

Overlooking Sexism: How Diversity Structures Shape Women's Perceptions of Discrimination

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A thesis

submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of

Master of Science

University of Washington

2013

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Program Authorized to Offer Degree:

Psychology

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Acknowledgements

This research was conducted under the guidance of Cheryl Kaiser and Brenda Major and was supported by a National Science Foundation Graduate Research Fellowship awarded to Laura Brady and by National Science Foundation grants 1053732 & 1052886 awarded collaboratively to Brenda Major and Cheryl Kaiser.

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Abstract

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Two experiments test the hypothesis that the mere presence (vs. absence) of diversity structures makes it more difficult for women to detect sexism. In Experiment 1, women who learned that a company required diversity training for managers thought the company was more procedurally just for women and was less likely to have discriminated against a female employee compared to women who learned the company offered general non-diversity related training for managers. Experiment 2 used a similar design, but also gave women evidence that the company had indeed discriminated against women in hiring practices. Again, compared to the control condition, women who learned that the company offered diversity training believed the company was more procedurally just for women, which led them to be less supportive of sexism related litigation against the company. To the extent that diversity structures legitimize the fairness of organizations, they may also make it more difficult for members of underrepresented groups to detect and remedy discrimination.

Overlooking Sexism: How Diversity Structures Shape Women's Perceptions of Discrimination

As concerns about the treatment of legally protected groups (e.g., women and minorities) remain prominent in American workplaces, many corporations have responded by implementing diversity structures (Dobbin, 2009; Kelly & Dobbin, 1998; Paluck, 2006). These structures take various forms such as diversity policies, diversity training programs, and affirmative action initiatives, but all profess to create equal opportunities and treatment for all employees (Edelman, Fuller, & Mara-Drita, 2001; Paluck, 2006). Empirical research, however, suggests that diversity structures often fail to achieve these egalitarian objectives, and many commonly employed diversity structures have little to no impact on diversity (Kalev, Dobbin, & Kelly, 2006). In some cases, diversity structures may ironically *decrease* racial diversity (Kalev et al., 2006). Despite the limited efficacy of many diversity structures, high status group members, such as White men, believe that the mere presence of diversity structures, even clearly ineffective structures, signifies that organizations are indeed fair for underrepresented groups (Kaiser, Major, et al., in press). While high status group members have an obvious motivation to perceive workplaces that advantage their group as fair and legitimate (Jost & Banaji, 1994), low status group members do not. Nonetheless, theories of legitimacy raise the possibility that the mere presence of diversity structures may also cause low status group members to legitimize systems that potentially disadvantage their own groups. The present investigation tests this hypothesis.

Diversity Structures Create an Illusion of Fairness Among High Status Groups

In a series of studies, Kaiser and Major and their colleagues (in press) examined whether diversity structures create an *illusion of fairness among members of high status groups*. That is, they examined whether companies with diversity structures are perceived as fair for members of legally protected groups, even when there is objective evidence that the companies' procedures

unfairly disadvantage these groups. Across these studies, high status group members (i.e., Whites and men) were exposed to a company's diversity structure (e.g., diversity statement, diversity training program or diversity award) or control structure (e.g., general mission statement, general management training program or award for non-diversity related achievements). Those who viewed a diversity structure believed that the company was less discriminatory and more procedurally just for underrepresented groups, even when they were given evidence that the company had acted unfairly (e.g., promoted more Whites than minorities, interviewed more men than equally qualified women, or paid men more than equally qualified women). This perception of procedural justice, or the belief that employees are valued and subjected to fair, neutral and consistent procedures (e.g., Colquitt, 2001; Leventhal, 1980; Thibaut & Walker, 1975), led high status groups to perceive less discrimination against underrepresented groups when diversity structures were present.

The finding that diversity structures cause high status groups to perceive organizations as fair and to overlook discrimination against low status groups converges with theoretical perspectives on legitimacy (Lind & Tyler, 1988). When forming opinions about the legitimacy of institutions and authorities, people are often more persuaded by the presence of seemingly fair procedures than by the outcomes of these procedures (Tyler, 2001). Similarly, system justification theory argues that because people are motivated to perceive their social systems as fair and legitimate, they often overlook negative or unfair outcomes of these systems (Jost & Banaji, 1994). For high status groups, believing that diversity structures make the workplace fair allows them to feel positively about their own and their group's achievement, and legitimizes their group's high position in the status hierarchy. Thus, it is perhaps not surprising that high

status group members are so easily persuaded that diversity structures are effective approaches to creating equality in the workplace.

