

Diversity Initiatives and White Americans' Perceptions of Racial Victimhood

Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin
2022, Vol. 48(6) 968–984
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DOI: 10.1177/01461672211030391
journals.sagepub.com/home/pspb



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Abstract

Seven experiments explore whether organizational diversity initiatives heighten White Americans' concerns about the respect and value afforded toward their racial group and increase their perceptions of anti-White bias. The presence (vs. absence) of organizational diversity initiatives (i.e., diversity awards, diversity training, diversity mission statements) caused White Americans to perceive Whites as less respected and valued than Blacks and to blame a White man's rejection for a promotion on anti-White bias. Several moderators were tested, including evidence that Whites were clearly advantaged within the organization, that the rejected White candidate was less meritorious than the Black candidate, that promotion opportunities were abundant (vs. scarce), and individual differences related to support for the status hierarchy and identification with Whites. There was little evidence that these moderators reduced Whites' perceptions of diversity initiatives as harmful to their racial group.

Keywords

diversity, social identity, discrimination perceptions, White Americans

Received March 10 2020; revision accepted June 15, 2021

U.S. history is marked by mobilization around efforts to expand civil rights. The suffragettes heralded a new dawn for women, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People and Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee catalyzed the civil rights movement, and the marriage equality movement brought new rights to sexual minorities. Recently, a new civil rights movement has emerged. This group targets biases in college admissions policies and employment practices and protests when they perceive that their group's values are under siege. This group formed a reactionary political movement and successfully worked toward the election of U.S. President Donald Trump, who fought for their rights. This new civil rights movement promises a greater America for White Americans.

This civil rights mobilization is puzzling, as on virtually all social indicators marking objective status, White Americans fare well. White Americans are less likely than African Americans to experience poverty, unemployment, poor health, and incarceration, and more likely to experience wealth, home ownership, and higher educational attainment (Stanford Center on Poverty and Inequality, 2017). Indeed, since its inception, the U.S. government enforced laws that protected Whites' interests, making it unsurprising that the legacy of these structural systems continues to advantage Whites (Hannah-Jones, 2019; Rothstein, 2017). So why then

are empirical studies, survey data, and lawsuits revealing that so many White Americans now see Whites as the face of racial discrimination (National Public Radio et al., 2017; Norton & Sommers, 2011; Wilkins & Kaiser, 2014)?

We believe these increasing perceptions of anti-White bias are in part a response to the rise of pro-diversity norms and practices, often manifested in the form of organizational diversity initiatives. Diversity initiatives involve programs and policies recognizing and valuing human difference, and acknowledge the significance of social group memberships, such as race, ethnicity, gender, and sexual orientation. The management and implementation of diversity initiatives have blossomed into a lucrative industry (Dobbin, 2009; Kalev et al., 2006), with a vast majority of organizations broadcasting their commitment to diversity.

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Although racial minorities can experience organizations that value diversity as welcoming and inclusive (Plaut et al., 2009; Purdie-Vaughns et al., 2008; but see Dover et al., in press and Wilton et al., 2020 for alternative findings), many Whites do not see diversity initiatives as inclusive, and instead view these initiatives as disadvantageous to Whites (Dover et al., 2016; Plaut et al., 2011). If Whites are concerned that diversity initiatives disadvantage their racial group, this may increase their perceptions of potential mistreatment of Whites. Ironically, however, the most commonly employed diversity initiatives are ineffective at increasing racial diversity or reducing discrimination (Edelman et al., 2011; Kalev et al., 2006). Nonetheless, even when diversity initiatives offer little more than window dressing, we suspect that many Whites still react to these initiatives with suspicion about their group's susceptibility to discrimination.

We conducted seven experiments exploring whether the presence (vs. absence) of organizational diversity initiatives causes White Americans to perceive that workplaces afford less respect and value to Whites than minorities and increases their willingness to attribute a White ingroup member's poor workplace outcome to anti-White bias. In addition, these experiments explore whether the effects of organizational diversity initiatives on Whites' perceptions of respect and value and anti-White bias occur even in the face of objective evidence that Whites are treated fairly, meritoriously, and have abundant opportunities for promotions.

Both perceptions of racial progress within the United States (Wilkins et al., 2015; Wilkins & Kaiser, 2014 but see Crawford et al., 2019) and perceptions that U.S. demographics are changing to favor minorities (Craig & Richeson, 2017, 2018) increase Whites' perceptions of anti-White bias. We build upon these findings to explore whether organizational messages that simply value diversity contribute to perceived anti-White bias. Due to the pervasiveness of messages promoting diversity in workplaces, schools, and society, diversity messages may have broad potential to affect perceived anti-White bias.

The most direct linkages between diversity initiatives and Whites' perceptions of anti-White bias come from a series of studies (Dover et al., 2016) in which young White men imagined or role-played applying for a job at organizations that valued diversity or human uniqueness. White men applying for jobs at companies that valued diversity (vs. human uniqueness) experienced cardiovascular threat and perceived that they and their racial group would experience more discrimination at the organization. These studies provide the foundation for the relationship between diversity initiatives and Whites' susceptibility to perceiving anti-White bias but leave critical issues unexamined.

First, in a job interview context like the one examined in Dover et al. (2016), the personal self is highly engaged as personal outcomes are at stake. Thus, Whites may have been unusually motivated to perceive discrimination to buffer

themselves from the threat of failure (Wilkins et al., 2017). The present studies remove participants' personal stake within the organization, and instead explore how diversity initiatives affect Whites' interpretations of a fellow White American's negative workplace outcome. This third-party perspective is analogous to the role of neutral fact-finders, such as jurors, human resource managers, or other arbitrators who interpret the causes of an employment outcome. It is also akin to the position of many White Americans who observe society and conclude that Whites are now the new victims of racial discrimination.

Second, in Dover et al. (2016), the pro-diversity organization was presented alongside images of an ethnically diverse workforce, whereas the control condition did not present images of diverse people. This may have fostered the assumption that minorities were relatively advantaged in hiring practices in the pro-diversity condition, making anti-White bias perceptions more credible. In contrast, in the current studies, the pro-diversity organizations are not presented as more demographically diverse than the control organizations.

Further, the current investigation explicitly counters the assumption of minority advantage by presenting White participants with information that should assuage their concerns about minorities' potential advantage. In Study 4, participants view organizational data showing that Whites and minorities are treated fairly or that Whites are advantaged. This manipulation directly speaks to minority advantage, and any evidence that diversity initiatives affect Whites' perceptions of bias would reflect a departure from the reality of the situation.

In Studies 5 and 6, we manipulate the presence of merit in organizational decision-making. A perceived tension between the values of diversity and meritocracy often exists (Walton et al., 2013), such that efforts to promote diversity are viewed as violating the principle of merit (Bobocel et al., 1998). Whites view diversity initiatives as less potentially disadvantageous to Whites when these initiatives clearly value merit (Gündemir et al., 2017). In Studies 5 and 6, participants learned (or did not learn) that an organizational promotion favored a more qualified minority employee over a White employee. If participants still perceived anti-White bias in the face of meritorious outcomes that favor minorities, this, too, would support the illusory nature of diversity initiatives in sparking Whites' perceptions of anti-White bias.

Finally, in Study 7, we provide participants with information that the organization has abundant (vs. scarce) opportunities for promotion opportunities. Abundant opportunities should lessen Whites' concerns about disadvantage as this manipulation reduces realistic conflict by mitigating competition for limited resources (Esses et al., 1998; Krosch et al., 2017; Sherif, 1966). Together, the current studies provide the first test of whether diversity initiatives shape Whites' perceptions of anti-White bias, even in the face of evidence that should assuage concerns about Whites' treatment.

Why Do Diversity Initiatives Increase Whites' Vigilance to Anti-White Bias?

