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Attitudes Toward Diversity: Determining Differences by Social Locators

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ATTITUDES TOWARD DIVERSITY:
DETERMINING DIFFERENCES BY SOCIAL LOCATORS

A Thesis

Presented to

The Faculty of The Department of Sociology

Western Kentucky University

Bowling Green, Kentucky

In Partial Fulfillment

Of the Requirement For The Degree

Master of Arts

by

Stacey Andrews Sympson

August 1999

Attitudes Toward Diversity:
Determining Differences by Social Locators

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ATTITUDES TOWARD DIVERSITY:
DETERMINING DIFFERENCES BY SOCIAL LOCATORS

Stacey Andrews Sympson August 1999 101 pages

Directed by James W. Grimm, Joan L. Krenzin, Paul R. Wozniak

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Diversity training in workplaces is occurring across the U.S. at a growing rate. These programs attempt to make work environments more pluralistic for everyone. Conflict and feminist theory both agree that those with less power will see issues in a different way than will those with more power.

This research involved a questionnaire administered to employees at a governmental agency in a small city in the Southeastern United States. Indices were used to measure attitudes toward diversity and sexual orientation. T-tests and multiple regressions were employed to determine the differences in employees' attitudes toward the two dependent variables.

Results from 175 returned questionnaires showed females, nonwhites, and employees with fewer years of employment had more positive attitudes toward diversity and equality based on sexual orientation than did males, whites, and employees with a large number of years in the workforce.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Although affirmative action programs originated over thirty years ago, diversity training is a relatively recent technique designed to bridge the gap between different peoples. Diversity training is also known as diversity management, diversity programs, or diversity initiatives. The programs are developed by workplaces and employers to help sensitize employees to the different groups of people with whom they work. Also, these programs are thought to offer a competitive advantage for businesses to attract new customers. The type of workplace will obviously dictate the type of diversity program. For example, some businesses choose to deal only with race while others may look at sexuality, race, gender, and religion. The extent of a diversity program is contingent on the demographics of the workers involved and the market the employer serves.

Diversity programs have created a heated debate in business and public circles. While diversity initiatives serve to decrease prejudices among workers and lower subtle barriers to advancement for minorities, many see these initiatives only as smoke screens for affirmative action

(Caudron 1998; Galen and Palmer 1994; Staples 1995). The idea that diversity training is a smoke screen for affirmative action has aided in creating negative opinions from both black and white people. Some black opinions include the idea that these programs are taking away from the impact of affirmative action (Staples 1995). In other words, the programs are being used instead of affirmative action, yet the programs are not allowing people of color and women to penetrate the upper management positions.

One of the more negative opinions among whites is the idea that diversity initiatives are as exclusive to certain groups as some thought affirmative action to be (Lynch 1997). In the era of political correctness, Americans are trying to make the move to the higher levels of equality. White men, in particular, claim that they felt cheated by affirmative action and they feel excluded from diversity programs (Galen and Palmer 1994; Staples 1995).

One argument has been that there will be a "white backlash" to racial policies and diversity initiatives. The idea being suggested is that these programs will create tension between those who supposedly do not benefit--white men--and those who do--people of color and women. That idea is theoretically backed up by Peter Blau's (1977) arguments that a conflict of interest can occur when people with little power seek to reallocate power. The group(s) with

more power have more to lose than any other group and, therefore, may voice more opposition to the practice.

However, whether these reactions have developed in response to diversity training remains unknown. White people in general, and white men specifically, have more power in the U.S. than any other group. Empirical questions that need to be answered, therefore, are 1) Is there resentment from white men due to diversity programs, and do they really feel left out and 2) Do women and minorities perceive diversity more positively than men do? These questions are addressed in this study, which examines workers' attitudes and beliefs toward diversity.

This study was focused on the opinions and attitudes of black and white workers of both sexes at three Federal agencies in a city in the Southeastern U.S. Previous quantitative studies have attempted to measure the differences in diversity opinions between black and white people. However, that research failed to treat gender as an independent variable. There is also an abundance of research on whites' attitudes toward racial policies that deal with affirmative action. Again, however, these studies failed to use gender as an independent variable. It is important to examine the opinions of women in general, and black women specifically, because they have unique insight into the "white male power" world due to their marginal

status in that world (Collins 1991). Patricia Madoo Lengermann and Jill Niebrugge (1996) also agree that it is important to analyze the relations between knowledge and power because every person's account of knowledge is directly related to her/his location within a social system. In this study gender is treated as an independent variable to illustrate the difference between the attitudes of women and men of both racial groups.