Group Status and the Illusion of Fairness

Less is known, however, about how diversity structures shape the perceptions of low status groups (e.g., minorities and women), the intended beneficiaries of diversity structures. In comparison to high status groups, low status groups may be more concerned about potential negative outcomes for their groups (Tajfel & Turner, 1986) and therefore less persuaded that the mere presence of a diversity structure proves that their group is treated fairly. Low status groups' previous experiences as the target of discrimination may raise suspicion about the motives of high status groups, causing low status groups to be more vigilant in detecting discrimination compared to high status groups (Crocker & Major, 1989; Kaiser, Vick, & Major, 2006; Major & Kaiser, 2006; Cohen, Steele, & Ross, 1999). Indeed, compared to Whites, minorities tend to be more attentive to their groups' representation and opportunities when forming opinions about a company and its commitment to diversity (Unzueta & Binning, 2011; Purdie-Vaughns, Steele, Davies, Dittmann, & Randall Crosby, 2008). Although this research would suggest that minorities may *not* fall victim to the illusion of fairness, decades of research in legitimization demonstrates that low status groups are not immune from legitimizing unfair systems, even when those systems disadvantage their groups (Dasgupta, 2004; Jost & Banaji, 1994; Jost & Hunyady, 2002; Major, 1994; Major & Schmader, 2001). Furthermore, low status groups may be particularly likely to legitimize unfair systems when they perceive those systems as having fair procedures (Tyler, 2001).

Indeed, in one study (Dover, Major, & Kaiser, under review), Latino participants viewed either a company's diversity related awards (e.g., "Top 50 Company for Latino Diversity") or

neutral awards unrelated to diversity (e.g., “Leader in Service”) and subsequently evaluated a Latino employee’s discrimination lawsuit against the company. The Latino participants varied in their endorsement of status legitimizing beliefs (SLBs) measured by belief in the protestant work ethic, belief in individual mobility and belief in status legitimacy. Respectively, these beliefs encompass the extent to which people believe that those who work hard succeed, that people can get ahead in society regardless of group membership, and that status differences between groups are justified (e.g., O’Brien & Major, 2005). When given evidence of a company’s diversity structure, Latinos who endorsed these status legitimizing beliefs perceived the company as more procedurally just and less discriminatory toward Latinos compared to a company with no diversity structure. In contrast, Latinos who rejected status legitimizing beliefs were not affected by the mere presence of a diversity structure; they perceived the company as equally unfair whether or not it had received a diversity award. This study provides initial evidence that like high status group members, some low status group members might ironically fall prey to the illusion of fairness by perceiving companies with diversity structures as fair for their groups.

Although the Dover et al. (under review) study is consistent with the legitimacy perspective that low status groups sometimes perceive diversity structures as effectively leveling the playing field, several important questions about this phenomenon remain. First, as this study did not provide participants with any objective information about whether the company actually treated Latinos fairly or unfairly, it might have been particularly easy for SLB-endorsing Latinos to conclude that companies that were publically recognized with diversity awards probably were in fact fair to minorities. Indeed, receiving a diversity award may be more synonymous with accomplishing diversity related outcomes than simply implementing a diversity policy or otherwise professing to be committed to diversity. The present investigation examines whether

low status group members show illusion of fairness effects even when it is abundantly clear that the company treated their group poorly. If the mere presence of a diversity structure placates low status group members and reduces their sensitivity to discrimination even when their group is likely the victim of discrimination, then the evidence for an *illusion* of fairness among low status group members would emerge.

Further, although the Dover et al. (under review) study provides an important demonstration of variability in low status group members' susceptibility to illusion of fairness effects, we suspect that for some low status groups, the illusion of fairness will occur irrespective of individual differences in tendencies to legitimize inequality (i.e., the endorsement of status legitimizing beliefs). Although psychologists often seek to describe the attitudes and behaviors of low status groups in general, low status groups vary tremendously with respect to their historical and contemporary positions in society, their relationships with higher status groups, and the particular circumstances surrounding their oppression. These differences undoubtedly shape how low status groups perceive and react to inequality (Jackman, 1994; Sellers, Smith, Shelton, Rowley, & Chavous, 1998; Sidanius & Veniegas, 2000).

Some scholars, for example, have suggested that, compared to low status racial groups, women do less publicly and privately to combat their disadvantage (see Jackman, 1994, Chapter 1) and are less likely to perceive discrimination against their group or themselves (Higgenbotham & Webber, 1999). This depressed sense of disadvantage among women may occur because compared to racial minorities, women maintain more intimate emotional and legal relationships with and feel more positively toward their high status counterparts (i.e., men) (Jackman, 1994; Sidanius & Veniegas, 2000; Rudman & Glick, 2008). In part because of these relationships, sexism has been characterized as more paternalistic and less antipathic than racism

(Levin, Sinclair, Veniegas, & Taylor, 2002; Sidanius & Veniegas, 2000). Indeed, positive cross-group relations decrease low status groups' support for justice-related advocacy on behalf of their own group (Ashmore, Deaux, & McLaughlin-Volpe, 2004; Dixon, Tropp, Durrheim, & Tredoux, 2010; Saguy, Tausch, Dovidio, & Pratto, 2009). Thus, given the close interdependence of men and women, women may be especially susceptible to legitimizing unfairness in organizations that tout their diversity credentials.