Diversity initiatives may raise suspicion of anti-White bias because Whites interpret these initiatives as conveying that organizations value and respect minorities more than Whites. Feeling valued and respected lies at the heart of procedural justice, and in particular, the group-value model of procedural justice (Lind & Tyler, 1988). In organizational contexts, individuals seek signs of respect and value, and these feelings are particularly influential when outcomes are unfavorable (see Brockner & Wiesenfeld, 1996; Colquitt et al., 2001 for reviews). We propose that organizational diversity structures signal to Whites that minorities are more respected and valued than their own group and have stronger standing within the organization. Perceptions of insufficient respect and value will in turn increase Whites' willingness to attribute their group members' negative outcomes to discrimination. Indeed, the recent civil rights mobilization among Whites has been characterized as stemming from the sense that Whites are disrespected and insufficiently valued relative to minorities (Knowles et al., 2013; Mutz, 2018).

Prior work shows that the presence (vs. absence) of diversity initiatives causes Whites to perceive organizations as more respectful and valuing of minorities, and this occurs even when environments advantage Whites (Dover et al., 2014; Kaiser et al., 2013; Kirby et al., 2015). This "illusion of fairness" (Kaiser et al., 2013) in the treatment of minorities is especially pronounced when diversity initiatives are multicultural rather than colorblind (Gündemir & Galinsky, 2018). We build upon this foundation by comparing perceptions of value and respect for both Whites and minorities, as these two groups have not previously been considered simultaneously. This joint relationship between respect/value for minorities and Whites is important as high-status groups, such as White Americans and men, are especially likely to view improvements in the status of minorities and women as harmful to the status of their own group (Bosson et al., 2012; Eibach & Keegan, 2006; Kehn & Ruthig, 2013; Norton & Sommers, 2011; Wilkins et al., 2015; in press; see also Earle and Hodson (2020) and Perry and Wages (2020) for varying interpretation of these effects). Moreover, this zero-sum thinking about relations between minorities and Whites predicts important outcomes, such as decreased support for policies that benefit minorities and increased support for policies that benefit Whites (Wilkins et al., 2015). Thus, understanding how diversity initiatives affect perceptions of both minorities' and Whites' joint organizational status is critical to understanding perceived anti-White bias.

Hypotheses

We propose that the presence (vs. absence) of organizational diversity initiatives will

Hypothesis 1 (H1): Increase Whites' perceptions that minorities are more valued and respected than Whites.

Hypothesis 2 (H2): Increase Whites' perceptions of anti-White bias.

These effects will occur even when Whites' concerns about unfair group treatment are assuaged by evidence that the organization advantages Whites, provides abundant opportunities for advancement, and operates on merit principles.

Hypothesis 3 (H3): the perceptions that minorities are more valued and respected than Whites will mediate the effects of diversity initiatives on perceptions of anti-White bias.

Individual differences. Although we hypothesize that Whites will generally respond to diversity initiatives by perceiving more injustice directed toward their own group, some Whites may welcome diversity initiatives, and resist perceiving anti-White bias. Notably, Dover et al. (2016) found that individual differences on a variety of theoretically relevant variables, including White identity, racial attitudes, and system justifying beliefs, did *not* moderate young White men's threat and perceptions of anti-White bias when they applied for jobs in organizations that valued diversity (vs. human uniqueness). This surprising finding suggests that even egalitarian well-intentioned Whites generally react defensively in the presence of diversity initiatives.

This conclusion may be premature, however, given the sample of young White men in this research. The current studies sample beyond young White men, as it is possible that this group was too homogeneous to show moderation on anti-White bias perceptions. In addition, we employ larger sample sizes, addressing whether past null effects stemmed from insufficient statistical power. If Whites react similarly to diversity initiatives, irrespective of a range of theoretically derived individual differences and situational factors known to increase and decrease responsiveness to intergroup threats, this highlights the power of diversity initiatives in shaping Whites' perceptions of anti-White bias. Alternatively, if reliable moderators of Whites' responsiveness to diversity initiatives are identified, this will help explain diversity initiatives' effect on the perceived anti-White bias.

We reasoned that Whites who are most supportive of hierarchical status arrangements and those most identified with Whiteness may be especially likely to experience diversity initiatives as conveying disrespect toward Whites and as discriminatory toward Whites (Knowles et al., 2013). Accordingly, we explored Social Dominance Orientation, and several instantiations of White racial identity, including racial common fate, racial identity centrality, and affective preferences for Whites over minorities, as potential moderators of the predicted effects. Despite extensive exploration of these theoretically derived constructs, we found little evidence of reliable moderation. For clarity of presentation, we

Table 1. Designs and Effects of Diversity Manipulation for Studies 1–7.

Study	Design	N analyzed	M age (SD)	% Male	90% power to detect η_p^2	ME on discr.	Interaction on respect/value	Conditional effects on respect/value
Study 1	Award	319	33.81 (11.27)	50.5	.0321	D > C**	***	D: M > W*** (larger) C: M > W***
Study 2	Statement	306	36.92 (11.89)	48.9	.033	D > C**	**	D: M > W*** (larger) C: M > W***
Study 3	Training	305	34.71 (12.36)	53.0	.034	D = C	**	D: M > W*** (larger) C: M > W***
Study 4	Award × Promotion	551	31.32 (13.02)	46.9	.019	D > C*	**	D: M > W* C: W > M*
Study 5	Statement × Merit Attribution	588	39.65 (12.60)	48.1	.018	D > C**	***	D: M > W*** (larger) C: M > W***
Study 6	Statement × Merit Attribution	451	38.99 (12.38)	46.3	.023	D > C*	ns	D: M > W*** C: M > W***
Study 7	Statement × Scarcity/Abundance	573	39.38 (12.07)	41.4	.018	D > C**	*	D: M > W*** (larger) C: M > W***

Note. Sensitivity power analysis conducted using G*Power version 3.1.9.3 to determine effect size (η_p^2) required given a two-tailed test with $\alpha = .05$ for main design (two-cell design for Studies 1–3, 8; 2×2 for Studies 4–7). ME = main effect; D = diversity condition; C = control condition; M = Minorities; W = Whites.

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$.

relegate individual differences largely to the supplement and address findings in the discussion.

Common Methods

Participants

We conducted seven experiments involving 3,093 self-identified White participants. Studies used common exclusion criteria: participant race (excluded all non-White participants); failure to recall the correct diversity vs. control manipulation, the merit attribution manipulation (Studies 5 and 6), and the scarcity abundance manipulation (Study 7); having study completion times two standard deviations above the mean; and answering attention check items incorrectly. Participants were Amazon Mechanical Turk (MTurk) Workers, with the exception that Experiment 4 was run with both subject pool and MTurk samples (we planned to use only subject pool participants, but the study exhausted the supply). See Table 1 for sample descriptions and Table 2 for study exclusions.

Procedures

All experiments followed a similar procedure. Participants first read about an organization; we manipulated the presence versus absence of a diversity initiative at the organization. The diversity initiatives varied across experiments (see Online Supplement S1) and included diversity awards ($k = 2$ studies), diversity values statement ($k = 4$ studies), and diversity training programs ($k = 1$ studies). Participants then viewed what they believed was an employee survey about career opportunities at the organization (this came from Wilkins et al., 2013; see Online Supplement S2 for stimulus).

In the survey, an unnamed employee identified as a 33-year old White male with a bachelor's degree describes being passed over for a promotion in favor of his colleague "Tyrone" (a name we assumed would cue African American ancestry; see Wilkins et al., 2013). The White employee expressed that he was more qualified than Tyrone and that the promotion decision was more competitive than he thought. To draw participants' attention to the survey, we asked them to write a brief response to the following prompt: "Please summarize this employee's experience at Smith & Simon." Participants could advance to the next page after 45 s. Participants then completed measures of respect and value for Whites relative to minorities, perceptions of anti-White bias, manipulation and attention checks, and demographics including race, age, and sex. Studies 1–4 were conducted between 2014 and 2016, prior to Trump's election, and Studies 5–7 were conducted between 2018 and 2019. These studies were not pre-registered; all data, syntax files, instructions for reproduction, and material are available on Open Science Framework (OSF; <https://osf.io/fhjxy/>).

Dependent Measures

Value and respect. Participants completed two items measuring the extent to which the company valued and respected Whites: Smith and Simon Corporation values White employees' opinions; Smith and Simon Corporation treats White employees with respect. Two identically worded items measured the extent to which the company valued and respected minorities ("White" was replaced with "minority"). Scales ranged from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree). Differences in group value and respect result when one group is perceived as more valued and respected than another.

Table 2. Study Exclusions.

