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TARGET ARTICLE

Diversity Science: Why and How Difference Makes a Difference

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This article proposes that addressing the complex ethnic and racial issues of the 21st century will require a diversity science. A diversity science will consider how people create, interpret, and maintain group differences among individuals, as well as the psychological and societal consequences of these distinctions. A diversity science will recognize that these significant social distinctions (in the case of this article, race and ethnicity) are not simply natural, neutral, or abstract. Instead they are created and re-created in the process of everyday social interactions that are grounded in historically derived ideas and beliefs about difference and in a set of practices and institutions that reflect these ideas and beliefs and that therefore shape psychological experience and behavior. According to this "sociocultural" framework, psychological experience and behavior, in turn, reinforce particular cultural and structural realities. As an initial step toward a diversity science, this article reviews the roots and consequences of two examples of how to think about difference, color blindness and multiculturalism. Through this sociocultural lens, intergroup behaviors can be understood as more than just products of individual prejudice. This article also proposes that a comprehensive diversity science requires a critical examination of majority group perspectives, minority group perspectives, and their dynamic interaction beyond the typical Black–White binary. Such a diversity science has the potential to help meaningfully inform race-related policy.

A deep concern with how race and ethnicity make a difference for behavior has always fueled social psychology. This concern is now more necessary and relevant than ever. The first decade of the 21st century is characterized by an increasingly complicated set of racial issues invigorated by a steady flow of immigrants, deeply entrenched racial disparities, vastly divergent views on race-related events and policies, and a concomitant, growing sentiment that recent political events have erased the problems of race in the United States. As demographics change and as select members of underrepresented groups achieve positions of power, how will individuals and communities make sense of this diversity? Can they do so without turning a blind eye to racial inequality? Why and how will difference make a difference?

The ability of social psychology to address this complicated set of issues rests in part on its ability to continue to develop a science of diversity that adopts a sociocultural understanding of racial inequality—one that recognizes the intertwined roles of cultural and structural realities (i.e., cultural beliefs and social positioning) in shaping intergroup relations.[1] The central, but often ignored, insight of this approach is that intergroup relations do not occur in a vacuum. They unfold with certain cultural understandings about what race is and how difference should be understood and dealt with. Accordingly, these ways of thinking about difference and whether this difference matters help people not only to make sense of racial realities but also to reinforce them. A diversity science must therefore be able and willing to avoid employing and perpetuating an abstract conception of race; to locate the sources of inequality not only in individual minds but also in the practices, policies, and institutions that they create; and to unearth cultural ideologies that

[1]There are many types of diversity. For the purposes of this article, I focus almost exclusively on racial and ethnic diversity within the United States.

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help perpetuate systems of inequality. A sociocultural paradigm also requires social psychology to address a variety of underexamined theoretical assumptions and perspectives. This includes interrogating the mask of privilege that Whiteness carries, investigating the perspectives of both minority and majority groups in dynamic interaction, and documenting the experiences of groups beyond the Black–White binary. In so doing, diversity science will be able to provide descriptions of diversity-related psychological processes that can help inform policy.

In this article, I first make a case for the need for a science of diversity. I outline the reasons why diversity science should be guided by a sociocultural framework that takes account of cultural and structural realities. I then examine prevalent approaches to diversity that guide intergroup relations and may sustain inequality. Finally, I discuss additional theoretical considerations for a diversity science.

Diversity Science: The Time Is Now

Shifting Demographics: Increased Diversity

Why does the first decade of the 21st century represent an important time to study diversity? The most basic reason regards the shifting demographics of the United States. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, some minority groups in the United States are growing so quickly relative to the majority group that a "majority-minority crossover" (i.e., a shift in who constitutes the numerical majority and minority) will likely occur sometime between 2040 and 2050 (Ortman & Guarneri, 2009; U.S. Census Bureau, 2008). In other words, according to current population projections using present racial and ethnic categorization schemes, the U.S. population will consist of more people of color than Whites.[2] Major explanations for this growth include international migration, age distribution, and fertility rates.

The U.S. has experienced nearly unprecedented immigration, especially from Southeast Asia and Mexico, Central America, and South America. Even if net immigration remains at a constant level, the Hispanic[3] population is expected to more than double between 2000 and 2050, whereas the Asian population is expected to increase by 79% (Ortman & Guarneri, 2009). For Latinos, even absent immigration, the population will likely increase substantially owing to their lower median age and above replacement-level fertility rates. As a result of these immigration and fertility trends, one fifth of all children younger than age 18 are either foreign born or in a family where at least one parent was foreign born (Beavers & D'Amico, 2005). In addition, in terms of ethno-racial diversity, almost half of all children younger than age 5 are members of a racial or ethnic minority, and if current immigration and fertility trends persist, that share will increase.

The past several decades have also witnessed the proliferation of linguistic diversity. The number of Americans speaking a language at home other than English has more than doubled since 1980 (Pew Hispanic Center, 2006). About 31 million U.S. residents speak Spanish at home—making it the second-most spoken language. Yet Spanish is not the only fast-growing language in the United States; Chinese, Tagalog, Vietnamese, and Arabic have also experienced large gains since 1990. In 2004, nearly 50 million Americans spoke a language other than English at home—nearly one fifth of all U.S. residents age 5 or older. Notably, however, today's immigrants, on average, make the transition to speaking English more quickly than immigrants at any other time in U.S. history.

The net result of these international migration and fertility trends and the concomitant growth of linguistic and ethno-racial diversity is that the United States has experienced and will continue to experience significant changes in its demographic—and hence in its racial, ethnic, and cultural—composition. As Bill Clinton stated in a 1998 commencement speech, "No other nation in history has gone through demographic change of this magnitude in so short a time." In other words, the diversity of the United States is growing, and people are facing more diversity in more arenas of their lives than ever before. In U.S. education, for example, children from immigrant families (more than 50% of whom have origins in Latin America) represent the fastest-growing group of school-age children. Demographic transformation has also gripped the U.S. workforce (although earlier predictions overestimated the pace of growth; see Edelman, Fuller, & Mara-Drita, 2001, for a discussion). From 1988 to 2018, non-Hispanic Whites' share of the workforce is projected to decline from 79% to 64%. During the same period, the percent distribution of Hispanics in the workforce is expected to grow from 7.4% to 17.6% (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2009).

Persisting Racial Disparities: The Structural Reality

The United States faces these shifting demographics at a time of surprisingly large racial disparities across various measures of social and economic welfare. These disparities, which persist in many domains including wealth and employment, criminal justice,

[2]The current classification system utilized by U.S. government agencies includes five racial categories (White; Black or African American; American Indian or Alaska Native; Asian, Native Hawaiian, or other Pacific Islander; and Some Other Race) and two ethnic categories (Hispanic or non-Hispanic).

[3]The terms "Latino" and "Hispanic" are used interchangeably throughout this article.

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housing, education, and health, paint a picture of a structural reality that is far from equal. Rather than simply glossing over racial disparities, I describe the following disparities below in order to highlight—regardless of the reasons for the disparities—the degree to which structural realities, and therefore individual experiences, are differentially distributed across a variety of groups.

Wealth and employment. In contrast to 26% of Whites and 33% of Asians/Pacific Islanders, more than half of Hispanics, African Americans and American Indians/Alaska Natives are poor or near poor (James, Thomas, Lille-Blanton, & Garfield, 2007).[4] According to the Federal Reserve Board, the wealth gap has widened to a point where Blacks own on average one tenth of the wealth of Whites. Despite increased levels of education among Black and Hispanic men, they earn 73.1% and 67.8%, respectively, of the earnings of White men. Black women earn 86.1% of that of White women, whereas Hispanic women earn 74.3% (U.S. Department of Labor, 2010). With respect to unemployment, as of March 2010, the unemployment rate for White Americans was 8.8%, whereas the rate among Black Americans was 16.5%, with Black men posting the highest rate at 19.0% (U.S. Department of Labor, 2010). For Hispanics the rate was 12.6%. Among those employed, Blacks and Hispanics are least likely to hold management or professional occupations, whereas Asians and Whites are more likely to hold these positions (U.S. Department of Labor, 2009). Moreover, as a whole, minorities compose about one third of American workers in private industry and are underrepresented in executive and senior management (13%), midlevel management (19%), and professional (24%) positions (Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, 2007), indicating that, as a group, they are underrepresented and hold little power in American workplaces. The same can be said of institutions of higher education, where faculty of color as a whole make up only 15% of professor-rank faculty (National Center for Education Statistics, 2007).

Criminal justice. With respect to the criminal justice system, the incarceration rate for Black men ages 20 to 34 is a staggering 1 out of 9, as compared with 1 out of 106 for White men (Pew Center on the States, 2008). Native Americans have the second largest incarceration rate in the country, 38% higher than the national rate. The incarceration rates of Black and Hispanic male youth (ages 16–25) are 6.5% and 2.7%, respectively, whereas the rate for White male youth is 1.2% (Pew Hispanic Center, 2009). Notably, incarceration rates are stratified by education. For example, among Black men born between 1965 and 1969, 30% of those with no college education and nearly 60% of those with no high school degree were incarcerated by 1999 (Pettit & Western, 2004). Disparities also emerge in sentencing, where Blacks receive much longer sentences in general and Blacks and Hispanics are much less likely than Whites to be assigned no prison term when that option exists or to have their sentences adjusted down (Mustard, 2001). Racial differences are particularly salient in capital sentencing. For example, Black defendants are more likely than White defendants to be sentenced to death and the death penalty is disproportionally sought if the victim is White than if the victim is not White (e.g., Baldus, Woodworth, Zuckerman, Wiener, & Broffitt, 1998).