The current research examines how the mere presence of diversity structures affects women's perceptions of procedural justice and discrimination when women are potential victims of sexism. To the extent that women, irrespective of individual differences in endorsement of beliefs that legitimize the status hierarchy, show the illusion of fairness, the present studies will provide critical insight into how diversity structures shape the experiences of women, a group that currently occupies 47% of the US workforce (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2012). We hypothesized that the presence (versus absence) of a diversity structure would cause women to believe that a company was more procedurally just for women, even in the face of evidence that the company treated women unfairly (Hypothesis 1). We also hypothesized that the presence of a diversity structure would cause women to perceive the company as less discriminatory toward women (Hypothesis 2), and to be less supportive of sexism related litigation (Hypothesis 3). We predicted that perceptions of procedural justice would mediate the effect of diversity structures on perceived discrimination (Hypothesis 4) and support for sexism litigation (Hypothesis 5).

Experiment 1

Experiment 1 examined whether the presence (versus absence) of a diversity management training program causes women to perceive a company as procedurally just for women and to overlook the possibility that a company has discriminated against women.

Management training diversity structures are particularly important to examine because despite their frequent adoption (Dobbin, 2009), these programs often have no effect on diversity, and if anything, actually decrease diversity (Kalev et al., 2006), rendering them especially likely to function as window dressing. We hypothesized that women who read about a company's diversity management training program (compared to a general management training program unrelated to diversity) would perceive the company as more procedurally just for women (Hypothesis 1) and less discriminatory toward a female employee who sued the company for gender discrimination (Hypothesis 2). We predicted that perceptions of procedural justice would mediate the effects of the mere presence of a diversity structure on perceived discrimination (Hypothesis 4). Of secondary interest, and to provide a direct comparison to Dover et al.'s (under review) research with Latinos, we measured individual differences in women's endorsement of status legitimizing beliefs. We predicted that unlike minorities, women's legitimizing reactions to diversity structures would not be dependent upon their endorsement of status legitimizing beliefs.

Method

Participants

One hundred seventy-eight female participants were recruited from the University of Washington psychology subject pool. Eight participants were excluded due to random patterns of responding; specifically, responding on an item they were instructed to leave blank (Oppenheimer, Meyvis, & Davidenko, 2009). The final sample had a mean age of 18.76 years, and was predominately Asian American (51.8%) and White (25.3%). Non-Asian minorities

reported African American (3.5%), Hispanic American (6.5%) and multiracial or other (12.9%) ethnicities.¹

Procedures

Experiment 1 was completed during two separate sessions. During a mass testing session at the beginning of the quarter, we assessed participants' status legitimizing beliefs with 12 items used extensively in prior research (e.g., O'Brien & Major, 2005). Items measured participants' endorsement of the protestant work ethic (e.g., Most people who don't get ahead should not blame the system; they really have only themselves to blame), their belief in individual mobility (e.g., America is an open society where individuals can achieve higher status), and their belief in status legitimacy (e.g., America is a just society where differences in status between groups reflect actual group differences).

Several weeks later, participants took part in an ostensibly unrelated lab study that replicated Kaiser and colleagues' (in press, Experiment 5) method, which has previously shown illusions of fairness effects among White men contemplating women's experiences with sexism. Participants were told that they would read information about a company and a lawsuit against the company and that they would be asked to answer questions about the people and events described. First, participants read a profile of a fictitious investment company, Smith and Simon Corporation. Then, they were then randomly assigned to read about either the company's diversity training program ("Fostering Women's Success") in the diversity structure condition or its general managerial training program ("Fostering Employee Success") in the control condition (See Appendix A for the stimuli). These program descriptions were identical except that the diversity training program included phrases specifically about improving women's outcomes in

¹ We report analyses for all racial groups combined. Supplemental analyses demonstrated that participant race (coded as non-white = 0 White = 1) did not predict responses to outcome measures, nor did it interact with the experimental condition or status legitimizing beliefs, so it was not included in analyses.

the company. All participants then read a newspaper article describing a woman's gender discrimination lawsuit against the company. The woman claimed branch managers had preferentially referred clients to male employees, leading her and other female employees to have lower salaries than their male counterparts. Finally, participants completed dependent measures assessing their perceptions of the company's procedural justice for women and the likelihood that the company had discriminated against the gender discrimination plaintiff.