Study	Initial N	Final analyzed N	Pp race	Rationale for exclusion					
				Diversity manipulation check	White target race	Black target race	Completion time	Merit manipulation check	Scarcity manipulation check
Study 1 ^a	448	319	108	1	11	na	9		
Study 2 ^b	538	306	141	59 (16 diversity, 42 control, 1 missing)	5	11	16		
Study 3 ^c	470	305	104	35 (30 diversity, 4 control, 1 missing)	2	15	8		
Study 4 ^d	785 (657 MTurk)	551	182	13 (8 diversity, 5 control)	9	24	6		
Study 5 ^e	653	588	21	14 (10 diversity, 4 control)	6	11	6	7 (5 merit absent, 2 merit present)	
Study 6 ^f	599	451	28	41 (30 diversity, 11 control)	20	23	12	27 (18 merit absent, 9 merit present)	
Study 7 ^g	648	573	17	19 (12 diversity, 7 control)	8	9	5		17 (10 resources scarce, 7 resources abundant)

Note. Following the race exclusion, participants could be excluded for multiple reasons, so *N* analyzed is not a direct difference between total *N* and exclusions. Missing data on a given variable were classified as inaccurate and part of the exclusions.

^aAn additional 120 participants began the study but withdrew prior to completing any dependent measures. These withdrawals in this and all subsequent studies occurred primarily on screens when there was a timer forcing them to stay on a page to provide a written response. ^bAn additional 189 participants began the study but withdrew prior to completing any dependent measures. ^cAn additional 135 participants began the study but withdrew prior to completing any dependent measures. ^dWe initially hoped to recruit all participants from the subject pool, but that proved infeasible, so we moved to MTurk. An additional 191 participants (9 from the subject pool, 182 from MTurk) began the study but withdrew prior to completing it. ^eAn additional 97 participants began the study but withdrew prior to completing the study. ^fAn additional 183 participants began the study but withdrew prior to completing the study. ^gAn additional 163 participants began the study but withdrew prior to completing the study.

Perceived discrimination. Participants completed five items assessing the extent to which they perceived the company as discriminatory against Whites: Smith and Simon Corporation was biased against the person who completed the survey; Smith and Simon discriminated against the person who completed the survey; The person who completed the survey would have had a better chance of obtaining the promotion if he had not been White; Smith and Simon discriminates against White employees; and Smith and Simon unfairly favors minority employees. Items were rated on 1–7 scales described above.

Manipulation and attention checks. All experiments included forced-choice items checking whether participants correctly recalled the manipulation and the race (White or Black) of both the employee who completed the survey and Tyrone (Tyrone's race was not assessed in Experiment 1).

Unique Procedures

To explore the robustness of the predicted effects of diversity initiatives on Whites' perceptions of value and respect and

anti-White bias, we introduced several manipulations that theoretically should assuage Whites' concerns about group disadvantage. Study 4 employed a manipulation conveying that Whites were in fact treated fairly or even advantaged in the organization. Studies 5 and 6 manipulated the presence or absence of a merit violation, such that the White employee did (or did not) state that he was passed over in favor of a more qualified African American employee. Study 7 used a manipulation conveying that organizational promotion opportunities were abundant (vs. scarce). These procedures are described below.

Results

Although individual study results are described separately, Table 1 provides a comprehensive summary of all main effects of the diversity condition on respect and value and perceived anti-White bias. Online Supplement S4 provides correlations among variables for all studies. Mediation findings are described collectively following Study 7.

Table 3. Study 1 Descriptive Statistics.

Variable	Diversity condition <i>M</i> (<i>SD</i>), <i>n</i> = 162	Control condition <i>M</i> (<i>SD</i>), <i>n</i> = 157
Respect and value For Whites ($\alpha = .892$)	4.494 (1.277)	4.698 (1.095)
Respect and value For minorities ($\alpha = .956$)	5.451 (1.052)	5.147 (1.101)
Perceived Discrimination ($\alpha = .966$)	3.854 (1.600)	3.278 (1.654)

Study 1

Procedures

Study 1 followed the common procedures and manipulated diversity initiatives by communicating that the company was recognized with diversity awards (diversity condition) or service and innovation awards (control condition). See Online Supplement S1 for the stimuli and Table 3 for descriptive statistics.

Results

Respect and value. A mixed ANOVA with the diversity manipulation between-subjects factor and the recipient (Whites and minorities) of respect and value repeated measures factor yielded a main effect of recipient, $B = -.707$, $SE = .069$, 95% CI [-.873, -.570], $F(1, 317) = 102.510$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .244$, with participants overall reporting that the organization valued and respected minorities ($M = 5.301$, $SD = 1.085$) more than Whites ($M = 4.594$, $SD = 1.193$). This effect was qualified by the predicted interaction with the diversity manipulation, $B = .508$, $SE = .139$, 95% CI [.235, .781], $F(1, 317) = 13.372$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .040$. Simple effects supported H1; participants perceived the organization as more respectful of minorities than Whites in both conditions, but the magnitude of the difference was larger in the diversity condition, M difference = $-.957$, $SE = .097$; 95% CI [-1.148, -.765], $F(1, 317) = 96.476$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .233$, compared with the control condition, M difference = $-.449$, $SE = .099$; 95% CI [-.644, -.254], $F(1, 317) = 20.594$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .061$.

Perceived discrimination. An ANOVA exploring the diversity manipulation on perceived discrimination produced the predicted main effect, $B = -.577$, $SE = .182$, 95% CI [-.935, -.218], $F(1, 317) = 10.016$, $p = .002$, $\eta_p^2 = .031$. Supporting H2, participants perceived greater discrimination against the White employee in the diversity condition than the control condition.

Discussion

Experiment 1 provides evidence that the presence (vs. absence) of diversity initiatives causes Whites to perceive

organizations as offering more respect and value to minorities relative to Whites, and to perceive more anti-White bias. Study 2 attempts to replicate these effects with a second manifestation of diversity initiatives, a diversity (vs. control) mission statement.

Study 2

Procedures

Procedures were identical to Study 1, except for a subtler diversity initiative manipulation. Participants were randomly assigned to read and briefly summarize an organization's diversity statement or general mission statement (Kaiser et al., 2013). The statements were identical, except that the former included a few extra words referencing diversity (see Online Supplement S1). One participant did not complete the respect and value measures. Descriptive statistics are in Table 4.

Results

Respect and value. The mixed ANOVA yielded a main effect of the recipient of respect and value, $B = -.717$, $SE = .082$, 95% CI [-.878, -.556], $F(1, 303) = 68.942$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .185$, with participants reporting that the organization offered more respect and value to minorities ($M = 5.544$, $SD = 1.139$) than Whites ($M = 4.828$, $SD = 1.430$). This effect was qualified by the predicted interaction with the diversity manipulation, $B = .482$, $SE = .165$, 95% CI [.157, .806], $F(1, 303) = 8.547$, $p = .004$, $\eta_p^2 = .027$. Simple effects revealed that participants perceived the organization as more respectful of minorities than Whites in both conditions, but the magnitude of the difference was larger in the diversity condition, M difference = $-.925$, $SE = .108$, 95% CI [-1.138, -.712]; $F(1, 303) = 72.805$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .194$, compared with the control condition, M difference = $-.443$, $SE = .124$, 95% CI [-.687, -.199]; $F(1, 303) = 12.756$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .040$.

Perceived discrimination. The ANOVA yielded the predicted main effect, $B = -.568$, $SE = .190$, 95% CI [-.941, -.194], $F(1, 304) = 8.943$, $p = .003$, $\eta_p^2 = .029$, with participants perceiving greater discrimination against the White employee in the diversity condition than the control condition.

Table 4. Study 2 Descriptive Statistics.

Variable	Diversity condition <i>M (SD), n = 174</i>	Control condition <i>M (SD), n = 132</i>
Respect and value For Whites ($\alpha = .960$)	4.769 (1.510)	4.905 (1.318)
Respect and value For minorities ($\alpha = .955$)	5.694 (1.115)	5.349 (1.146)
Perceived Discrimination ($\alpha = .968$)	3.749 (1.722)	3.182 (1.537)

Table 5. Study 3 Descriptive Statistics.