Housing. Housing remains a major site of racial disparities. For example, as of 2008, 74.9% of Whites owned homes, whereas 59.1% of Asians, 48.9% of Hispanics, and 47.5% of Blacks owned homes (Kochhar, Gonzalez-Barrera, & Dockterman, 2009). The home ownership rate among Native Americans is estimated to be as low as 33% (The Enterprise Institute, 2004). The mortgage denial rate was 10.8% for high-income Whites and 19.7% for low-income Whites (Kochhar et al., 2009). In contrast, among high-income Latinos the denial rate was 27.7%, among low income Latinos it was 29.0%, and for Blacks it was roughly 30% regardless of income. Moreover, discriminatory practices such as racial steering persist in the housing industry. The 2000 Housing Discrimination Study (U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, 2000) estimates that roughly one fifth of Black, Latino, and Asian prospective renters experience discrimination relative to their White counterparts. That figure is 28.5% for Native Americans.

Education. According to the Civil Rights Project (Orfield, 2009), U.S. public schools are more segregated today than in the past 40 years, especially for Blacks and Latinos. Educational outcomes continue to reveal disparities, which some researchers argue are related to persisting segregation. For example, among 16- to 24-year-olds, the high school drop out rate is highest for Hispanics (21.4%)—four times that of Whites (5.3%) and three times that of Blacks (8.4%; National Center for Education Statistics, 2009). Notably, the statistic for native-born Latinos is much lower than for those born outside of the United States (Pew Hispanic Center, 2009). In Pacific and Northwestern regions, less than 50% if American Indian and Alaska Native students graduate high school (Faircloth & Tippeconnic, 2010). Rates of attainment of a college degree likewise show wide variation. Whites are less likely than Asians to hold a college degree (28.9% vs. 49.4%) but more likely than Blacks (17.2%), Native

[4]The economic picture of Asians varies greatly between and within national origin (Takaki, 1989).

Hawaiians/Pacific Islanders (14.9%), Native Americans/Alaska Natives (12.7%), and Latinos (12.6%). The picture with respect to Asian Americans is complicated, with some groups having very high college degree rates (e.g., Taiwanese at 73.5% and Indians at 69.0%) and others having rates on par with other minority groups (e.g., Laotians at 11.5%, Hmong at 12.6%, and Cambodians at 13.3%; U.S. Census Bureau, 2009). Likewise among Latinos, Salvadorans and Mexicans have much lower rates (7.9% and 8.7%) than Venezuelans (50.8%).

Health. Housing also impacts health in a number of ways, including access to medical care and health conditions (D. R. Williams & Collins, 2001). The relationship between poor environmental conditions (e.g., air pollution) and poor health is well established. Housing areas with the poorest conditions tend to have the highest concentrations of minorities and weak political power to improve conditions (see Anderson, 2008). With respect to some common indicators of health, infant mortality rates are higher among Black and American Indian women than among Asian, White, and Latina women, even among those similarly situated in terms of years of educational attainment. Perhaps even more striking, Black women with a college degree have a higher rate of infant mortality than women of any other background who have not graduated high school (James et al., 2007). With respect to health insurance, Hispanics make up the largest population of uninsured workers at 39.6% followed by American Indian/Alaska Natives at 32.1%, African Americans (22.8%), Asian and Pacific Islanders (18.8%), and Whites (14.1%; James et al., 2007). Although access issues are important, minorities tend to receive lower quality health care even when income and access to health care are controlled (Smedley, Stith, & Nelson, 2003).

The harsh structural reality is that even in 2010, after decades of decreasing rates of overt prejudice and after the election of a biracial president, the United States is still home to striking racial inequalities across many different groups. As the statistics just cited reveal, the size of some inequalities varies on the basis of educational attainment, generational or native-born status, and national origin. Of course, racial disparities stem from a complex set of factors, and not just from racial prejudice and discrimination. The extent to which these disparate outcomes stem from racial prejudice and discrimination lies outside of the scope of this article. Note, however, that studies tackling this difficult question report that at least some portion of inequality in domains such as income (e.g. Charles & Guryan, 2008) and incarceration (e.g. Crutchfield & Bridges, 1986) is due to factors such as racial bias. For example, studies by criminologists indicate that 20% of the racial disparity in imprisonment cannot be explained by differential rates of crime commission. In Washington State, for example, one report finds that more than half of the racial disproportionality cannot be explained by levels of crime involvement. With respect to income inequality, research by economists suggests that 25% of the racial wage gap can be explained by prejudice. Whatever the source, the disparities in major life domains just described, at the very least, paint a picture of a highly stratified society—and not of a society that has transcended issues of racial inequality. Moreover, these disparities are of particular interest here in light of the very different perceptions of whether and why they exist.

Polarized Views on Racism: Interpretations of Structural Reality

Notably, a strong racial divide exists regarding perceptions of racism and racial inequality. A recent study conducted in Jacksonville, Florida, provides an interesting illustration of this phenomenon (Jacksonville Community Council, Inc., 2009). The study found patterns of racial disparities in income, employment, housing, education, and health similar to the national patterns just described. However, in juxtaposition with these figures, the study also found a 25% racial gap among residents in beliefs that racism was a problem. Specifically, three fourths of Black residents but only half of White residents surveyed believed that racism had been a problem in that city over the past year. In other words, different constituents perceived the structural reality differently.

The response to Hurricane Katrina provides an even more compelling illustration of the racial gap in perceptions of racism. Whereas 71% of African American respondents indicated that they believed that the events surrounding Katrina showed that racial inequality persists, only 32% of Whites did so (Pew Research Center for the People & the Press, 2005). The same gap appears for perceptions of job opportunities: Whereas only 17% of Blacks and 34% of Hispanics believe that racial minorities have equal job opportunities as Whites, 53% of Whites do (Gallup, 2006). Group differences in perceptions of societal racism have also been documented by social psychologists and sociologists (e.g., Dovidio, Gaertner, Kawakami, & Hodson, 2002; Feagin, 2006; O'Brien et al., 2009; Operario & Fiske, 2001).

Explanations for the racial gap in the perception of societal racism have focused on factors such as differences in knowledge or representations of history (Adams, O'Brien, & Nelson, 2006; Kurtis, Adams, & Yellow Bird, 2010; Salter & Adams, 2010) and different reference points for assessing progress (Eibach & Ehrlinger, 2006). Others have focused on self-protective motives. For example, studies using a self-affirmation paradigm have demonstrated that Whites'

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self-protective motives undergird their denial of societal racism (Adams, Tormala, & O'Brien, 2006; Unzueta & Lowery, 2008). The specific self-protective motives associated with denial vary. On one hand Whites' denial of racism may be motivated by a need to protect oneself from threats to the legitimacy of the status quo or systems of privilege (e.g., Branscombe, Schmitt, & Schiffhauer, 2007; Unzueta & Lowery, 2008). On the other hand, Whites may simply be distancing themselves from the perception that they themselves are racist. According to research by Sommers and Norton (2006), for example, the most common lay representation of White racism is old-fashioned racism, a label from which people tend to demonstrate a self-distancing motive (see also Esses & Hodson, 2006, for a discussion of lay theories of ethnic prejudice).

Both explanations put into high relief the significance of a "sociocultural" perspective. They suggest first of all that an individualistic, "bad apple" view of racism prevails, a view that locates the source of racism in prejudiced individuals. To the extent that people believe that racism exists in the minds of a few bad apples, it becomes much more difficult for them to interpret racial disparities through a structural lens. Research by O'Brien and colleagues (O'Brien et al., 2009) on reactions to Hurricane Katrina revealed that the more participants endorsed an individualistic conception of racism, the less racism they later perceived in Katrina-related events. Moreover, an individualistic conception of race protects privileged groups from the self-image threats associated with acknowledging institutional racism (Unzueta & Lowery, 2008). In a study by Unzueta and Lowery, Whites were less willing to acknowledge institutionally generated disparities as indicators of racism partly because they were trying to minimize their perceptions of White privilege. A second sociocultural thread running through this research is the way in which differently situated groups entrench themselves in a particular perspective on racism. For example, powerful self- or status-protecting motives work in tandem with particular beliefs about difference to construct particular interpretations of reality.

A Postracial America?

