survey measuring attitudes toward women and minorities might not be interpreted to mean white women and minorities as opposed to minority and white women as a group. Using a liaison group that includes members who mirror the key group members in the organization to develop an empathic survey and to conduct the study is also recommended (cf. Alderfer, 1980; Alderfer and Brown, 1972), since the current instrument represented intergroup issues mainly of interest to the senior administration and may have overlooked other key matters. More research is also needed that includes a larger sample of minorities so that more comparisons between racial and ethnic groups, and foreign- and U.S.-born racioethnic minorities can be conducted. Clearly, longitudinal study is needed on the conditions that might lead diversity climate to vary over time. To begin to understand diversity climate, however, organizations need to start by collecting baseline data such as those collected in our study.

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Appendix: Scales constructed for study

Value efforts to promote diversity

(Five point scale: 5=strongly agree, 4=agree, 3=neither agree or disagree, 2=disagree, 1=strongly disagree)

If organization X is to remain an excellent institution it must recruit and retain more minority faculty.

If organization X is to remain an excellent institution it must recruit and retain more women faculty.

If organization X is to remain an excellent institution it must recruit and retain more handicapper faculty.

Increasing gender diversity among the faculty is important in promoting greater understanding and cooperation between men and women.

Increasing minority representation among the faculty is an important way to achieve multi-racial understanding and cooperation.

The organization should continue to work towards ensuring that academic programs are fully accessible to handicappers.

Attitudes toward qualifications of racioethnic minorities

(Five point scale: 5 = much higher, 4 = slightly higher, 3 = about the same, 2 = slightly lower, 1 = much lower)

The scholarly qualifications of minority faculty, compared to non-minority faculty in my school/department are _____

The research productivity of minority faculty, compared to non-minority faculty in my school/department is _____

Attitudes toward qualifications of women

(Five point scale: 5 = much higher, 4 = slightly higher, 3 = about the same, 2 = slightly lower, 1 = much lower)