Variable	Diversity condition <i>M (SD), n = 143</i>	Control condition <i>M (SD), n = 162</i>
Respect and value For Whites ($\alpha = .964$)	4.476 (1.460)	4.694 (1.323)
Respect and value For minorities ($\alpha = .948$)	5.416 (1.116)	5.090 (1.158)
Perceived Discrimination ($\alpha = .961$)	3.668 (1.623)	3.475 (1.471)

Discussion

Experiment 2 replicated the main effects of diversity initiatives on respect and value and perceived anti-White bias and extended these effects to a subtler diversity mission statement manipulation. Relative to diversity awards that might suggest concrete progress with diversity outcomes, a mission statement is a values expression, devoid of concrete practices that affect actual diversity outcomes. To further generalize, Study 3 explored the third instantiation of diversity initiatives, a diversity training program.

Study 3

Procedures

Procedures were identical to Study 2, except that participants viewed and summarized the organization's training program labeled either as "Fostering Racial Minorities' Success" or "Fostering Employee Success" (from Kaiser et al., 2013). The training programs were described identically except that former included a few extra words referencing diversity (see Online Supplement S1). Descriptive statistics are in Table 5.

Results

Respect and value. There was a main effect of recipient of respect and value, $B = -.651$, $SE = .079$, 95% CI [-.805, -.496], $F(1, 303) = 71.967$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .192$, with participants overall reporting that the organization offered more respect and value to minorities ($M = 5.243$, $SD = 1.149$) compared with Whites ($M = 4.592$, $SD = 1.391$). This effect

was qualified by the predicted interaction with the diversity manipulation, $B = .545$, $SE = .157$, 95% CI [.236, .855], $F(1, 303) = 12.005$, $p = .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .038$. Participants perceived the organization as more respectful of minorities than Whites in both conditions, but the magnitude of the difference was larger in the diversity condition, M difference = $-.941$, $SE = .115$, 95% CI [-1.166, -.715]; $F(1, 303) = 67.193$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .182$, compared with the control condition, M difference = $-.395$, $SE = .108$, 95% CI [-.607, -.183]; $F(1, 303) = 13.430$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .042$.

Perceived discrimination. Unexpectedly, there was no significant diversity initiative main effect on perceived discrimination, $B = -.193$, $SE = .177$, 95% CI [-.541, .156], $F(1, 303) = 1.181$, $p = .278$, $\eta_p^2 = .004$.

Discussion

Experiment 3 replicated the effects of the diversity manipulation on respect and value but there was no effect on perceived anti-White bias. Studies 4–7 further test the robustness of the diversity initiative main effects and examine moderators that theoretically should assuage these effects.

Study 4

Procedures

Study 4 used a 2 (Promotion Graph: equal or White advantage) \times 2 (Diversity Initiative: diversity awards or control awards) between-subjects design. After viewing the Study 1 awards manipulation, participants viewed and summarized a

Table 6. Study 4 Descriptive Statistics.

Variable	Diversity condition		Control condition	
	Equal M (SD), n = 145	White advantage M (SD), n = 137	Equal M (SD), n = 132	White advantage M (SD), n = 137
Respect and value For Whites ($\alpha = .928$)	5.159 (1.299)	4.945 (1.113)	5.235 (1.288)	5.230 (1.068)
Respect and value For minorities ($\alpha = .934$)	5.569 (1.097)	4.825 (1.086)	5.519 (1.051)	4.620 (1.198)
Perceived Discrimination ($\alpha = .955$)	2.918 (1.660)	3.293 (1.438)	2.703 (1.469)	2.963 (1.373)

“Smith & Simon Human Resource Department Data Report,” outlining the percentages of White and minority employees who received promotions within the first 5 years of their employment. Participants viewed graphs showing that Whites and minorities had the same promotion rate (equal promotion condition) or that Whites received promotions at a higher rate than minorities (White advantage promotion condition). The manipulation, depicted in Online Supplement S8, controls for base rates of minorities and Whites within the organization. Descriptive statistics are in Table 6.

Participants completed a manipulations check assessing the extent to which Whites and minorities were equally likely to obtain promotions on a 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 7 (Strongly Agree) scale. Only the expected main effect of the promotion manipulation was significant, $F(1, 546) = 414.320, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = .431$, with those in the White advantage condition ($M = 2.945, SD = 1.553$) reporting lower agreement than those in the equal condition ($M = 5.708, SD = 1.634$; all other p 's $> .239$).

Results

Respect and value. A mixed ANOVA did not produce the main effect of recipient of respect and value that was observed in prior studies, $B = .003, SE = .047, 95\% CI [-.089, .096], F(1, 547) = .035, p = .851, \eta_p^2 = .000$. Instead, there was an interaction between the target of respect and value and the diversity manipulation, $B = .489, SE = .134, 95\% CI [.226, .752], F(1, 547) = 10.624, p = .001, \eta_p^2 = .019$. Simple effects revealed that consistent with prior studies, participants perceived the organization as offering less respect and value toward Whites than minorities in the diversity award condition, M difference = $-.145, SE = .066, 95\% CI [-.275, -.015], F(1, 547) = 4.830, p = .028, \eta_p^2 = .009$, but unlike prior studies, significantly more respect and value for Whites than minorities in the control award condition, M difference = $.163, SE = .068, 95\% CI [.030, .295], F(1, 547) = 5.807, p = .016, \eta_p^2 = .011$. The observation of more respect and value for Whites than minorities in the control condition might be because the manipulations explicitly showed Whites being treated as well or better than minorities in both conditions. Given the objective reality of no bias and

even White advantage, it is noteworthy that Whites still thought this organization was less respectful of Whites than minorities when diversity initiatives were present (vs. absent).

There was also an interaction between the recipient of respect and value and the promotion condition, $B = -.531, SE = .132, 95\% CI [-.790, -.272], F(1, 547) = 56.930, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = .094$. Participants perceived the organization as less respectful toward Whites than minorities in the equal percentage promotion condition, M difference = $-.347, SE = .067, 95\% CI [-.478, -.216], F(1, 547) = 27.182, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = .047$, but as more respectful toward Whites than minorities in the White advantage promotion condition, M difference = $.365, SE = .067, 95\% CI [.234, .496], F(1, 547) = 29.772, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = .052$. Thus, Whites perceived the organization as less respectful to Whites than minorities even when there was clear evidence of equality, but Whites were willing to acknowledge more ingroup respect when their group was objectively advantaged. The three-way interaction was marginally significant, $B = -.363, SE = .189, 95\% CI [-.734, .008], F(1, 547) = 3.693, p = .055, \eta_p^2 = .007$, and is addressed in the discussion.

Perceived discrimination. A diversity main effect revealed that participants perceived more anti-White bias in the diversity condition than in the control condition; $B = -.272, SE = .127, 95\% CI [-.522, -.022], F(1, 546) = 4.578, p = .033, \eta_p^2 = .008$. There was a main effect of the promotion manipulation, with participants surprisingly perceiving more anti-White bias in the White advantage condition compared with the equal promotion condition, $B = -.319, SE = .127, 95\% CI [-.569, -.069], F(1, 546) = 6.242, p = .013, \eta_p^2 = .011$. There was no interaction, $B = .116, SE = .255, 95\% CI [-.384, .616], F(1, 546) = .206, p = .650, \eta_p^2 = .000$.

Discussion

Study 4 replicated prior studies demonstrating that when a diversity initiative was present, Whites were perceived as less valued and respected than minorities, but unlike prior studies, the reverse pattern emerged in the control condition. This pattern in the control condition likely reflects the reality

of the information presented in this study, as Whites were treated better than or equal to minorities in all conditions. There was a marginal three-way interaction with these patterns that seemed to stem from divergent patterns among participants in the White Advantage condition. Among participants who saw White advantage, those in the control condition appeared willing to recognize that advantage by perceiving Whites as more respected and valued than minorities. However, among those in the diversity condition who saw White advantage, this recognition of more respect and value for Whites than minorities was attenuated. This attenuation suggests that diversity initiatives may not always increase perceptions of Whites' lower respect and value compared with minorities; yet diversity initiatives may still make it difficult to perceive an obvious advantage in a situation that should warrant such a conclusion. However, the three-way interaction was marginal, and caution is warranted with these conclusions.