In addition to the denial of racism previously evident in national polls and empirical research, the 2008 election ushered in a wave of commentary on postracialism—the idea that society has progressed beyond race and thus race no longer matters. For example, both on election night and in the days following the election, politicians and media pundits made sweeping claims that the era of postracial America had dawned. Yet the argument that race played an insignificant role in the election seems unjustified. Although the election of a president of color was a historically monumental event, the prevalence of hate speech and threats, the public discussions of Obama's association to controversial Black figures (e.g., Reverend Wright), and the speculation as to whether race was going to pull the rug out from under Obama come election day left an indelible imprint on the campaign and the election. For some, the election signaled that the pinnacle of hard-fought progress had finally been reached and for others it signaled the ridding of the metaphorical "race card"—that racism could no longer be used as an excuse to explain racial disparities. Either way, the election and the postrace argument paradoxically curtailed support for racial equality. For example, research suggests that the representation of Obama had *negative* effects on belief in the need for racial progress and on support for policies such as affirmative action (e.g., Kaiser, Drury, Spalding, Cheryan, & O'Brien, 2009). In addition, soon after the election, the postracial argument was immediately used to challenge the constitutionality of the Voting Rights Act in *Northwest Austin v. Holder,* a 2009 Supreme Court case. Notably, however, analyses of the 2008 election (submitted as an amicus brief in that case) revealed that, despite the outcome of the election, race did play a role in voting behavior, particularly in certain jurisdictions (Ansolabehere, Persily, & Stewart, 2010).

In sharp contrast to postracialism, persisting tensions and resistance surrounding issues of diversity continue to plague social relations. For example, hate continues to play a role in shaping responses to diversity. The Southern Poverty Law Center documented 932 hate groups operating in the United States in 2009, a figure that increased 55% since 2000 (Southern Poverty Law Center, 2010). The proliferation of harassment in offices and schools across the country through overt acts, such as the placement of hangman nooses (see Thomas & Plaut, 2008), also betray a resurgence of racial hostility. By some accounts, racial discrimination in the workplace is actually on the rise (e.g., Wooten & James, 2004).

In addition, high-profile incidents or trends from the past decade or so serve as important reminders of how ideas about racial diversity are socially contested. These tensions have surfaced, most recently, in the form of racial narratives and varied reactions surrounding the arrest of Henry Louis Gates, a Black Harvard professor, in his Cambridge, Massachusetts, home in 2009; the BART police shooting earlier that year of Oscar Grant, a Black male, in Oakland, California; the national debate in 2003 over affirmative action at the University of Michigan and in 2009 over a test used to promote firefighters in New Haven, Connecticut; the nomination and confirmation hearings of the first Latina Supreme Court Justice, Sonia Sotomayor; the news coverage of Asian American scientist Wen-Ho Lee in 1999–2000 over spying allegations and the earlier news headline "American Beats out Kwan" (an Asian American figure skater) in the 1998

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Winter Olympics; the imprisonment and the profiling of Middle Eastern Americans both before and after 9/11; and the use of Native American sports mascots in college and professional sports. These events and situations cause tension in part because they are understood from drastically different perspectives depending upon the different cultural and structural realities of perceivers.

In sum, the reasons why the early part of the 21st century marks one of the most important times to study diversity are multifaceted, but they all appear to be largely related to beliefs about difference. For example, the election of the first Black male president was coupled with an ideological shift in assumptions about whether race matters. Likewise, the confirmation of Supreme Court justice Sonia Sotomayor was coupled with a belief that one could judge from (and that many do judge from) a neutral, nonethnic perspective. To more fully understand the operation of diverse environments, we have to recognize the contested nature of the concepts of difference (e.g., race, racism, and diversity), the surge of rationalizing and legitimizing narratives surrounding diversity, and the ways in which these ideas animate institutional life and reproduce status relations. It is this struggle over concepts of difference and inclusion that a diversity science needs to address, and capturing this negotiation requires a more thoroughly sociocultural approach than that traditionally used in social psychology. Moreover, a science of diversity must be capable of documenting how divergent cultural and structural realities, perpetuated by each other and by institutions and practices, animate diversity-related attitudes and behaviors, all in a continuously mutually constitutive process.

A Sociocultural Framework

Addressing why and how difference matters requires a sociocultural analysis. A sociocultural analysis involves paying careful attention to the historically rooted cultural and structural contours of human behavior and psychological tendencies (Wertsch, del Rio, & Alvarez, 1995) (see Figure 1).[5] The approach highlights the ways in which individuals are both shaped by and are architects of their social worlds (Berger & Luckmann, 1966). This task involves first and foremost examining the cultural ideas and beliefs that are prevalent in people's social worlds (Kroeber & Kluckhohn, 1963) and that depend on status relations and social positioning (Ridgeway & Smith-Lovin, 1999). These socially, culturally, and historically constituted ideas and beliefs, or cultural models, get inscribed in institutions and practices (e.g., language, law, organizational policies), and daily experiences (e.g., reading the newspaper, watching television, taking a test) such that they organize and coordinate individual understandings and psychological processes (e.g., categorization, attitudes, anxiety, motivation) and behavior (e.g., voting, interpersonal discrimination, disengagement; D'Andrade & Strauss, 1992; Holland & Quinn, 1987; Shore, 1996).[6] Of importance, these cultural ideas are units of meaning that individuals create while making sense of their social world and while engaging in social interaction. In other words, they impart to people the meanings they use to live their everyday lives while reinforcing social and cultural systems. Cultural ideas and beliefs are widely shared and instantiated in everyday practices, yet they may often go unnoticed and thus remain invisible or at least uninterrogated—especially if they serve the interests of powerful groups. With respect to diversity, cultural ideas and beliefs may include collective representations about a social group (Fryberg, Markus, Oyserman, & Stone, 2008; Stangor & Schaller, 1996) or even ideas about what diversity is and how to interpret and approach difference (Plaut, 2002). These ideas are then used to construe people's actions, make decisions, or justify ones actions in racially diverse situations.

Take, for example, the Henry Louis Gates incident in which a White police officer, James Crowley, arrested a Black Harvard professor at his home in Cambridge, Massachusetts. After the incident, the officer was quick to defend his actions as nonracially motivated. He also defended himself by publicly describing an incident in his career in which he had tried to save the life of a Black basketball star: "I wasn't working on a black man. I was working on another human being" (Drash, 2009). In other words, the officer contends that his actions toward Professor Gates should be interpreted through a lens of color blindness, the logic being that if he had demonstrated through previous actions that he was not a "racist" and that he did not judge on the basis of skin color, then his actions in the Gates incident could not be viewed as race related. What this particular understanding of the incident is missing, however, is an appreciation of the ways in which cultural meanings and power relations necessarily imbued the situation.

Viewed through a prototypical social psychological lens, we might interpret the incident simply as a product

[5]See Adams, Biernat, Branscombe, Crandall, and Wrightsman (2008) for a relevant account of sociocultural approach to studying racism and oppression. See also DiTomaso, Post, & Parks-Yancy (2007), which underscores the need to link discussions of workplace diversity to socio-structural relationships and inequalities.

[6]The concept of cultural models approach bears resemblance to other concepts that refer to cultural units of meaning. These include lay theories (Levy, Chiu, & Hong, 2006), tacit epistemologies (Nisbett et al., 2001), ideology (Jost, Fitzsimmons, & Kay, 2004; Pratto, Sidanius, Stallworth, & Malle, 1994), social representations (Moscovici, 1984), shared reality (Hardin & Higgins, 1996), and worldviews (Kaiser, Vick, & Major, 2004).

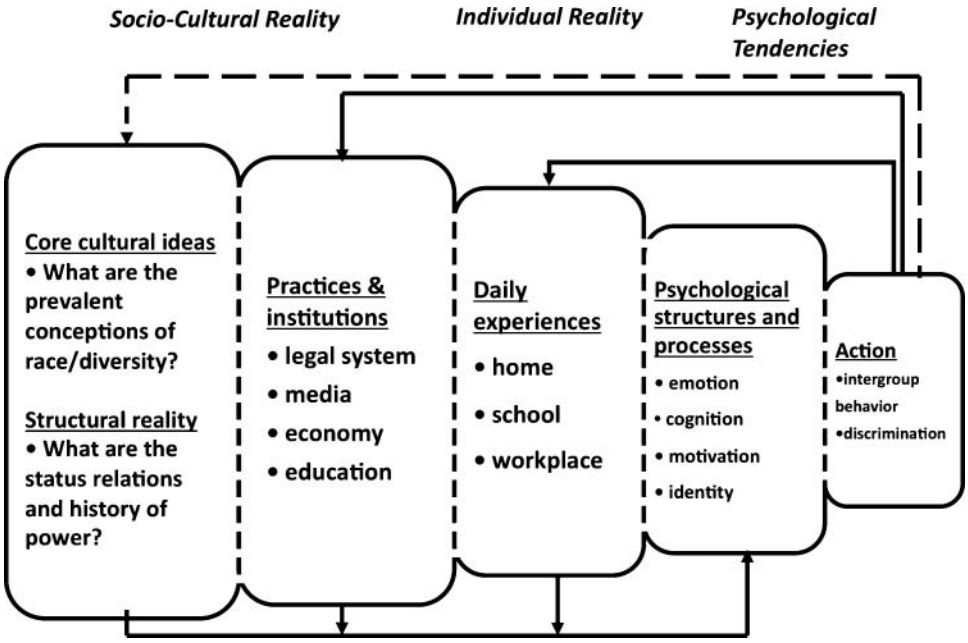

Figure 1. Diagram depicting a sociocultural framework for intergroup relations. Figure adapted from Markus and Kitayama (1994).