Procedural Justice for Women. Participants completed a five-item measure of procedural justice assessing the extent to which they perceived the environment at Smith & Simon to be procedurally just for women. Procedural justice was operationalized with the measure from Kaiser et al. (in press), which draws upon previous research on procedural justice (Colquitt, 2001; Lind & Tyler, 1988; Thibaut & Walker, 1975; Leventhal, 1980). Items were: *Women are able to express their views and feelings about their treatment at Smith & Simon Corporation; Women have influence over the outcomes they receive at Smith & Simon Corporation; Smith & Simon Corporation applies personnel procedures consistently across all employees, irrespective of gender; Smith & Simon Corporation values women's opinions; and Smith & Simon Corporation treats women with respect.* Participants responded using 7-point scales (1=Strongly Disagree 7=Strongly Agree; $\alpha = .85$).

Perceived Discrimination against the Plaintiff. Next, participants completed a 5-item measure of perceived discrimination assessing the extent to which they believed that the woman suing the company had been discriminated against (Kaiser et al., in press). Items included: *The individual suing Smith & Simon Corporation was discriminated against; The branch managers at Smith & Simon Corporation acted fairly in their distribution of customers to the individual suing the company (reverse coded); The individual suing Smith & Simon Corporation was given*

the same opportunities as other employees (reverse coded); The branch managers at Smith & Simon Corporation were biased when distributing customers to the individual suing the company; and The individual suing Smith & Simon Corporation was treated unfairly when customers were assigned. Participants responded using 7-point scales (1=Strongly Disagree 7=Strongly Agree; $\alpha = .73$).

Manipulation Check. Participants also completed a manipulation check on the diversity structure condition manipulation, in which they indicated whether they had read about Smith & Simon's "Fostering Employee Success" program (i.e., control condition) or "Fostering Women's Success" program (i.e., diversity structure condition). Response options were 1 (Fostering Employee Success), 2 (Fostering Women's Success) and 3 (I don't know).

Results

Manipulation Check

A frequency check on the diversity structure manipulation indicated that 82% of participants (69 in the control condition and 70 in the diversity structure condition) correctly remembered whether they had read about the company's gender diversity training program ("Fostering Women's Success") or its general managerial training program ("Fostering Employee Success"). Seventeen percent of participants (7 in the control condition and 22 in the diversity structure condition) incorrectly remembered which training program they read about. One percent of participants (2 in the control condition) did not recall the name of the training program. A chi-square test of independence revealed that this pattern of responses was not due to chance ($\chi^2(2, N = 170) = 77.19, p < .001$). We retained all participants for analysis, as all findings were unchanged irrespective of whether those who incorrectly recalled the manipulation were excluded.

Main Analyses

We hypothesized that the presence of a diversity structure would increase women's perceptions of procedural justice and decrease women's perceptions of discrimination against the plaintiff, irrespective of differences in women's endorsement of legitimizing beliefs. To test this hypothesis, we conducted hierarchical regression analyses on each dependent variable. In Step 1, we entered the diversity structure condition (0 = control condition, 1 = diversity structure condition) and the mean-centered status legitimizing variable. In Step 2, we entered the two-way interaction.

Procedural Justice. The regression model for procedural justice revealed that as predicted, women who read about a company's diversity structure believed that the company was more procedurally just for women ($M = 3.83$, $SD = 1.18$) compared to those who read about the control structure ($M = 3.21$, $SD = 1.10$) (Hypothesis 1; $b = .62$, $SE = .18$, $t(166) = 3.49$, $p = .001$, $d = .54$). There was no effect of women's endorsement of status legitimizing beliefs on perceptions of procedural justice ($b = -.26$, $SE = .21$, $t(166) = -1.25$, $p = .21$) or interaction between diversity structure condition and status legitimizing beliefs ($b = .34$, $SE = .28$, $t(166) = 1.24$, $p = .22$). Thus, the presence of a diversity structure increased women's perceptions of procedural justice irrespective of whether women endorsed or rejected status legitimizing beliefs.

Perceived Discrimination. The regression model for perceived discrimination indicated that as predicted, women who read about a company's diversity structure perceived the company as less discriminatory toward the plaintiff ($M = 4.74$, $SD = .72$) than women who read about the control structure ($M = 5.00$, $SD = .89$) (Hypothesis 2 $b = -.26$, $SE = .13$, $t(166) = -2.04$, $p = .04$, $d = -.32$). There was no effect of women's endorsement of status legitimizing beliefs on perceptions of discrimination ($b = .01$, $SE = .15$, $t(166) = .08$, $p = .94$) or interaction between diversity

structure condition and status legitimizing beliefs ($b = .01$, $SE = .20$, $t(166) = .06$, $p = .95$). As expected, the diversity structure decreased women's sensitivity to discrimination, irrespective of their personal endorsement of status legitimizing beliefs.