With respect to the perceived anti-White bias measure, consistent with prior studies, the mere presence (vs. absence) of a diversity award was sufficient for raising Whites' perceptions of anti-White bias, and this was not moderated by the organization's actual record of equal or preferential treatment of Whites. Although the effect size was smaller in this study compared with the prior studies, the diversity condition main effect under these circumstances speaks to the power of diversity initiatives in increasing Whites' perceptions of anti-White bias. This finding runs counter to the perspective that assuaging concerns about Whites' status and treatment eliminates their perceptions of bias when they encounter organizational diversity initiatives.

Study 5 took a different route toward assuaging the effects of diversity initiatives on Whites' perceptions by exploring the role of merit violations. In prior studies, the White candidate conveyed that he was more qualified than the Black candidate who received the promotion. This may have conveyed to participants that merit was not operating within the organization. Thus, Studies 5 and 6 directly manipulated the presence of a merit attribution within the specific promotion context.

Study 5

Procedures

Study 5 used a 2 (Diversity statement: present or absent) \times 2 (Merit attribution: present or absent) between-subjects design. After viewing the organization's diversity or mission statement, participants viewed the same materials used in the previous studies in which an employee indicated that he had been passed over for a promotion in favor of his colleague "Tyrone." Participants in the merit attribution absent condition read this exact same wording in which the White employee expressed the belief that he was more qualified than Tyrone and that the promotion decision must have been

more competitive than he thought. In contrast, for participants in the merit attribution present conditions, the White employee expressed the belief that Tyrone must have received the promotion because he had more years of relevant job and managerial experience and that the promotion decision must have been more competitive than he thought (see Online Supplement S10 for stimuli). Thus, in the merit attribution present condition, the White employee was passed over in favor of a Black candidate that even he perceived as more qualified for the promotion.

The same dependent measures were examined with the addition of a *predicted job performance* question in which participants predicted how well Tyrone would perform at his new job on a scale of 0–120 (Gündemir et al., 2017). If diversity initiatives are perceived to undermine merit, then Tyrone would be perceived as performing more poorly when a diversity initiative was present vs. absent (Gündemir et al., 2017; Heilman & Welle, 2006; Walton et al., 2013), but this effect should be mitigated when Tyrone was highly meritorious. See Table 7 for descriptive statistics.

We included one additional exploratory variable, individual differences in preference for the merit principle (Davey et al., 1999). Because we assessed this construct just once across these studies, we cannot draw strong conclusions, and simply provide this variable in the data file.

Results

Respect and value. A mixed ANOVA produced the main effect of recipient of respect and value observed in prior studies, $B = -.466$, $SE = .045$, 95% CI $[-.554, -.378]$, $F(1, 584) = 115.363$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .165$. Participants overall reported that the company offered less respect and value to Whites ($M = 5.344$, $SD = 1.344$) than racial minorities ($M = 5.811$, $SD = 1.097$). This main effect was qualified by a two-way interaction with the diversity statement manipulation, $B = .328$, $SE = .090$, 95% CI $[.152, .504]$, $F(1, 584) = 13.496$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .023$ and a two-way interaction with the merit-attribution manipulation, $B = -.539$, $SE = .090$, 95% CI $[-.716, -.363]$, $F(1, 584) = 35.984$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .058$.

The recipient by diversity statement interaction revealed that participants perceived the organization as less respectful of Whites than minorities in both conditions, but the magnitude of this difference was larger in the diversity condition, M difference = $-.648$, $SE = .064$, 95% CI $[-.773, -.523]$; $F(1, 584) = 104.097$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .151$, compared with the control condition, M difference = $-.318$, $SE = .064$, 95% CI $[-.443, -.193]$; $F(1, 584) = 24.921$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .041$. The recipient by merit attribution interaction showed that participants perceived the organization as less respectful of Whites than minorities in both conditions, but the magnitude of this difference was larger when no merit attribution was made, M difference = $-.753$, $SE = .066$, 95% CI $[-.882, -.624]$; $F(1, 584) = 132.038$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .184$,

Table 7. Study 5 Descriptive Statistics.

Variable	Diversity condition		Control condition	
	Merit attribution <i>M</i> (<i>SD</i>), <i>n</i> = 149	No merit attribution <i>M</i> (<i>SD</i>), <i>n</i> = 144	Merit attribution <i>M</i> (<i>SD</i>), <i>n</i> = 163	No merit attribution <i>M</i> (<i>SD</i>), <i>n</i> = 132
Respect and value For Whites ($\alpha = .934$)	5.591 (1.267)	4.708 (1.544)	5.871 (1.039)	5.110 (1.194)
Respect and value For minorities ($\alpha = .924$)	5.950 (1.060)	5.646 (1.117)	5.939 (1.091)	5.678 (1.093)
Perceived Discrimination ($\alpha = .972$)	2.309 (1.487)	3.697 (1.803)	1.896 (1.171)	3.270 (1.596)
Predicted job performance	95.879 (21.948)	79.549 (24.252)	100.815 (17.448)	83.621 (23.648)

compared with when a merit-based attribution was offered, M difference = $-.213$, $SE = .062$, 95% CI $[-.334, -.092]$; $F(1, 584) = 11.976$, $p = .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .020$. The three-way interaction was not significant, $B = .078$, $SE = .180$, 95% CI $[-.276, .431]$, $F(1, 584) = 0.187$, $p = .666$, $\eta_p^2 = .000$, suggesting that diversity initiatives cause Whites to worry about their group's relative status within an organization even when they observe an ingroup member fairly lose out on a promotion in favor of a more qualified minority.

Perceived discrimination. Participants perceived more anti-White bias in the diversity condition ($M = 2.9911$, $SD = 1.788$) than in the control condition ($M = 2.511$, $SD = 1.536$), $B = .420$, $SE = .125$, 95% CI $[.173, .666]$, $F(1, 584) = 11.185$, $p = .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .019$. There was also a main effect of the merit-based attribution manipulation, with participants perceiving more anti-White bias when the White employee did not make a merit-based attribution ($M = 3.493$, $SD = 1.717$) compared with when he made a merit-based attribution ($M = 2.093$, $SD = 1.345$), $B = 1.381$, $SE = .126$, 95% CI $[1.134, 1.628]$, $F(1, 584) = 120.812$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .171$. The interaction was not significant, $B = -.015$, $SE = .251$, 95% CI $[-.508, .479]$, $F(1, 584) = .003$, $p = .954$, $\eta_p^2 = .000$, suggesting that the presence (vs. absence) of a diversity statement increases Whites' perceptions of anti-White bias, and this effect is not assuaged when a White employee acknowledges that he lost out to a more qualified minority.

Job performance. There was a significant main effect for diversity condition revealing that participants predicted higher job performance for Tyrone when the company made no mention of diversity ($M = 93.095$, $SD = 22.152$) compared with when the company offered a diversity message ($M = 87.853$, $SD = 24.476$); $B = -4.531$, $SE = 1.803$, 95% CI $[-8.072, -0.989]$, $F(1, 583) = 6.217$, $p = .013$, $\eta_p^2 = .011$. There was a main effect of the merit-based attribution manipulation, with participants predicting higher job performance when the White employee provided a merit-based attribution ($M = 98.450$, $SD = 19.855$) compared with when he did not ($M = 81.496$, $SD = 24.008$), $B = -16.764$, $SE = 1.806$, 95% CI $[-20.312, -13.216]$, $F(1, 583) = 86.103$, $p <$

$.001$, $\eta_p^2 = .129$. The interaction was not significant, $B = -.863$, $SE = 3.613$, 95% CI $[-7.959, 6.233]$, $F(1, 583) = .057$, $p = .811$, $\eta_p^2 = .000$.

Discussion

The mere presence (vs. absence) of a diversity statement increased Whites' perceptions that Whites were less valued and respected than minorities, that Whites were the victims of anti-White bias, and that minorities who succeeded in these organizations would underperform. Although participants were sensitive to the merit attribution manipulation, it did not assuage these main effects of the diversity initiative manipulation. Study 6 provides a direct replication of these methods and further explores how diversity initiatives affect performance perceptions.