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of individual racial bias: that the officer harbored deeply ingrained—but perhaps implicit—hostility toward Blacks that motivated him to arrest Gates. In fact, a large body of research on stereotyping and prejudice might even lead some to conclude that the incident was natural and inevitable. Although the incident most likely involved racial biases, a sociocultural framework suggests that these biases are far from natural. People are not simply programmed to have particular stereotypes of and biases against certain groups. Rather, those habits develop over time in constant interaction with a social world that supports them (see Adams, Edkins, Lacka, Pickett, & Cheryan, 2008). In addition, the social world and its institutions (e.g., policing) offer certain facially race-neutral policies and practices that serve to rationalize or legitimize race-related outcomes. In fact, adding to the literature on institutional racism (Jones, 1972/1997), a growing body of work suggests that prejudice may be perpetuated not just by negative stereotypes and hostility but by cultural systems of meaning (Jones, 1972/1997; Knowles, Lowery, Hogan, & Chow, 2009; Levy, Chiu, & Hong, 2006; Sanchez-Burks, Bartel, & Blount, 2009), some of which can actually be benevolent in nature (Glick & Fiske, 2001).

What is missing from an "individual racial bias" account, therefore, is an understanding of how social and cultural meanings and practices imbued the Gates situation from the very start. A sociocultural analysis would draw out the fact that the two men (a White police officer and a Black resident) inhabited different sociocultural realities. Gates's perspective was likely laden with knowledge of the long history of Black men's problematic interactions with the police. The officer's perspective was likely informed by knowledge of a long history of police officers' charged interactions with Black men. These representations, channeled through institutions such as the legal system and the media and a history of previous interactions, produced different psychological realities. For the officer, being worried about a charged interaction could have led him to worry about control issues and assert dominance. For Gates, worries about being controlled and disrespected could have lead to escalating indignation. The two men were thus caught between divergent sociocultural realities that existed long before the initial incident and in a tension that extended beyond prejudice.

Although knowledge of the operation of individual biases—both overt and implicit—make an important and necessary contribution to our understanding of processes related to diversity, our picture is incomplete without an appreciation of how stereotyping and prejudice is animated by cultural meanings and status relations. Moreover, this kind of approach may do more to alleviate the tension between divergent sociocultural realities. For instance, Adams, Edkins et al. (2008) found that social psychology lessons that locate the source of racism in individual processes of stereotyping and prejudice are less successful in changing these habits than lessons that highlight the systemic nature of racism. They argued that because the environment shapes racism over time, teaching about the

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source of racism as those aspects of the environment is more effective than teaching about deeply seated biases that reside within the individual. A sociocultural approach recognizes both the individual's psychological experience and behavior as well as its social and cultural context, in the form of cultural ideas and values that in conjunction with status relations inform institutions and everyday practices that shape the individual's psychological experience and behavior (see Figure 1). Inevitably, however, this type of approach is met with some unease. Where is the source of the problem—in the minds of individuals or in the environment they produce? And if it is in the environment, how to we measure that and how do we intervene?

A growing number of social psychological studies have begun to examine the race-relevant ideas and beliefs that constitute material products in the environment; for example, archival studies of media products such as prime time television shows (Weisbuch, Pauker, & Ambady, 2009) and newspaper articles (Goff, Eberhardt, Williams, & Jackson, 2008; Sommers, Apfelbaum, Dukes, Toosi, & Wang, 2006). These archival studies document the ways in which racial bias is inscribed in sociocultural products, perpetuating representations of and behavior toward social groups and ultimately reproducing cultural and structural realities. For example, Goff and colleagues found that news articles depicting Blacks convicted of capital crimes from 1979 to 1999 in Philadelphia contained more ape-relevant language (e.g., ape, monster, jungle) than articles depicting Whites convicted of capital crimes. The researchers then linked the amount of apelike language used to describe each defendant with death sentencing. In other words, the more apelike the news coverage of Black defendants, the more likely they were to be put to death. Likewise, Weisbach and colleagues found that in popular television shows, nonverbal behavior toward minority actors was more negative than it was toward majority actors, and that this behavior reproduced racial bias in viewers. In other words, the material representations produced and embedded in public or shared settings reinforced the race-relevant cultural and structural realities in people's minds.

In terms of intervention, several recent studies also suggest a starting point for changing cultural and structural realities. Sociocultural analysis offers a more comprehensive, and in some respects more optimistic, view of how to change racial bias and improve the climate for diversity. Researchers have manipulated, for example, messages about social groups in promotional videos (Murphy, Steele, & Gross, 2007), television commercials (Davies, Spencer, Quinn, & Gerhardstein, 2002) and room décor (Cheryan, Plaut, Davies, & Steele, 2009; Mendoza-Denton, Shaw-Taylor, Chen, & Chang, 2009) in order to create spaces in which underrepresented groups feel more comfortable and vested. Notably, researchers have also manipulated messages about conceptions of race or diversity in cultural products, for example, in newspaper articles (M. J. Williams & Eberhardt, 2008) and in corporate brochures (Purdie-Vaughns, Steele, Davies, Ditlmann, & Crosby, 2008). For example, M. J. Williams and Eberhardt manipulated lay conceptions of race by exposing participants to news articles that portrayed either a biological construction of race or a more social construction of race (M. J. Williams & Eberhardt, 2008). The study revealed that, compared to the social construction of race, the biological construction of race yielded negative effects on proclivity toward intergroup friendship and reactions to racial inequality (see also Levy et al., 2006).

Of course, the systems that perpetuate the racial disparities described herein will be difficult to dismantle employing the small environmental adjustments described in these studies. Ideally, by taking a sociocultural approach, researchers will be able to create more extensive programs that attack racial bias in more comprehensive ways. Claude Steele (2010), in *Whistling Vivaldi*, for example, documents more large-scale attempts to create spaces that are "identity safe" and truly free of inequality producing mechanisms. In addition, recent studies suggest the power of large-scale programs of intergroup dialogue to create more equitable environments (Sorensen, Nagda, Gurin, & Maxwell, in press). At the very least, however, designing studies that capture how the mind works while operating under certain ideological assumptions, and how individuals use those assumptions to build worlds (through institutional and daily practices) that reproduce structures of inequality, can also go a long way in bolstering social psychology's understanding of race-related psychological functioning.

Models of Diversity: Cultural Realities that Guide Intergroup Relations and Reinforce Structural Realities

Social psychologists have long conducted research that is fundamental to our understanding of how race operates. The current situation of race requires that we widen our theoretical lens to incorporate a sociocultural perspective, starting with a closer examination of how intergroup relations are affected by ideas about what racial diversity means. In other words, in light of the racial disparities that persist alongside the pervasive perception that racism is not a problem, it is particularly important to examine how core cultural ideas about interpreting difference and structuring group relations also structure behavior around race and reproduce racial inequality.

In the past few decades, two major examples of ideas about how to interpret difference and structure intergroup relations—what I term "models of

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diversity"—have pervaded American institutional life: color blindness and multiculturalism.[7] Models of diversity represent implicit and explicit systems of ideas, meanings, and practices that suggest how groups should include and accommodate one another and how to best organize a diverse society (Berry, 1984; Markus, Steele, & Steele, 2000; Plaut, 2002). The color-blind model emphasizes the sameness of people, that racial categories should be ignored or avoided, and that differences based on social identity should be assimilated into an overarching unifying category. In contrast, the multicultural model explicitly acknowledges differences among groups and promotes the notion that differences associated with social identities should be valued and even celebrated. I further describe the history (legal in particular), contours, and implications of these two models below. I recognize that there are other models for intergroup relations, but I will rely on these two for this article.[8] Also, although the two models are not necessarily mutually exclusive, they have been treated as such in the literature.

I should also note that although the tension between these two models can be conceived of as a "new American dilemma" (Jones, 1998), the two ideologies described herein are not new. The questions that undergird the tension between them have plagued social relations throughout American history and have attracted the attention of sociologists, political theorists, educators, and legal scholars for more than a half-century. Thus it seems appropriate for a field devoted in part to examining processes related to diversity and racial inequality to comprehend and weigh in on this ongoing debate.[9]

Moreover, it is important for social psychologists to realize that every day institutional actors make important, consequential decisions on the basis of certain theories about how intergroup relations function—what difference is and what difference it makes. For example, with respect to equal protection law (the law most commonly implicated in affirmative action cases), the Supreme Court has for the past three decades espoused a view that using racial categories automatically begets discrimination or racial stratification and that racial preference systems leave minorities feeling stigmatized. Not only do many other reasons exist for racial discrimination and feelings of stigmatization, but current social psychological research (some of which I describe next) actually suggests that these assumptions about psychological functioning are flawed.

What Is Color Blindness?

The color-blind model has developed and shifted in a variety of ways throughout U.S. history. Although it has roots in the pre–Civil War era, the color-blind model (or doctrine, with respect to the law) sprang into national legal consciousness with Supreme Court justice John Harlan's dissenting opinion in *Plessy v. Ferguson*. In *Plessy*, the Court upheld a Jim Crow law regarding segregation of Louisiana railroad cars and ruled that "separate but equal" did not violate equal protection. The equal protection clause, they argued, was meant to promote equality before the law and not in matters of "social arrangements," which lay outside the scope of the clause. Enacting what would come to be known as color-blind constitutionalism, in a lone dissent Justice Harlan argued, "Our Constitution is color-blind, and neither knows nor tolerates classes among citizens" (*Plessy v. Ferguson,* 1896). It should be noted that Harlan left unquestioned the assumption that Whites were dominant and superior: "The white race deems itself to be the dominant race in this country. And so it is, in prestige, in achievements, in education, in wealth and in power. So, I doubt not, it will continue to be for all time. . . . " (see Carr, 1997). Therefore, color blindness, as articulated by Harlan, was not an ideology that unequivocally advocated for the dismantling of inequality.