Mediation

We used the Preacher and Hayes (2012) Mediate macro to examine whether perceptions of procedural justice for women mediated the relationship between the presence of a diversity structure (present = 1, absent = 0) and perceived discrimination against the plaintiff. Consistent with predictions, the presence of a diversity structure predicted less perceived discrimination against the plaintiff ($b = -.26$, $p = .04$) and more perceived procedural justice for women ($b = .63$, $p < .001$). When condition and procedural justice were entered simultaneously as predictors of perceived discrimination, condition was no longer significant ($b = -.09$, $p = .43$), but procedural justice was significant ($b = -.26$, $p < .001$), revealing that procedural justice mediated the relationship between diversity structure condition and perceived discrimination (Hypothesis 4). We used 10,000 bootstrapped samples to estimate the indirect effect of diversity structure condition on perceived discrimination through procedural justice. The unstandardized indirect effect (-.16) was contained in a 95% confidence interval that did not contain zero (-.28, -.07), demonstrating a significant indirect effect.

Discussion

This experiment revealed that diversity structures signaled to women that a company's procedures were fair for members of their group, which in turn decreased their sensitivity to sexism. This finding is consistent with research on legitimacy demonstrating that people are often content with unfair outcomes if they believe these outcomes are the product of fair procedures (Tyler, 2001). Much as diversity structures lead high status groups to legitimize

inequality (Kaiser et al., in press), Experiment 1 suggests that diversity structures may also cause some low status groups to legitimize unfair treatment experienced by their own group.

Importantly, diversity structures caused women as a whole to legitimize inequality, not only those who chronically legitimize inequality (i.e., those who strongly endorse status legitimizing beliefs). This effect differs from previous research examining the impact of diversity structures on ethnic minorities' perceptions of discrimination and procedural justice. Specifically, among Latinos, diversity structures elicit a legitimizing response only from those who chronically legitimize inequality (Dover et al., under review). We suggest that compared to low status racial/ethnic minority groups such as Latinos, women may be more likely to legitimize inequality against their group because of their particularly deep interdependence with their respective high status group, men (Jackman, 1994). These divergent findings among low status groups suggest that generalizing from one low status group to all low status groups may create an inaccurate and incomplete understanding of how low status groups respond to disadvantage. The context of groups' oppression may be an important determinant in how different low status groups perceive and respond to discrimination (Ashmore et al., 1994; Sellers et al., 1998).

Although Experiment 1 demonstrates that diversity structures alter women's perceptions of fairness, it does not provide evidence that diversity structures create an *illusion* of fairness among women. Participants in Experiment 1 received no information indicating that the company did indeed discriminate against women. Thus, it may have been easier to legitimize potential inequality in this context. In Experiment 2, we examine a stronger test of the hypothesis that diversity structures increase women's perceptions of a company's procedural justice for women by providing participants with evidence that women were indeed unfairly disadvantaged

at the company. We predicted that even when they were given evidence that a company had treated women unfairly, the presence (versus absence) of a diversity structure would lead women to perceive a company as procedurally just for women (Hypothesis 1). Experiment 2 also examines how the perception of fairness created by diversity structures affects women's behavioral intention to support sexism related litigation. We hypothesized that by increasing perceptions of procedural justice, diversity structures would decrease women's support for sexism related litigation (Hypothesis 3). This measure expands upon the Experiment 1 finding that diversity structures lead women to perceive less discrimination to examine whether these structures also shape women's willingness to mobilize on behalf of ingroup members who have experienced discrimination. Finally, whereas Experiment 1 was limited to participants who were university students, in Experiment 2 we recruited a more diverse group of participants who may have more work experiences to draw upon when forming judgments about fairness.

Experiment 2

In Experiment 2, we used Kaiser and colleagues' (Experiment 2, in press) methods to examine whether diversity structures create an *illusion of fairness* among women regarding the treatment of in-group members. Specifically, participants learned that a company reviewed job applications from equal numbers of equivalently qualified men and women, but selected men for interviews 70% of the time (and women only 30% of the time). We modeled this method to capture the experience of adverse impact in law, which conveys that discrimination is statistically plausible when one group is hired at a rate of less than 80% of the other group (known as the "four fifths rule"). We hypothesized that even when given evidence that equivalently qualified women were disproportionately passed over for interviews, women who read about a company's diversity structure (versus a control structure) would perceive the

company as more procedurally just for women (Hypothesis 1) and would be less supportive of sexism litigation (Hypothesis 3). We further predicted that perceptions of procedural justice would mediate the effect of diversity structures on support for sexism litigation (Hypothesis 5).

Method

Participants

One hundred nineteen female participants were recruited through Amazon's Mechanical Turk and were compensated twenty-five cents. One participant was excluded from analyses for showing a random pattern of responding. Our final sample had a mean age of 32 years ($SD = 12.16$), and the majority was White (84.7%). Minorities reported African American (5.1%), Asian American (3.4%), Latino/Hispanic American (1.7%), Native American (.8%), and multiracial or other (4.2%) backgrounds. Participants varied in highest educational attainment, including some high school (.8%), high school diploma (8.5%), some college (38.1%), two-year degree (9.3%), four-year bachelor's degree (21.2%), some graduate school (7.6%), and graduate degree (14.4%). Eighty-five percent reported being currently or in the past employed in a full-time job.