Study 6

Procedures

The procedures replicated Study 5, with the addition of two performance outcome measures: The percentage of a pay raise offered to Tyrone and the level recommended for his promotion (neither measure supported hypotheses; see Online Supplement S12 for description). See Table 8 for descriptive statistics. In addition, we included an individual measure of Zero Sums Beliefs as an exploratory variable. As we assessed this construct just once, we cannot draw strong conclusions. This variable is in the data file.

Results

Respect and value. The mixed ANOVA produced the main effect of recipient of respect and value, $B = -.622$, $SE = .058$, 95% CI $[-.736, -.508]$, $F(1, 447) = 112.054$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .200$, with participants overall reporting that the company offered less respect and value to Whites ($M = 5.247$, $SD = 1.401$) than racial minorities ($M = 5.870$, $SD = 1.008$). Surprisingly, the respect and value main effect was not qualified by an interaction with the diversity

Table 8. Study 6 Descriptive Statistics.

Variable	Diversity condition		Control condition	
	Merit attribution <i>M</i> (<i>SD</i>), <i>n</i> = 108	No merit attribution <i>M</i> (<i>SD</i>), <i>n</i> = 118	Merit attribution <i>M</i> (<i>SD</i>), <i>n</i> = 112	No merit attribution <i>M</i> (<i>SD</i>), <i>n</i> = 113
Respect and value For Whites ($\alpha = .943$)	5.708 (1.202)	4.729 (1.507)	5.777 (1.137)	4.823 (1.381)
Respect and value For minorities ($\alpha = .950$)	6.046 (0.901)	5.775 (1.027)	6.036 (0.956)	5.637 (1.088)
Perceived Discrimination ($\alpha = .973$)	2.189 (1.481)	3.892 (1.771)	1.973 (1.431)	3.420 (1.638)
Predicted job performance	96.222 (17.466)	76.831 (23.766)	93.893 (15.661)	77.027 (22.463)
Pay raise %	8.750 (2.745)	6.746 (3.251)	8.321 (2.689)	6.911 (2.713)
Promotion	2.694 (0.729)	2.085 (0.812)	2.616 (0.661)	2.018 (0.707)

manipulation, $B = .158$, $SE = .116$, 95% CI [-.070, .386], $F(1, 447) = 1.800$, $p = .180$, $\eta_p^2 = .004$.

This main effect of target of respect and value was qualified by an interaction with the merit attribution manipulation, $B = .632$, $SE = .116$, 95% CI [.404, .860], $F(1, 447) = 29.634$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .062$. Participants perceived the organization as less respectful of Whites than minorities in both conditions, but that the magnitude of this difference was larger when no merit attribution was made, M difference = $-.930$, $SE = .081$, 95% CI [-1.090, $-.771$]; $F(1, 447) = 131.672$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .228$, compared with when a merit attribution was made, M difference = $-.298$, $SE = .083$, 95% CI [-.462, $-.135$]; $F(1, 447) = 12.905$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .028$. The three-way interaction was not significant, $B = .153$, $SE = .232$, 95% CI [-.303, .610], $F(1, 447) = 0.437$, $p = .509$, $\eta_p^2 = .001$.

Perceived discrimination. Participants perceived more anti-White bias in the diversity condition ($M = 3.078$, $SD = 1.844$) compared to the control condition, $M = 2.700$, $SD = 1.697$; $B = -.347$, $SE = .150$, 95% CI [-.641, $-.053$], $F(1, 447) = 5.272$, $p = .022$, $\eta_p^2 = .012$. As in Study 5, there was no interaction with the merit manipulation, $B = -.256$, $SE = .300$, 95% CI [-.845, .332], $F(1, 447) = 0.733$, $p = .392$, $\eta_p^2 = .002$.

There was a significant main effect of the merit attribution manipulation, with participants perceiving more anti-White bias when the White employee did not make a merit attribution ($M = 3.661$, $SD = 1.720$) compared with when he did ($M = 2.079$, $SD = 1.456$), $B = -1.575$, $SE = .150$, 95% CI [-1.869, -1.280], $F(1, 447) = 110.522$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .198$.

Job performance. The ANOVA on predicted job performance did not reveal the main effect for diversity condition that was observed in Study 5, $B = -1.036$, $SE = 1.903$, 95% CI [-4.776, 2.704], $F(1, 447) = .314$, $p = .576$, $\eta_p^2 = .001$ (diversity condition $M = 86.097$, $SD = 23.087$; control condition $M = 85.422$, $SD = 21.101$). There was a significant main effect of the merit attribution manipulation, with

participants predicting higher job performance for Tyrone when the White employee provided a merit attribution ($M = 95.036$, $SD = 16.575$) compared with when he did not ($M = 76.926$, $SD = 23.088$), $B = 18.132$, $SE = 1.904$, 95% CI [14.391, 21.873], $F(1, 447) = 90.690$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .169$. There was no interaction, $B = 2.525$, $SE = 3.807$, 95% CI [-4.957, 10.008], $F(1, 447) = .440$, $p = .507$, $\eta_p^2 = .001$.

Discussion

Study 6 replicated the finding that diversity initiatives increase Whites' propensity to perceive anti-White bias, and this is not moderated by a merit manipulation in which Whites observe an ingroup member passed over in favor of a more qualified minority. Study 6 did not, however, replicate the finding from the prior five studies that relative differences in perceived value and respect for Whites were greater in the diversity condition relative to the control condition. Instead, overall, Whites were perceived as more disrespectfully treated than minorities, but this effect was smaller when there was a merit attribution present. Given that the pattern of means followed our prior studies, with reduced perceptions of respect for Whites relative to minorities being greater in the diversity (vs. control) condition, we suspect a Type 2 error. Finally, unlike Study 5, the diversity manipulation did not affect performance outcomes.

Study 7 adopts a third strategy for exploring the illusory nature of the effects of diversity initiatives on Whites' perceptions of their group's treatment. Drawing upon realistic group conflict theory, it explores how information about the abundance vs. scarcity of promotion opportunities shapes how diversity initiatives affect Whites. When resources are scarce, between-group competition is enhanced, leading to conflict, defensive ingroup supportive behaviors, and discrimination (Krosch et al., 2017; Sherif, 1966). In contrast, when resources are abundant, realistic group conflict dissipates and intergroup tensions improve. Thus, Study 7 explores whether conveying that future promotion opportunities at the organization are abundant is sufficient for

Table 9. Study 7 Descriptive Statistics.

Variable	Diversity condition		Control condition	
	Scarcity M (SD), n = 148	Abundance M (SD), n = 137	Scarcity M (SD), n = 134	Abundance M (SD), n = 154
Respect and value For Whites ($\alpha = .916$)	4.645 (1.362)	4.923 (1.375)	4.590 (1.300)	5.023 (1.299)
Respect and value For minorities ($\alpha = .908$)	5.497 (1.065)	5.683 (1.034)	5.187 (1.053)	5.562 (1.050)
Perceived Discrimination ($\alpha = .962$)	3.816 (1.571)	3.422 (1.603)	3.388 (1.582)	2.970 (1.652)
Predicted job performance	75.103 (21.553)	77.905 (22.417)	77.284 (23.788)	78.091 (21.722)
Pay raise %	6.034 (2.678)	7.168 (2.719)	6.306 (3.134)	6.843 (2.578)
Promotion	1.993 (0.733)	2.058 (0.735)	1.970 (0.858)	2.156 (0.751)

reducing Whites' perceptions of disrespect and perceived anti-White bias in the presence of diversity initiatives.

Study 7

Procedures

Study 7 used a 2 (Resources: abundant vs. scarce) \times 2 (Diversity statement: present vs. absent) between-subjects design. Embedded in the description of the company statement, participants read about the "company outlook", which either indicated that (a) "opportunities at Smith & Simon are at an all-time low and prospects for advancement in the company are scarce. Only 2% of employees will be considered for promotions each year for the foreseeable future" or that (b) "Opportunities at Smith & Simon are at an all-time high and prospects for advancement in the company are abundant. All employees will be considered for promotions every 6 months for the foreseeable future" (see Online Supplement S11 for stimuli). After reading about the company outlook, participants read either the company's mission statement or diversity statement. The pay raise and promotion variables are described in Online Supplement S12. See Table 9 for descriptive statistics.