A long period of official, legal sanctioning of segregation practices (i.e., Jim Crow) continued following *Plessy*, until the *Brown* decision in 1954. In *Brown v. Board*, the Court struck down segregation and claimed that separate was inherently unequal, at least in public education. The *Brown* decision, and the social and legal momentum surrounding it, also ushered in a decade or so of civil rights legislation (e.g., Civil Rights Act of 1964, Voting Rights Act of 1965, Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965, Fair Housing Act of 1968). Liberals generally used color blindness as a tool to advocate for antidiscrimination policies to tackle problems of social inequality. Thanks in part to these liberal architects of color blindness, the notion that "race should not matter" in determining the opportunities of racial minorities gained social momentum.

It is important to note, however, that a tension between color blindness and group consciousness had already begun to foment even among liberals. A distinctly race-conscious agenda was also being advanced by some liberals at this time. For example, Martin Luther King, Jr., often credited with popularizing the

[7]The following terms have also been used to denote approaches to diversity in the literature: interethnic ideologies (Knowles et al., 2009; Wolsko et al., 2000), diversity philosophy (Purdie-Vaughns et al., 2008), diversity paradigms (Thomas & Ely, 1996), and diversity perspectives (Ely & Thomas, 2001).

[8]Researchers have also explored ways to pay attention to the positive features of group difference and identity while encouraging a superordinate identity (Gaertner et al., 2000; Hewstone & Brown, 1986; Hornsey & Hogg, 2000). Readers are referred to Deffenbacher et al. (2009) for a discussion and more generally to Park and Judd (2005) for a review of social cognitive research on the relationship between categorization and prejudice.

[9]See Schofield (2009) for a discussion of this dilemma and an ethnography of colorblindness in a school setting (one of the earliest social psychological analyses of colorblindness).

color-blind ideal with his *I Have A Dream* argument that people should be judged "not by the color of their skin," also advocated for race-conscious policies. In a 1965 interview with *Playboy*, for instance, King intimated that "equality" was not adequate to eradicate inequality, and he proposed a program of restitution to disadvantaged groups. Moreover, some liberals also supported the explicitly race-conscious affirmative action executive orders issued by presidents Kennedy and Johnson during the 1960s. Johnson himself conceded the limits of a color-blind notion of equality in a 1965 commencement speech at Howard University:

> You do not wipe away the scars of centuries by saying: Now you are free to go where you want, and do as you desire, and choose the leaders you please. You do not take a person who, for years, has been hobbled by chains and liberate him, bring him up to the starting line of a race and then say, "you are free to compete with all the others," and still justly believe that you have been completely fair. Thus it is not enough just to open the gates of opportunity.

The unified color-blind agenda began to show cracks, and starting in the late 1960s and 1970s, in part in reaction to affirmative action programs, the use of color-blind rhetoric began to change. Whereas in the previous two decades, color blindness had been used to advocate for the dismantling of systems of inequality that disadvantaged minorities, conservatives realized the political usefulness of color blindness to argue against racial preference programs—programs that were seen as disadvantaging Whites. The argument went, if race-consciousness is so insidious, then we should not use racial classifications at all—not for Jim Crow and not for racial remediation (Haney-Lopez, 2005). This argument gained momentum through the 1980s and is inscribed in most Supreme Court race jurisprudence of the 1980s and 1990s. This interpretation of equal protection manifests in the contexts of employment (*Wygant v. Jackson Board of Education*, 1986), government contracting (*Adarand v. Pena*, 1995; *Richmond v. Croson*, 1989), voting (*Shaw v Reno*, 1993), and higher education (*Bakke v. Board of Regents*, 1978; *Grutter v. Bollinger* and *Gratz v. Bollinger*, 2003).[10]

Undergirding the opinions in each of these cases (and guiding the decisions of most) was an increasingly fortified rhetoric of color blindness. In *Shaw*, a North Carolina case involving the legality of the use of race in redistricting, for example, Justice O'Connor wrote, "Racial classifications of any sort pose the risk of lasting harm to our society. They reinforce the belief, held by too many for too much of our history that individuals should be judged by the color of their skin." In *Adarand*, a Colorado case involving the legality of race-conscious set-asides in government contracting, Justice Scalia wrote that

> to pursue the concept of racial entitlement—even for the most admirable and benign of purposes—is to reinforce and preserve for future mischief the way of thinking that produced race slavery, race privilege and race hatred. In the eyes of government, we are just one race here. It is American.

And more recently, in *Parents Involved v. Seattle Schools* (2007), a Seattle and Louisville case on the legality of the use of race in school assignment, Chief Justice Roberts argued that "the way to stop discrimination on the basis of race is to stop discriminating on the basis of race."

For social psychologists, this history of color blindness is instructive for at least three reasons. First, it demonstrates the malleability of models of diversity (see also Knowles et al., 2009)—the shifts of meanings of equality and equal protection over time depending on social and political circumstances and goals. Second, it illustrates the institutionalization of certain models of racial diversity—notions of race and diversity that do exist in the minds of individuals but that become codified in law or in interpretations of the law. Third, these models betray certain understandings of how racial prejudice works that are, in the case of color blindness, at odds with contemporary social psychological findings.

One inconsistency has to do with the conceptualization of race. The meaning ascribed to race in these opinions is that of race as an abstract, meaningless category, what critical legal scholar Neil Gotanda (1991) has called "formal race" (i.e., "neutral, a-political descriptions describing only 'skin color'"). According to critical legal scholar Ian Haney-Lopez,

> race exists in this conception almost as a magic word: say it, and race suddenly springs into being, but not otherwise. This magic word formalism strips race of all social meaning and of any connection to social practices of group conflict and subordination. This is the cornerstone of the Court's colorblind jurisprudence. (p. 71)

Race as viewed in this way lends itself much more easily to the perception that racial categories can be turned on and off than race as viewed through a historical, cultural, or structural lens (Gotanda, 1991). The current Court espouses a view of race that is at times seemingly completely disconnected from reality—that what it means to be Black, or Latino, or Asian, or Native American is simply affixing a label—a label that can simply be discarded from use. It is no surprise, then, that the remedy that Chief Justice Roberts

[10] *Bakke* and *Grutter* cases ultimately supported affirmative action in higher education but contain arguments invoking color blindness.

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advocates for ending racial discrimination is to "stop discriminating on the basis of race."

Yet a large literature in social psychology supports the notion that race perception cannot simply be turned "on" and "off." Meeting the general conditions for automaticity (Bargh, 1994), racial stereotyping influences judgment without conscious awareness, is often unintentional, operates efficiently, and can be difficult to control (e.g., see Devine & Monteith, 1999, and Fiske, 1998, for a review; Banaji & Dasgupta, 1998, for a discussion). The automaticity of racial stereotypes has been captured, for example, in a voluminous literature that includes studies on the link between race and perceptions of criminality (Correll, Park, Judd, & Wittenbrink, 2002; Eberhardt et al., 2004) and on the link between racially stereotypical features and social judgment (Blair, Judd, & Fallman, 2004; Eberhardt et al., 2004), to name just a few. Of course, social psychologists have found that automatic stereotyping can be weakened, for example, with the presence of certain self and social motives and a variety of strategies (e.g., see Blair, 2002; Dasgupta, 2009, for review). However, sometimes these strategies (e.g., suppressing stereotypes) can even backfire or lead to stronger, not weaker, stereotypes (e.g., Galinsky & Moskowitz, 2000; Macrae et al., 1994). In other words, this "magic" of turning off social categories such as race is not nearly so simple as the justices espousing color blindness have made it out to be.

Moreover, studies directly manipulating color blindness have found the opposite results to the justices' speculations: that color blindness can actually lead to greater, not weaker, racial bias. For example, Richeson and Nussbaum (2004), extending research by Wolsko, Park, Judd, Wittenbrink (2000), examined the effects of exposing individuals to color-blind versus multicultural ideology. Participants read a statement depicting one ideology or the other and then listed five reasons why that approach was a positive approach to interethnic relations. Then they tested racial bias by having participants complete both an implicit measure (a Black–White Implicit Association Test [IAT]) and an explicit measure (feeling thermometers). Consistent with previous IAT research, they found that participants exhibited a pro-White pattern of responses. However, the pro-White pattern was significantly larger among those who had been exposed to the color-blind prompt. Moreover, the pro-White bias found in the explicit measure was significantly different from zero in the color-blind condition but not in the multicultural condition. In other words, the color-blind condition was associated with bias, whereas the multicultural condition was not. Of interest, the researchers also found a similar effect of the ideological prompts on explicit bias against Asians and Latinos. Correlational studies also support these findings. For example, Ryan, Hunt, Weible, Peterson, and Casas (2007) found that stronger endorsement of color blindness (relative to multiculturalism) predicted stronger stereotypes and less ethnocentrism among Whites.