Procedure

Participants read the same company profile and diversity or general management training program descriptions used in Experiment 1. After reading the program description, participants wrote a one-sentence summary of the program. Participants were then told that they would view a list of applicants who applied for a client manager position at the company. The list contained 20 male and 20 female applicants, listed by first name and last initial to ensure that applicant gender was salient. The document also provided applicants' qualifications (i.e., years of relevant work experience, highest degree earned, score on an employment test ranging from 0-30, and

score from a human resources resume screening ranging from 0-5). Male and female applicants were matched in terms of qualifications such that for every male applicant, there was a female applicant with identical qualifications. Participants were given 2.5 minutes to examine the list and identify the most qualified applicant.

Next, participants spent one minute reviewing a short list of applicants who were selected for interviews. The shortlist included the top seven male applicants and top 3 female applicants, demonstrating that despite being equally qualified and equally represented in the applicant pool, women were interviewed at only 43% the rate of men. After reviewing the interview short list, participants completed dependent measures.

Dependent Measures. Participants completed items assessing their support for sexism related litigation. The first item was *If women brought a class action lawsuit against Smith & Simon for sex discrimination in hiring, how likely would you be to find in favor of the women who sued?* (1 = very unlikely, 7 = very likely). The second item was *If women won a class action lawsuit against Smith & Simon for sex discrimination in hiring, how much money in damages do you think each plaintiff should be awarded?* (the scale contained 13 response options labeled \$0 to \$600,000, with each option increasing by \$50,000). These two items were standardized and combined into a scale of support for sexism related litigation ($\alpha = .60$). Participants also rated their perceptions that the company was procedurally just using the same 5 items from Experiments 1 ($\alpha = .93$).

Finally, participants completed a series of manipulation checks. They provided estimates of the number of women who applied for the job (response options were 0, 5, 10, 15, 20, 25, 30, 35 and 40 women) and the number of women who were selected for interviews (the 11 response options ranged from 0 to 10 women). To examine whether they correctly viewed male and

female applicants as equally qualified, we asked participants to recall male and female applicants' average years of work experience (11-point scale ranging from 0-10 years), average resume score for men and women (6-point scale ranging from 0-5 points), employment test score for men and women (7-point scale with scale points labeled with 0, 5, 10, 15, 20, 25 and 30 points), and the percentage of men and women who earned high school, bachelors, and master's degrees (11-point scales for each level of education, with response options beginning at 0% and increasing by 10% up to 100% of applicants).

As a check on the diversity structure manipulation, participants responded to a forced choice item asking whether they read about a program called "Fostering Employee Success" or "Fostering Women's Success." They also responded to three items assessing their perception of the company's program: The managerial training program you read about emphasized that Smith & Simon values employees of different genders, Smith & Simon Corporation has a policy that addresses discrimination against women, and Smith & Simon Corporation engages in diversity practices to increase opportunities for female employees ($\alpha = .86$, 1 (strongly disagree) - 7 (strongly agree) scales).

Results

Manipulation Checks

A diversity structure (present or control) one-way ANOVA revealed that participants exposed to the Fostering Women's Success training program were more likely to say that the company addresses gender diversity issues ($M = 5.89$, $SD = 1.03$) compared to those who read the Fostering Employee Success training program ($M = 3.71$, $SD = 1.37$), $F(1, 116) = 95.54$, $p < .001$. Further, 96% of participants correctly recalled the condition to which they were assigned. The four participants who answered incorrectly in the diversity condition provided one-sentence

summaries of the manipulation that explicitly mentioned that the company addressed discrimination issues, and the one participant in the control condition who answered incorrectly provided a summary that did not mention discrimination issues. This suggests that all participants effectively attended to the manipulation, so they were all retained for analyses.

Procedural Justice for Women

Consistent with Hypothesis 1, women exposed to the Fostering Women's Success training program perceived the company as more procedurally just for women ($M = 5.59$, $SD = 1.13$) compared to those who read about the Fostering Employee Success training program ($M = 4.82$, $SD = 1.08$), $F(1, 116) = 14.39$, $p < .001$, $d = .70$. Importantly, diversity structures increased women's perceptions of procedural justice in spite of clear evidence that female applicants were unfairly disadvantaged, suggesting that these structures create an illusion of fairness among women.

Support for Sexism Related Litigation

Consistent with Hypothesis 3, women exposed to the Fostering Women's Success diversity training program were less supportive of sexism related litigation against the company ($M = -.18$, $SD = .66$) compared to those who read about the Fostering Employee Success training program ($M = .18$, $SD = .97$), $F(1, 116) = 5.44$, $p = .02$, $d = -.43$. This finding suggests that the presence of a diversity structure decreased women's likelihood of supporting group members who were disadvantaged.