Results

Respect and value. Analyses revealed the main effect of recipient of respect and value observed in prior studies, $B = -.685$, $SE = .054$, 95% CI $[-.791, -.580]$, $F(1, 569) = 163.208$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .223$, with participants overall reporting that the company offered less respect and value for Whites ($M = 4.800$, $SD = 1.343$) than racial minorities ($M = 5.486$, $SD = 1.063$). This effect was qualified by the interaction with the diversity statement manipulation, $B = .237$, $SE = .107$, 95% CI $[-.026, .448]$, $F(1, 569) = 4.872$, $p = .028$, $\eta_p^2 = .008$, but not the scarcity/abundance manipulation, $B = .075$, $SE = .107$, 95% CI $[-.136, .286]$, $F(1, 569) = 0.489$, $p = .485$, $\eta_p^2 = .001$.

The magnitude of the difference in respect/value for Whites relative to minorities was larger when a diversity statement was present, M difference = $-.805$, $SE = .076$, 95% CI $[-.955, -.656]$; $F(1, 569) = 111.839$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .164$, versus absent, M difference = $-.568$, $SE = .076$, 95% CI $[-.717, -.419]$; $F(1, 569) = 56.042$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .090$. The three-way interaction was not significant, $B = .034$, $SE = .215$, 95% CI $[-.388, .456]$, $F(1, 569) = 0.025$, $p = .874$, $\eta_p^2 = .000$.

Perceived discrimination. Participants perceived more anti-White bias in the diversity condition ($M = 3.627$, $SD = 1.596$) compared to the control condition ($M = 3.165$, $SD = 1.631$), $B = -.440$, $SE = .134$, 95% CI $[-.704, -.177]$, $F(1, 569) = 10.752$, $p = .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .019$. There was also a main effect of the scarcity/abundance manipulation, consistent with realistic conflict theory showing that participants perceived more anti-White bias when the company had scarce ($M = 3.613$, $SD = 1.588$) compared with abundant opportunities ($M = 3.183$, $SD = 1.642$), $B = -.406$, $SE = .134$, 95% CI $[-.670, -.143]$, $F(1, 569) = 9.161$, $p = .003$, $\eta_p^2 = .016$. There was no interaction, $B = .024$, $SE = .268$, 95% CI $[-.503, .551]$, $F(1, 569) = .008$, $p = .930$, $\eta_p^2 = .000$.

Job performance. The ANOVA exploring the effect of the scarcity/abundance and diversity statement manipulations on predicted job performance revealed no significant main effect of diversity statement, $B = 1.168$, $SE = 1.873$, 95% CI $[-2.511, 4.846]$, $F(1, 567) = 0.399$, $p = .528$, $\eta_p^2 = .001$ nor resource scarcity/abundance manipulation, $B = 1.800$, $SE = 1.873$, 95% CI $[-1.880, 5.479]$, $F(1, 567) = 0.928$, $p = .336$, $\eta_p^2 = .002$. The interaction was non-significant, $B = 1.995$, $SE = 3.746$, 95% CI $[-5.363, 9.354]$, $F(1, 567) = 0.284$, $p = .595$, $\eta_p^2 = .000$.

Discussion

Study 7 replicated the findings that the presence of diversity initiatives increases Whites' sense of organizational

Table 10. Summary of Mediation Analyses for Studies 1–7.

Study	a path B (SE), 95% CI	b path B (SE), 95% CI	c path (total) B (SE), 95% CI	c' path (direct) B (SE), 95% CI	Indirect Effect B (SE), 95% CI
Study 1	-.508 (.139), [-.781, -.235]	-.722 (.062), [-.843, -.601]	.577 (.182), [.218, .935]	.201 (.156), [-.096, .516]	.367 (.097), [.176, .559]
Study 2	-.482 (.165), [-.806, -.158]	-.706 (.053), [-.809, -.602]	.574 (.190), [.200, .949]	.234 (.153), [-.067, .535]	.340 (.108), [.123, .551]
Study 3	-.546 (.157), [-.855, -.236]	-.621 (.054), [-.727, -.514]	.193 (.177), [-.156, .541]	-.146 (.151), [-.443, .151]	.339 (.102), [.141, .541]
Study 4 ^a	-.309 (.095), [-.495, -.123]	-.548 (.052), [-.651, -.445]	.270 (.127), [.022, .522]	.103 (.117), [-.128, .333]	.169 (.053), [.069, .279]
Study 5 ^b	-.328 (.090), [-.504, -.152]	-.717 (.050), [-.815, -.620]	.420 (.125), [.174, .666]	.185 (.109), [-.029, .398]	.235 (.063), [.115, .361]
Study 6 ^b	-.158 (.116), [-.386, .070]	-.794 (.048), [-.888, -.699]	.347 (.150), [.053, .641]	.222 (.118), [-.011, .455]	.125 (.092), [-.046, .312]
Study 7 ^c	-.237 (.107), [-.448, -.026]	-.738 (.042), [-.821, -.656]	.440 (.134), [.177, .703]	.265 (.109), [.052, .479]	.175 (.081), [.020, .339]

Note. Bolded effects are significant at $p < .05$. a path = effect of diversity manipulation on respect and value for Whites (vs. minorities). b path = effect of respect and value for Whites (vs. minorities) on perceived discrimination. c path (total) = total effect of diversity manipulation on perceived discrimination. c' path (direct) = direct effect of diversity manipulation on perceived discrimination. Indirect Effect = indirect effect of diversity manipulation on perceived discrimination via respect and value for Whites (vs. minorities).

^aPromotion manipulation entered as covariate. ^bMerit attribution manipulation entered as covariate. ^cScarcity/abundance manipulation entered as a covariate.

disrespect directed at Whites relative to minorities and Whites' perceptions of anti-White bias. Further, although an abundance of opportunities did overall reduce perceptions of anti-White bias, as realistic group conflict theory would suggest, this manipulation did not moderate the effects of the diversity initiative on either the perceptions of respect and value or anti-White bias. This speaks to the robustness of diversity initiatives in increasing defensive behaviors among Whites, irrespective of local conditions that should otherwise ease these concerns. As in Study 6, the diversity initiative did not affect any of the Black employees' performance outcomes.

Mediation

We hypothesized that the presence of diversity initiatives increases perceptions of anti-White bias by reducing perceptions of respect and value for Whites, relative to minorities (H3). To test this hypothesis, we conducted a simple mediation model in all studies. We first operationalized perceived respect and value for Whites relative to minorities by subtracting perceived respect/value for minorities from perceived respect/value for Whites. We used Hayes' (2018) PROCESS macro to estimate the indirect effect of diversity manipulation on perceived discrimination via respect and value for Whites (relative to minorities) using 5,000 bootstrapped samples. In Studies 4–7, we included the second manipulated variable as a covariate. In all studies except Study 6, the indirect effect was significant (see Table 10 for a summary of these analyses and Online Supplement S13 for the detailed analyses). These analyses

provide support for our hypothesis that the effect of the presence of diversity initiatives on Whites' perceptions of anti-White discrimination stem in part from the belief that when diversity initiatives are present Whites are afforded less respect and value than minorities.

Meta-Analysis

We meta-analyzed the effect of the diversity manipulation across the seven studies using fixed effects, weighted by sample size (Goh et al., 2016). We calculated Cohen's d effect sizes for (a) the difference between respect/value for Whites and respect/value for minorities (weighted mean $d = -0.278$), and for (b) perceived discrimination (weighted mean $d = .253$). This revealed a significant meta-analytic effect of the diversity manipulation on respect value for Whites (vs. minorities), $Z = -7.672$, 95% CI [-.349, -.207], $p < .001$, such that respect/value for Whites (vs. minorities) was lower in the diversity condition than in the control condition. In addition, there was a significant meta-analytic effect of the diversity manipulation on perceived discrimination, $Z = 6.994$, 95% CI [.182, .324], $p < .001$, such that perceived discrimination was higher in the diversity condition than in the control condition.¹

Individual Differences

The findings from the individual difference moderators examined in Studies 1–4 are presented fully in Online Supplement S3–S7 and S9 and are described only generally here. As can be seen in Table 11, there was little

Table 11. Overview of Findings on Moderator \times Diversity Condition Interactions.