The insidious effects of color blindness have been captured not only with respect to racial attitudes but also in nonverbal behaviors in interracial interaction. For example, Apfelbaum, Sommers, and Norton (2008) subtly manipulated a color-blind norm in a "guess who" game. Whites who adopted a color-blind norm engaged in less friendly nonverbal behaviors than those who adopted a race-acknowledge norm. The findings also revealed that Whites who were the most motivated to avoid appearing biased were the ones most likely to avoid race during the interaction. However, Black observers rated these participants as more prejudiced, not less prejudiced, in interracial dyads. In other words, the strategy backfired. Why did it backfire? Using a modified Stroop task, the researchers found that decreased capacity for inhibitory control accounted for the effect of using a color-blind strategy on nonverbal friendliness—leading color-blind participants to appear more prejudiced.

Another laboratory study conducted in Canada provides parallel support for the contention that color blindness can impede intergroup relations when used as an interaction strategy. Vorauer, Gagnon, and Sasaki (2009) examined the effects of a color-blind prompt (vs. multicultural, anti-racist, and control) in dyadic interactions between White and Aboriginal Canadians. They found that White participants exposed to the color-blind prompt exhibited more prevention orientation (e.g., "I have been trying to prevent my exchange with the other participant from going badly"). They also found that these participants exhibited more negative affect toward their interaction partner. In other words, reflecting on the suggestion that ignoring race leads to better intergroup relations may have created a preoccupation of trying to ignore social categories that prevented a more positive experience. In contrast, the multicultural condition, which advocated the acknowledgment of ethnic and racial categories, resulted in a more outward focus and more positive, other-directed comments.

It could be that the color-blind approach creates not only a diversion of cognitive resources but also less opportunity for empathy. A correlational study in counseling psychology linking therapists' color-blind beliefs to reactions to their clients suggests this may be the case. Burkard and Knox (2004) found a significant, negative relationship between color blindness and empathy (i.e., empathic concern and perspective taking). Moreover, they found that in responding to clinical vignettes therapists with higher levels of color blindness placed more responsibility on Black (but not White) clients for solving their own problems.

Although an increasing number of studies point to the potential insidious effects of color-blind ideology,

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at this point, scientific understanding of the psychological sources and correlates of color-blind beliefs is somewhat limited. Whereas some research on color blindness links it to the purportedly nonprejudiced goal of trying to appear unprejudiced or avoiding racial categories (Apfelbaum et al., 2008; Norton, Sommers, Apfelbaum, Pura, and Ariely, 2006; Vorauer et al., 2009), other research has come out more strongly in support of the view that color blindness is an ideology deployed with the intent of maintaining the racial status quo (Bonilla-Silva, 2003; Knowles et al., 2009; Saguy, Dovidio, & Pratto, 2008). Although color blindness is not always linked to racist beliefs, some studies do point to an association between the endorsement of color-blind beliefs and prejudice as measured by the Modern Racism Scale and the Quick Discrimination Index (Carr, 1997; Neville, Lilly, Duran, Lee, & Browne, 2000). In addition, Neville et al. found color blindness to be related to global belief in a just world (e.g., "I feel that people get what they deserve") as well as the sociopolitical subscale of the multidimensional belief in a just world (e.g., "In a free market economy, the only excuse for poverty can be laziness and lack of enterprise"). Another problem is the multiple meanings of color blindness that currently pervade the literature and measures created to test for color-blind beliefs. Color blindness has been used, for example, to represent evasion of race, denial of racism and racial privilege, and belief in assimilation. Clearly, more work is needed to more sharply define what color blindness means psychologically and what its effects are across contexts.

In creating a diversity science, it is also important for social psychologists to reflect on the ways in which the field unwittingly perpetuates a color-blind perspective. Although social psychological research helps to dispel the notion that race is simply an abstract concept that can easily be psychologically erased, this conception of race is also simultaneously perpetuated by psychological research in two major ways. First, the field perpetuates this conception with its neglect of issues of race and culture in the study of "basic" processes—an act of omission. Generally speaking, psychological processes are assumed to be universal and the study of race is relegated to work on stereotyping and prejudice. Information about the race of participants is increasingly provided but with little information of variation among groups or examination of how psychological processes are shaped by certain sociocultural contexts. Second, even in areas of psychology that tackle race head on (e.g., stereotyping and prejudice), research may unwittingly foster a view of race as an abstraction that resides solely in the minds of individuals. For example, textbooks in social psychology present race as a formal, or natural, category with virtually no interrogation of why it has come to be seen this way or why certain racial categories have taken on certain social meanings (Markus, 2008).

In sum, color blindness is a powerful ideology about racial diversity—what difference is and whether it matters—that currently pervades the U.S. public imagination and constitutional law. Some might even argue that the ideology has a hegemonic grasp on racial jurisprudence and social policy (Brown et al., 2003). The problem is that perception and behavior "on the ground" plays out, as social psychologists have unveiled, in systematically racially biased ways. Furthermore, color-blind beliefs actually help reproduce systems of inequality (Schofield, 2009).

What of the Supreme Court's equation of the use of race with racism (Haney-Lopez, 2005)? Psychologically, does any use of racial categories constitute racism? Does a more race-conscious, multicultural approach necessarily elevate bias? The answer given by recent social-cognitive research is, not necessarily (Deffenbacher, Park, Judd, & Correll, 2009; Park & Judd, 2005; Wolsko et al., 2000). Moreover, research on organizational diversity finds positive effects on minority employment status of using category-conscious models relative to category-blind models (e.g., Konrad & Linnehan, 1995). In one laboratory study, employing identity-conscious hiring guidelines led White MBA students conducting unstructured interviews to sit closer to the Black confederate and assign a higher salary than under identity-blind guidelines (Madera, Hebl, & Beal, 2009).

In addition, priming multicultural ideology in laboratory studies has resulted in lower racial bias and greater acceptance of and openness to others (Richeson & Nussbaum, 2004; Verkuyten, 2005; Vorauer et al., 2009). According to Vorauer et al.,

> Because this ideology highlights the importance of appreciating differences and the benefits of learning about and from members of other groups, it should divert individuals away from a preoccupation with how they are coming across and encourage them to adopt a more outward and responsive focus during intergroup exchanges. (p. 839)

In fact, Todd and Galinsky (2010) find that priming multiculturalism increases perspective-taking. Moreover, multicultural ideology prepares people for the expectation of difference, whereas encountering difference challenges the tenets of color-blind ideology (i.e., people are all the same) and can lead to frustration. Even though a color-blind approach can at first lead to suppression, eventually prejudice rebounds (Correll, Park, & Smith, 2008). Multiculturalism also appears to predict more inclusive attitudes on controversial social policies such as affirmative action, immigration, and English standards—associations not

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explained solely by the absence of racial prejudice (Wolsko, Park, & Judd, 2006). Other positive outcomes associated with multiculturalism include intellectual and citizenship engagement (Gurin, Dey, Hurtado, & Gurin, 2002), creativity (Leung, Maddux, Galinsky, & Chiu, 2008), organizational learning and effectiveness (Ely & Thomas, 2001), and greater psychological engagement of minorities (Plaut, Thomas, & Goren, 2009). The section that follows examines in more detail the roots and consequences of this ideology.

What Is Multiculturalism?

The ideology of multiculturalism grew out of the civil rights and ethnic group movements of the 1960s and 1970s. More specifically, multiculturalism arose from dissatisfaction with the progress made in ending racial inequality and in reaction to expectations of assimilation or integration of various immigrant and non-immigrant groups to the dominant "White" society (see Citrin, Sears, Muste, & Wong, 2001; Glazer, 1997). Multiculturalism also drew strength from the surge in immigrants that occurred after the passing of the Immigration and Nationality Act in 1965. This law lifted quotas on certain immigrant groups that had been instituted in 1924 to restore the population's Anglo and Northern European composition (see Jacobson, 1998) and was followed by a wave of immigration from Asian, Latin American, and African groups. The term "multiculturalism" (coined in Canada) gained traction in the United States in 1980s and 1990s, as evidenced by the proliferation of the term in national media outlets (Glazer, 1997).

Multicultural ideology has taken many forms ranging from "soft" to "hard" (see Citrin et al., 2001) and encompassing a wide variety of groups (e.g., race, ethnicity, religion; see Song, 2009). Generally speaking, multiculturalism is an ideology that encourages the recognition and appreciation of distinct cultural groups and their experience and contributions, the maintenance of the culture and cultural identities of those groups, and the sense that no one group's culture is superior or should be privileged (Berry, 1984; Takaki, 1993; Taylor, 1994). Advocates of multiculturalism have been particularly vocal in the realm of education, arguing for the need for programs ranging from those that attend to the cultures and histories of different groups to those taking a socially transformative approach to issues of ethno-racial inequality (Banks & Banks, 2009; Nieto, 1996; Sleeter, 1996).

Can Multiculturalism Yield Equality?

There is some evidence that a group rights perspective is conducive to the identity, well-being, and political protection of minority groups and to social change. Moreover, from the social psychological literature previously cited (e.g., Richeson & Nussbaum, 2004; Voraurer et al., 2009) it would appear that a multicultural approach provides a clearer path to equality. So is the answer simply to embrace a multicultural approach to diversity? Once again, the answer is, not necessarily.