Mediation

We again used Preacher & Hayes (2012) Mediate macro to examine whether perceptions of procedural justice mediated the relationship between the presence of a diversity structure (present = 1, absent = 0) on support for sexism litigation. The presence of a diversity structure

predicted less support for sexism litigation ($b = -.36, p = .02$) and increased perceptions of procedural justice ($b = .77, p < .001$). When condition and procedural justice were entered simultaneously, condition was no longer significant ($b = -.14, p = .36$), but procedural justice was ($b = -.28, p < .001$), revealing that procedural justice mediated the relationship between diversity structure condition and support for litigation (Hypothesis 5). We used 10,000 bootstrapped samples to estimate the indirect effect of diversity structure condition on support for litigation through procedural justice. The unstandardized indirect effect (-.22) was contained in a 95% confidence interval that did not contain 0 (-.44, -.07), demonstrating a significant indirect effect.

Recollection of Women's Representation on Applicant Shortlist

In order to examine whether the diversity structure manipulation affected participants' attentiveness to the adverse impact against women on the interview shortlist, we examined their recollection of the number of women on both the applicant list and interview shortlist.

Experimental condition did not affect participants' recollection of the number of women on the applicant list, $F(1, 114) = 1.43, p = .23$, or interview shortlist, $F(1, 116) = 1.21, p = .28$. Women correctly recalled that women were adversely impacted in the interview selection process, noting that on average 3.4 of the 10 interview candidates were women ($M = 4.4, SD = 1.19$).

Participants tended to slightly underestimate the number of women on the interview list, recalling that women made up approximately 15 of the 40 applicants ($M = 3.88, SD = .95$).

Perceived Qualifications of Men and Women

In order to examine whether the effects of the diversity structure manipulation on procedural justice and support for women's efforts to remedy sexism were due to participants perceiving women as less qualified than men, despite men and women being equally qualified,

we examined participants' recollection of men's and women's qualifications (See Table 1). As intended, male and female applicants were generally perceived as having similar qualifications, and this did not differ by experimental condition (all condition $ps > .11$). Using a series of mixed model ANOVAs, we entered condition as a between subjects variable and participants' ratings of men's and women's qualifications as the within subjects variable (i.e., we conducted one mixed model ANOVA for each set of qualifications: years of work experience, resume score, employment score, and each of the three education levels). Of these six analyses, there were two in which male and female applicants' qualifications were perceived differently ($ps < .05$). Men were perceived to have more years of work experience than women ($p = .001$), and women were perceived to be less likely than men to have the lowest level of education, a high school diploma ($p = .01$). Women were also perceived to hold more Bachelor's degrees than men, but this effect was marginal ($p = .09$; all other $ps > .26$).² There were no main effects of condition (all $ps > .11$) or interactions with condition (all $ps > .12$). Thus, experimental condition did not affect perceptions of men and women's perceived qualifications across.

Discussion

Experiment 2 provides evidence that diversity structures create an illusion of fairness among women regarding the treatment of members of their own group. That is, the presence (versus absence) of a diversity structure caused women to believe that members of their own group were treated more fairly (Hypothesis 1), despite evidence that equally qualified women were passed over in the hiring process. Furthermore, the presence (versus absence) of a diversity structure caused women to become less supportive of sexism related litigation (Hypothesis 3).

² The effects of the presence of a diversity structure on perceptions of procedural justice and support for litigation were unchanged when we controlled for perceptions of men's work experience.

Finally, perceptions of procedural justice mediated the relationship between the presence of a diversity structure and support for litigation (Hypothesis 5).

Experiment 2 also showed an unexpected but interesting finding that, with further investigation, could point to ways in which women downplay or rationalize discrimination against members of their group. Specifically, although participants accurately perceived that women were underrepresented on the shortlist, they believed that women composed less of the overall applicant pool than men (on average, they recalled 15 women on the applicant list compared to the reality of 20 women.) This finding is consistent with that of Kaiser et al. (in press, Experiment 2). Interestingly, participants made this estimates *after* having seen (and recognized) that women were adversely impacted in hiring. Thus, this perception could be a response to discrimination and a way for women to downplay or rationalize unfair outcomes. Despite this overall downplaying of sexism irrespective of condition, the presence of a diversity structure still increased perceptions of procedural justice and decreased support for efforts to remedy discrimination.

General Discussion

The current research deepens the understanding of how diversity structures shape low status group members' perceptions of fairness and discrimination. Across two studies, we demonstrated that the mere presence of diversity structures causes women to believe that women are treated fairly in the workplace. This belief subsequently leads women to overlook the possibility that members of their group have experienced discrimination and to be less supportive of women's mobilization against discrimination. These data are consistent with theories of legitimacy that argue that low status group members often support systems that disadvantage members of their group (e.g., Jost & Banaji, 1994), especially when they perceive these systems

as having fair procedures (Tyler, 2001). Rather than supporting members of their group, women in our studies sided with workplaces that disadvantaged their group when these workplaces had diversity structures that gave the semblance of fair procedures.