Moderator	Study 1	Study 2	Study 3	Study 4
	R/V D	R/V D	R/V D	R/V D
Social Dominance Orientation	* X	X X	X X	
Racial Common Fate	* X	X X	X X	* X
Identity Centrality	* X	X X	X *	
Affective Attitudes toward Whites	X X		X X	

Note. Significant interactions are indicated by *. Nonsignificant interactions are indicated by X. R/V = respect/value of Whites relative to minorities; D = Perceived discrimination against Whites.

evidence that Social Dominance Orientation or various indices of White racial identification moderated the effects of diversity initiatives on perceptions of respect/value and anti-White bias. Of the 24 opportunities to observe moderation, only five significant interactions emerged, and no single variable produced a significant interaction at a rate higher than 33%. These results are consistent with Dover et al. (2016), who demonstrated that irrespective of endorsement of a wide variety of individual difference constructs related to status and group identification, the presence (vs. absence) of organizational diversity initiatives increased physiological indicators of threat and perceived anti-White bias among White men. Whereas the prior study examined a small group of young White men in an organization that appeared highly diverse, the current studies demonstrated this phenomenon with larger and more diverse samples of White Americans, and with several well-validated and reliable individual difference constructs. The present studies allow for a stronger conclusion that diversity initiatives produce defensive behavior among many White Americans, including well intentioned Whites who reject hierarchical status relations and do not have a strong affinity for Whites. See the supplements for more nuance, including lower order effects describing reliable main effects of individual differences on perceived anti-White bias and interactions between individual differences and the recipient of respect/value.

General Discussion

Discontent is rising among White Americans, many of whom now perceive their group as the true targets of racial discrimination (Norton & Sommers, 2011; Wilkins & Kaiser, 2014). Whites' perceptions of their group's disenfranchisement represent one reason for the election of President Trump, who based his campaign around the belief that White Americans have been neglected (Mutz, 2018). Despite Whites' rising concerns with their group's mistreatment, objective markers of social status do not reflect a pattern of White disadvantage; rather, Whites are advantaged on almost every available marker of social status. Why then is the perception of anti-White bias so prevalent?

We propose that perceptions of anti-White bias stem in part from widespread societal norms and practices that promote diversity, such as organizational diversity initiatives. Although diversity initiatives largely serve as markers of symbolic compliance with civil rights laws and have little impact on workplace demographics or bias (Dobbin, 2009; Edelman et al., 2011; Kalev et al., 2006), these initiatives nonetheless increase Whites' concerns about the respect and value afforded to their group, and thus increase perceptions that Whites are disadvantaged relative to minorities.

Seven experiments, exploring a range of diversity initiatives (i.e., diversity awards, mission statements, training programs), generally supported these hypotheses. The presence (vs. absence) of diversity initiatives increased Whites' perception that Whites were less valued and respected relative to minorities. Additionally, the presence (vs. absence) of diversity initiatives caused Whites to perceive a White man passed over for a promotion in favor of an African American as a victim of discrimination. Furthermore, perceived lack of respect/value for Whites relative to minorities mediated the effects of the presence (vs. absence) of diversity initiatives on the perceived anti-White bias.

These studies build upon the findings in Dover et al. (2016) to demonstrate that diversity initiatives shape perceptions of anti-White bias even when Whites take the perspective of third-party fact-finders with no personal interest at stake within the organization. Significantly, across several reasonable tests of moderating factors that should have assuaged Whites' concerns about diversity initiatives, there was little evidence that these factors attenuated these effects. Specifically, the effects of diversity initiatives on perceived anti-White bias were not qualified by evidence that Whites were objectively advantaged with regard to promotions relative to minorities, that a White employee was less qualified for a specific promotion relative to the African American man who received the promotion, and that promotion opportunities at the organization were abundant. These same moderators generally did not reduce the effects of diversity initiatives on perceptions of respect and value afforded to Whites relative to minorities, yet the evidence was more nuanced for the objective advantage in promotions manipulation. Together, these theoretically derived factors should

have assuaged the perception that diversity initiatives disrespect and devalue Whites relative to minorities, but most often they did not.²

The modest influence of these moderators is reminiscent of research showing that Whites who are reminded that the United States is becoming more diverse show increased perceptions of anti-White bias, and that this effect is not mitigated by assuaging Whites' concerns that their high-status position would remain intact, but is reduced by reminders that prototypical American culture would remain intact (Craig & Richeson, 2017). This prototypical American cultural mechanism is worth exploring in future research, perhaps with a reminder that local organizational culture would remain unchanged despite diversity initiatives. Likewise, broadening the definition of diversity so that it is inclusive of Whites might provide an alternative mechanism for mitigating the effects of diversity initiatives on perceived anti-White bias (Small et al., 2021; Stevens et al., 2008).

Strengths of the current studies include stimulus sampling with respect to the types of diversity initiatives explored, ranging from the shallow, such as ubiquitous diversity mission statements, to those that may reflect more organizational impact, such as receipt of diversity awards. In addition, the use of a common paradigm and set of measures across experiments allowed for systematically and rigorously testing a series of theoretically relevant individual differences and situational factors as moderators of results. The paradigm also reflects how complaints about "reverse discrimination" are often aired in employment and educational settings. Nonetheless, the use of a common paradigm and set of measures across experiments is a limitation, raising the possibility that the findings might be unique to this paradigm. We did replicate the phenomena in Studies 5 and 6 using a variant of the general paradigm (when Whites made a merit attribution), so the paradigm offers some generalizability. Likewise, the current findings are consistent with Dover et al. (2016) which used a markedly different paradigm. Nonetheless, replication with other paradigms, with more diverse and representative samples, and in more real-world settings is desirable. Likewise, our conclusions are specific to assuaging factors and methods employed in these studies; there may be other methods that would reveal boundary conditions or even reversals of the major effects. Finally, we did not counterbalance the ordering of measures, which also limits the generalizability of conclusions.

In conclusion, these experiments demonstrate that the presence (vs. absence) of organizational diversity initiatives generally increased Whites' perceptions that their group is unfairly treated relative to minorities and sensitized them to anti-White bias. As in prior studies (Dover et al., 2016), these effects were robust and rarely moderated by individual difference and situationally manipulated factors that should have to assuage Whites' concern about their group's treatment. Although these assuaging factors

often had direct main effects on anti-White bias and the respect and value offered to Whites and minorities, these constructs were rarely sufficient to qualify the reliable effects of diversity initiatives.

Discrimination perceptions represent a powerful lens through which people perceive and act upon the social world. Discrimination perceptions catalyze action, and they are at the heart of significant societal events including lawsuits, political movements, and the state of contemporary race relations. To realize the promise of diversity initiatives, organizations would be wise to turn toward the burgeoning scholarship on diversity science, as this literature points to obstacles, including Whites' perceptions of anti-White bias, that have the potential to hamper well-intended approaches to increasing diversity and creating a more equitable workforce. Efforts to address Whites' perceptions of victimhood might help organizations deliver on their efforts to create diverse and inclusive workplace environments.

Declaration of Conflicting Interests

The author(s) declared no potential conflicts of interest with respect to the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

Funding

The author(s) disclosed receipt of the following financial support for the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article: This research was supported by National Science Foundation Grants BCS-1053732 and 1052886 awarded collaboratively to C.R.K. and B.M.

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Supplemental Material

Supplemental material is available online with this article.

Notes

1. Across analyses, we treated respect and value for Whites and minorities with a repeated-measures approach. This approach was grounded in our theoretical perspective that considering these constructs together provides a fuller understanding of how participants perceive the value afforded to both groups within the workplace. Nonetheless, the separate patterns on respect/value for Whites and minorities are of interest, and we include tables describing reanalysis on the separate items for the ANOVA findings from all studies in Online Supplement S14 and the mediational findings in Online Supplement S15.
2. Although the Diversity \times Assuaging Factor interactions were never significant on any variables in Studies 4–7, we nonetheless describe the simple effects within each cell of the experiment in Online Supplement S16. We encourage caution with interpretation due to the nonsignificant interactions.

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