Although multiculturalism certainly is promising in theory, it also risks perpetuating racial divides if not carefully implemented. For instance, some social psychologists have pondered the difficulty of "recogniz[ing] and appreciat[ing] ethnic and cultural differences without reifying divisive group boundaries" (Prentice & Miller, 1998, p. 19; see also Brewer, 1997). Indeed, if multicultural policies are designed in a way that essentializes group differences, they can cause further stereotyping of minority individuals on the basis of a group characteristic and result in their pigeonholing or marginalization (Thomas & Ely, 1996). For example, if a company hires a Latino for the sole purpose of catering to an emerging Latino market segment, that employee will probably not be integrated into the organization and will be seen primarily in his specialized role. Recent research suggests that multiculturalism may create the expectation of cultural boundaries within which minorities are expected to stay (Gutierrez & Unzueta, in press). Furthermore, because different minority groups have been embraced on and off at the whim of dominant groups throughout history, whose difference is valued often seems to shift easily with dominant group members' needs (Jacobson, 1998; Takaki, 1993).

In addition, there seems to be a limit as to how much difference is perceived as acceptable. Although sampling foods and traditions from other cultures may be palatable, the use of another language (e.g., Spanish, ebonics) and customs that are inconsistent with mainstream U.S. cultural norms (e.g., headscarves, female genital mutilation) can cause strong negative reactions (see Shweder, 2003). If multiculturalism is implemented as "foods and festivals," it may seem like we are embracing multiculturalism, but what do we do when the ethnic buffet or cultural lesson is finished? What has anyone really learned about each other's cultural and structural realities? What, if anything, has changed in terms of societal power relations? A similar problem exists with the "diversity rationale" that has surfaced in Supreme Court jurisprudence on diversity in higher education—the only justification for the use of race that has recently survived "strict scrutiny" (Ford, 2005). This argument for diversity reinforces a view of racial diversity simply as distinctive viewpoints and cultural practices. In other words multiculturalism in its most publicly acceptable manifestations may not have the capacity to address entrenched social inequalities.

Drawbacks to multiculturalism also involve the backlash it has inspired, not only in academic circles

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(e.g., Schlesinger, 1992) but also in public reactions. This opposition has manifested itself in many ways, including in policy stances and voting behavior against immigration, bilingual education, language rights, and affirmative action in a variety of states. According to U.S. public opinion research conducted by Citrin et al. (2001), multiculturalism tends to be interpreted by Whites as the special treatment of minority groups. More generally, research suggests that multiculturalism can serve as a source of resource and symbolic threat to majority group members (Ginges & Cairns, 2000; Morrison, Plaut, & Ybarra, 2009), and when threatened, antiegalitarian majority group members tend to embrace a variety of legitimizing ideologies, including color blindness, to preserve the status quo (Knowles et al., 2009; see also Saguy et al., 2008). This is consistent with work by Citrin and colleagues' finding that opposition toward multiculturalism is linked to animosity toward minority groups. Even in the absence of explicit threat or animosity, multiculturalism may be associated with feelings of exclusion among majority group members. Using both implicit and explicit measures, in a series of studies with college students and with employees in an organization, Plaut, Stevens, Buffardi, and Sanchez-Burks (2009) documented a relationship between multiculturalism and perceptions of exclusion among nonminorities (see also Stevens, Plaut, & Sanchez-Burks, 2008). Other research suggests one reason why this may be the case: Diversity is perceived as being associated with minority (not majority) values, concerns, and contributions (Unzueta & Binning, in press).

In fact, several studies have demonstrated a relationship between group membership and endorsement of various models of diversity. Not surprisingly, given its focus on ethnic minorities, multiculturalism receives greater support from ethnic minority group members (Ryan et al., 2007; Verkuyten, 2005; Wolsko et al., 2006). For example, in a sample of Dutch and Turkish participants living in the Netherlands, Verkuyten (2005) found that minority group members endorse multiculturalism more than majority group members. He also demonstrated in correlational and experimental studies that multiculturalism is associated with greater in-group identification and positive in-group evaluation among minority group members but with less ethnic group identification and more negative outgroup evaluation for majority group members.

In sum, multiculturalism holds some promise in improving intergroup relations (see also Jones, Lynch, Teglund, & Gaertner, 2000). However, it also has the potential to reify group boundaries and may be limited in its ability to change structural realities. Furthermore, if implemented in ways that essentialize difference or create threat and feelings of social exclusion, multiculturalism may contribute to backlash against minority groups or reinforce ways of thinking about diversity that ignore the need to address structural inequalities. By attending to and revealing the roots and consequences of conceptions of difference such as multiculturalism and color blindness, a diversity science helps to reveal why and how difference matters—how core cultural beliefs, practices and institutions, and daily experiences help to perpetuate racial inequalities and strained relations.

Diversity Science: Key Theoretical Perspectives

As previously argued, a diversity science needs to be capable of illuminating the racial or diversity "logics" that undergird and reproduce social relations. In the following sections, additional consideration is given to theoretical perspectives that can contribute to this objective.

Perspective on Majority Perspectives: Whites as Racial Actors

The reactions to multiculturalism just described not only demonstrate the power of cultural ideologies to elicit responses with great consequences for intergroup relations but also signal a need for a deeper understanding of dominant-group—or in the present case of the United States, White—identity. While social psychologists have uncovered a myriad of ways in which Whites perpetrate and perpetuate prejudice, we have left almost completely off the table the question of what Whiteness is in the first place, and how it plays an important role in shaping intergroup relations and sustaining inequalities (Lipsitz, 1998). Although the fields of sociology (Frankenberg, 1993; Perry, 2002), history (Jacobson, 1998; Roediger, 1991), communication (see Nakayama & Martin, 1998), and critical legal studies (Haney-Lopez, 1996; Harris, 1993), among others, have made some strides in interrogating Whiteness, very little work in social psychology has investigated how Whites think about their racial identity and what implications this has for interracial outcomes (see Knowles & Peng, 2005).

Understanding White identity is of particular import because of the mask of neutrality that is often afforded by a majority perspective. Legal scholar Patricia Williams (1997) referred to Whites' racial vantage point as the "majoritarian privilege of never noticing themselves" (p. 7; see also McIntosh, 1988). This phenomenon played itself out recently in the confirmation hearings of Sonia Sotomayor, as her neutrality—whether she would judge as a neutral party or as a member of her ethnic group—was repeatedly questioned. Political strategy aside, the assumption of neutrality of White judges reveals a lack of understanding of the social positioning of any individual, not to mention those who tend to enjoy the greatest racial privilege. This presumption of neutrality (and that other groups are

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biased) may not only serve to reinforce exclusionary practices but may also help fuel color-blind beliefs.

Perspective on Minority Perspectives

Research on the experience of stigma (see Crocker, Major, & Steele, 1998) has brought to the fore minority perspectives in race-related psychological processes. Yet in general, social psychology continues to privilege a majority perspective. This is true, and is just as problematic, in research on race.

What reasons could potentially help to account for this trend? Practically speaking, the majority of psychological studies depend upon convenient participant pools, and in many parts of the country these pools consist of mostly of White college students. The racial composition of the field is also predominantly White. One can imagine the probable increased ease with which researchers study the thoughts, feelings, and behaviors of their own group. Third, the assumption of universality in psychology still prevails (Shweder, 1990). What this means is that when we study basic processes, we tend to assume that people everywhere are basically the same and that it should not really matter if our sample is White or not (a color-blind perspective). At the end of the day, a perceiver is a perceiver. Finally, cultural psychology has taught us that Western thought is more concerned with the actor than with the subject or context (see Nisbett, Peng, Choi, & Norenzayan, 2001). In the case of the study of racism, the person holding and acting on bias is therefore likely to attract more attention than the person or people being acted upon. Westerners, it appears, more commonly see actors as the source of action (Markus & Kitayama, 2004), so attacking bias inside the person seems like the best strategy. This point is tremendously important to consider not only because it helps to explain why social psychology has produced so much work on the perceiver but also because it helps to explain why the field is so focused on individual bias as opposed to systemic or structural explanations of racism (see Adams, Edkins et al., 2008).

Another reason to consider minority perspectives is that this work can provide significant information as to how environments are being structured in ways that perpetuate inequality—ones that may otherwise remain invisible to the eyes of majority group members. For example, research by Purdie-Vaughns et al. (2008) has exposed the heightened sense of distrust among African Americans engendered by a corporation's color-blind approach to diversity—at least when that approach is accompanied by little visible evidence of diversity. Under these conditions, respondents were most likely to express concern about their devaluation due to race and to perceive racism in an attributionally ambiguous employment scenario. The researchers demonstrated that color blindness is part of the representational space that can trigger feelings of threat. There is good reason to believe, however, that from the perspective of many Whites, color blindness is seen as decreasing perceptions of prejudice (Apfelbaum et al., 2008; Norton et al., 2006).

Putting Perspectives Together: A Dynamic Approach to Diversity

This disconnect constitutes one reason why it is imperative for a diversity science to foster research that illuminates the ways in which these ideologies contour the interaction of minority and majority individuals and shape the sociocultural environments they inhabit. Research testing dyadic interracial or interethnic interactions constitutes one important step in that direction (e.g., Apfelbaum et al., 2008; Vorauer et al., 2009; see Shelton & Richeson, 2006). Another step is research on diversity climate, and in particular, on the implications of diversity climate for minority experiences. For example, organizational psychologists have found that minority managers' perceptions of the diversity climate in an organization (i.e., evaluation of aspects of the environment that signal racial conditions) is a major source of their intention to leave (McKay et al., 2007).