These findings also highlight the significance of group-specific processes in understanding low status groups' responses to their disadvantaged status. Specifically, while Dover et al. (under review) demonstrated that diversity structures create unfounded perceptions of fairness only among Latinos who chronically legitimize inequality, our research demonstrates that diversity structures create unfounded perceptions of fairness among women, regardless of women's chronic acceptance or rejection of legitimizing ideologies. We suspect that Latinos and women react differently to diversity structures because of the divergent historical and contemporary factors that characterize sexism and racism in the United States (Sellers, Smith, Shelton, Rowley, & Chavous, 1998; Ashmore et al., 2004). Because women (but not minorities) have historically and contemporarily enjoyed close, interdependent relationships with their high status counterpart (men, for women), they have a high degree of investment in maintaining harmony with men and may be particularly resistant to seeing men as oppressors. Indeed, other research shows how close interdependence with men can undermine women's likelihood of detecting sexism. Specifically, when women received negative feedback from a man, they were less likely to attribute that feedback to sexism when the man was romantically available compared to when he was not available (Carvallo & Pelham, 2006). Similarly, we suggest that women's interconnectedness with men may make women more amenable to diversity structures' image of fairness, however illusory this image may be.

Practically speaking, our findings suggest that diversity structures have the potential to pose problems for women who confront unfair treatment in the workplace. The illusion of

fairness among women is especially troubling, as women, much like other low status groups, often bear the responsibility of identifying and bringing to light discrimination. If women have difficulty seeing through ineffective diversity structures, it may be especially difficult for them to identify and challenge unfair treatment in the workplace. Furthermore, if diversity structures make women less supportive of their group's efforts to mobilize against sexism, diversity structures may create an additional hurdle for women who confront sexism, as they must not only try to convince high status groups that they have been treated wrongfully (Kaiser, Major, et al., in press), but also convince members of their *own* group to support their efforts to gain restitution.

Limitations and Future Directions

As psychology continues to explore the differences in perceptions of and reactions to discrimination among low status groups, it will be important to test the hypothesized causes of these differences. We argue that women's interdependence with men drives their strong legitimizing responses to discrimination in the context of diversity structures. However, we did not measure or manipulate differences in women's interconnectedness with men. Future research should examine how constructs such as interconnectedness shape the context of low status groups' oppression and thereby influence their responses to discrimination.

It will also be important to seek strategies to help people accurately evaluate diversity structures and to help companies pursue diversity goals without inadvertently obscuring unfair treatment. Companies should have as great a stake in this endeavor as do members of legally protected groups. In many cases, companies implement diversity structures because they wish to diversify their workforces and reap the potential benefits that can come from consideration of many different perspectives. To this end, companies could improve the outcomes of their

diversity efforts by changing the way they approach and implement diversity management initiatives. Beyond simply professing a commitment to workplace equality and diversity, companies could devote resources to developing, testing, and implementing efficacy-based approaches to diversity management and monitoring the outcomes of these diversity efforts. Moving toward an evidence-based model of diversity practices may reduce the prevalence of ineffective diversity structures and expose the weaknesses of existing structures.

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Table 1: Recollection of Men and Women's Qualifications (means and standard deviations)

Variable	Diversity Condition		Control Condition	
	Men	Women	Men	Women
Years of Work Experience	7.73 (1.29)	7.10 (1.89)	8.10 (1.21)	7.41 (1.90)
Resume Score	4.52 (.65)	4.60 (.75)	4.63 (.75)	4.49 (.76)
Test Score	5.38 (.69)	5.48 (.77)	5.51 (.74)	5.56 (.78)
% High School Diploma	3.09 (1.49)	2.88 (1.70)	3.49 (2.65)	3.28 (2.85)
% Bachelor's Degree	7.50 (1.58)	7.65 (1.74)	7.53 (1.94)	7.72 (2.08)
% Master's Degree	2.57 (1.19)	2.64 (1.06)	2.98 (1.81)	2.98 (1.79)

Appendix A

Diversity Statement:

Smith and Simon Corp. considers its employees to be one of its greatest assets. All Smith and Simon Corp management-level employees are required to participate in a mandatory training program called FOSTERING WOMEN'S SUCCESS. The goal of this program is to foster improved communication among male and female employees, to develop increased sensitivity to managing gender diversity, and to establish ways of recognizing and rewarding good performance that do not discriminate against women.

Control Statement:

Smith and Simon Corp. considers its employees to be one of its greatest assets. All Smith and Simon Corp management-level employees are required to participate in a mandatory training program called FOSTERING EMPLOYEE SUCCESS. The goal of this program is to foster improved communication among employees, to develop increased sensitivity to managing personnel, and to establish ways of recognizing and rewarding good performance.