Do Whites help create a climate for diversity? In one study conducted in a large organization, Plaut et al. (2009) tested the relationship of the psychological engagement, or job commitment, of minority employees with the diversity attitudes of the White coworkers in their department. They hypothesized, on the basis of previous research on the relationship between diversity ideologies and racial bias, that high levels of color-blind attitudes among dominant-group members would create a negative climate for diversity and high levels of multicultural attitudes would create a positive climate for diversity. In fact, minority employees in low color-blind or high multicultural environments were more engaged. Moreover, the effects were mediated by perceptions of bias in the organization: those in less color-blind departments (and those in high multicultural departments) reported less bias in the organization, and this perception of bias helped account for the effect of Whites' color blindness and multiculturalism on minority engagement. Notably, these results held even when the researchers controlled for departments' demographic diversity. This suggests that cultural reality contributes significantly to minorities' experience, above and beyond structural reality (i.e., numerical representation). Of course, this does not imply that numbers do not matter. Clearly research has shown that being a "token," having "solo status," or not seeing one's group represented, for example, can substantially alter minorities' psychological experience, including motivation and performance (Murphy et al., 2007; Sekaquaptewa & Thompson, 2003). Yet the Plaut

et al. results suggest that focusing only on increasing numbers and not on the climate for diversity may impair efforts at decreasing inequality.

Perspective on Racial Foci: Beyond the Black/White Framework

Another bias that may impair efforts at decreasing inequality is the focus on racial binaries. Generally speaking, in the academy, work on race has focused its gaze primarily on Black–White race relations (Alcoff, 2003; Martinez, 1993). Social psychology is no exception. Much of the research conducted on racism examines racial bias geared toward Blacks, and many of our methodologies have been developed or used primarily to test prejudice against Blacks (although not exclusively). Some notable examples include the modern racism scale (McConahay, 1986) and the IAT (Greenwald et al., 1998). Moreover, most research on social perceivers has focused on prejudice as perpetrated by Whites against Blacks. Even research conducted on the target's perspective has focused primarily on the experience of racism by Blacks. For example, although it has now been applied to a variety of social groups, stereotype threat was originally conceived as a way to understand the experience of high-achieving African American students (Steele & Aronson, 1995).

This focus makes sense in light of the history of slavery and persistent Black–White inequality in American society. Some would even argue that Blacks' experience should be compared vis-à-vis all other groups—that rather than a Black–White binary, the more accurate characterization of racial divide is that between Black and non-Black (Glazer, 1997; Sears & Savalei, 2006; Yancey, 2003). According to this thesis of "black exceptionalism," Blacks experience racialization to a greater degree than other groups such as Asians and Latinos. Assimilative attitudes and opportunities, rates of racial intermarriage, and multiracial identification (vs. hypodescent, or the "one-drop" rule) have been suggested as some of the reasons for this "whitening" of Asian and Latino groups (Yancey, 2003).

Yet there are also reasons to argue for a White/non-White binary. Certainly minority status affords a certain perspective on difference and subordination that has lead to a great deal of commonality across groups. After all, many minority groups share a history of shared exclusion and fights for equal rights. For example, the Jim Crow laws that segregated Black from White Americans had their counterparts for other groups (e.g., "Juan Crow"). Hispanics, Asians, and Native Americans have faced restrictions on many rights, including among others citizenship, property, and voting, both legally (de jure) and in practice (de facto). In fact, according to Haney-Lopez (2005), the first case to dismantle Jim Crow was not *Brown v. Board* but rather *Hernandez v. Texas*, a jury exclusion case involving a Mexican American community decided by the Supreme Court 2 weeks earlier.

Yet a sociocultural approach may be more consistent with the "differential racialization thesis," which holds that each minority group has a unique history of racialized experience in American society. The problems of social perception that plague minorities in the United States are varied and inextricably linked to individual group histories. For Asian Americans, being seen as "perpetual foreigners" (and the denial of American identity and questioning of national loyalty) continues to constitute one of the greatest sources of their exclusion (Cheryan & Monin, 2005; Orbe & Harris, 2006; Yogeeswaran & Dasgupta, in press), codified in U.S. history both in law (e.g., 1882 Chinese Exclusion Act) and in practice. The perception of Asian Americans as the "model minority" has also generated a type of discrimination that differs from that of other groups (Orbe & Harris, 2006), can have pernicious effects (Cheryan & Bodenhausen, 2000; Takagi, 1992) and historically has been actively used to cast other groups in a negative light (Takaki, 1993). Latinos have faced a "perpetual foreign invader" association, despite that historically the U.S. border crossed them and even though two thirds of Latino youth are American citizens (Pew Hispanic Center, 2009). For Native Americans the biggest challenge has been invisibility (Fryberg & Townsend, 2007), where a limited set of stereotypes coupled with a lack of realistic, and often historical, representations (e.g., mascots, Hollywood characters) shape psychological reality. Likewise, for Middle Eastern Americans one of the greatest challenges has been the limited and often geographically inaccurate representation of religious extremists (Naber, 2000; Orbe & Harris, 2006).

The downside of ignoring this diversity of experience is a narrow psychological portrayal of what it means to be a person of color. In contrast, the benefits of recognizing this diversity include not only a deeper understanding of the phenomenological experience of different groups but also an appreciation of the generalizability of some processes of exclusion. For example, although the "perpetual foreigner" representation is particularly relevant to Asian American groups, research has found as association with African Americans as well (Devos & Banaji, 2005). In fact a close look at the racialization of Obama during the election reveals not only prominent African American representations but also the questioning of his American identity and loyalty (Omi & Lee, 2009). In other words, differentiating between the experiences of different groups can ultimately help to draw out important dimensions of exclusion.

A sociocultual perspective also encourages the examination of dimensions of difference beyond broad racial categories and how understandings of these

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differences also help perpetuate structural realities. Factors that have been shown to have cultural significance and repercussions for racial bias include, for example, stereotypicality, skin tone, or babyfacedness (Blair et al., 2004; Eberhardt et al., 2006; Livingston & Pearce, 2009; Maddox, 2004) and cues regarding ethnic identification (Kaiser & Pratt-Hyatt, 2009). Other important cross-cutting variables include immigrant versus native-born status, gender, class, sexual orientation, and disability. In fact, a growing literature indicates the need for understanding the ways in which intersectionality (the intersection of social identities; Cole, 2009; Crenshaw, 1989; Goff, Thomas, & Jackson, 2008; Purdie-Vaughns & Eibach, 2008) or social identity complexity (Roccas & Brewer, 2002) informs and promotes certain cultural and structural realities. In fact, intersectional blindness may pose even greater challenges for the inclusion of some groups (e.g., Black women) than colorblindness. Finally, in order to focus the present sociocultural analysis, this article has primarily examined U.S. race relations. Clearly, the specific conceptions of race and diversity discussed here may take different forms in other societies. Moreover, given that the U.S. context has served as a site for much of the psychological research on diversity, a more global perspective is needed to better understand diversity processes (Moghaddam, 2008).

Conclusions

As Americans deal with both demographic transformation and persisting inequality, diversity has taken center stage in major national policy debates across many different institutional contexts. Some of the questions that have emerged in these debates include the following: What role should race play in the voting process? Is race a permissible factor in school assignment? Should affirmative action be legal or are racial classifications of any kind inherently suspect? Whose language should be used? Whose history and literature should be taught to children? Should group identity play a role in determining who gets hired, promoted, or protected from layoffs? What role does race play in policing and how should it be addressed? Decision makers across a variety of contexts (e.g., courts, government agencies, school systems, and business organizations) give answers to these questions on a daily basis. And they do so guided by certain conceptions about what difference is and whether and how it matters.

We need a diversity science that will promote an understanding of the implications of these conceptions if we are to meaningfully address the policy debates that the aforementioned questions reflect. An individualistic understanding of the sources of racial inequality inside biased individual minds—though important—is inherently limited. Instead, diversity science should push the boundaries of social psychology to include a more cultural and structural understanding of how the mind interacts with the world to reproduce systems of inequality. These products of mind, which help to weave the fabric of social and institutional life, are evident, for example, in law, in organizational policies and practices, in media, and even in the value placed on diversity by others.

According to the evidence reviewed in this article, a diversity science that examines the sociocultural grounding of processes related to race shows us that, contrary to current, dominant legal opinion, color blindness cannot do the work of undoing racial inequality. If color blindness—no matter how well intentioned—guides the responses to the questions previously mentioned, then we can expect to see the perpetuation of racial disparities. Even multiculturalism may not be fully equipped to deal with entrenched racial inequalities. In addition, if multiculturalism does not resonate strongly in public opinion, as is currently the case (Citrin et al., 2001), then the ability of policymakers to use race-conscious remedies to address racial inequalities will continue to be constrained.

In other words, the direction that these and other notions of difference take has serious implications for the success of diverse environments—whether they will be marked by greater exclusion or by greater inclusion. A diversity science is needed to better understand these implications—from the perspective of minority and majority group members in dynamic interaction and along multiple dimensions of difference.

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