The effects of increasing diversity in U.S. society and diversity training in the workplace can be examined through both conflict and feminist theory. A basic premise of conflict theory is that people's behavior is explained in terms of their own self-interest in a world that involves struggles over power (Collins 1988). Feminist theory argues that the various race, class, and gender stratification systems produce different attitudes and opinions within both the oppressor and oppressed groups. Varying social groups will, therefore, have a number of different attitudes toward diversity based on their social location in stratification systems.

A survey was administered to approximately 340 employees in a governmental agency. The survey consisted of demographic, attitudinal, and work-experience questions. The researcher wanted to find out whether age, race, sex, or working experience affect one's attitude toward diversity

and equality. Examining the attitudes of employees permitted the investigator to note any interesting patterns among black and white women and men. By focusing on any similarities or differences among these groups the researcher hoped to add to the understanding of intergroup conflict and relationships.

CHAPTER II

THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVE

Companies of all sizes are implementing diversity training programs for their employees as a strategic device to help improve labor relations and productivity (Caudron 1998). In the U.S., where historically the workforce has been composed of white men, diversity training programs are in part the product of a changing workforce that includes a larger number of women and minorities. The general reason cited for having this type of program is to "expand career and advancement opportunities for women and minorities" and to foster "greater customer growth" (Caudron 1998, p. 141). Another reason to justify diversity training is the need to create a sense of shared pluralism, which theoretically would create a more egalitarian workplace and encourage people to open the doors to minorities and women. In empirical terms how open employees will be to these changes remains to be seen. Several variations of conflict and feminist theories are useful in examining the reasons some employees, rather than others, may find diversity training offensive. The two theories agree that systems of stratification create several different groups that differ

in power or privilege. Conflict theory goes on to state that "any social order will be largely structured by conflict" between those groups (Collins 1988, p. 120).

Conflict Theory

Conflict theory is useful for this study because one of the main focuses is on social change and its effect on stratification. It can be argued that diversity is becoming an important topic now because of the changing demographics of the work force. Also, U.S. society is characterized by several stratification systems, which include race and gender. The researcher wanted to determine whether those stratification systems shape the opinions of people about the changing face of the workplace.

A major focus of conflict theory, and specifically the version by Ralf Dahrendorf, is the changing nature of every society (Dahrendorf 1968). Change occurs in a dialectical form; the very things that set change in motion create the necessary environment for more change to occur. Conflict theorists also maintain that in all relations people who occupy dominant positions seek to continue the status quo while people in less privileged positions seek to gain more power. It is usually assumed that conflict occurs only between two groups at a time because even subordinate groups with different interests unite in order to achieve change

vis-a-vis the powerful group. Once the desired change is achieved, it is argued, the challenging groups break up into smaller groups with different and more specific interests. According to Dahrendorf's (1968) conflict theory of social roles, sociologists must try to understand not only the relationship between conflict and change--change is the growing demand for diversity--but also the relationship between conflict and the status quo--the resistance against diversity by those with vested interest in the power.

Another conflict theorist, Randall Collins (1975), has expanded the traditional conflict premises. The idea that people change the social structure, when combined with the emphasis conflict theorists place on the differing perspectives of actors located in differing power positions, sets the stage to understand the current reality in the U.S. Collins goes on to say that sociologists should examine the relationship between cultural things such as beliefs or ideals and the resources people have. He argues that groups without power and resources have belief systems forced upon them from the group with more resources. Only when one has power and resources can he/she develop a new set of belief systems.

Collins (1975) states,

In each sphere, we look for the actual pattern of personal interaction, the resources available to persons in different positions, and how these

affect the line of attack they take for furthering their personal status. (p. 61)

From this idea it can be presumed that every group has a different outlook on the effects of diversity training. Considering that white people in general, and white men specifically, have held more privileged positions, one can hypothesize that the opinions and attitudes of this group cause them to choose to maintain the status quo. Before reaching such a conclusion, however, it is also important to look at how Peter Blau, who is traditionally a structural theorist, writes about the nature of inequality and conflict.

Blau (1977), in *Inequality and Heterogeneity*, discusses the nature of inequality, social change, and conflict. Blau agrees with conflict theorists about the notion that an imbalance of power will lead to conflict among groups. He goes on to hypothesize, however, that any intergroup relations will lead to some conflict. Increasing the number of women and minorities in the workforce will increase the number of intergroup relations between differing groups. Blau also states that the same conditions, increasing numbers of women and minorities, that allow for more casual intergroup contact will give rise to an increase in interpersonal conflict. "Comparatively frequent interpersonal conflict is the price of social integration in

a diverse society" (Blau 1977, p. 113).

Blau also states that more intergroup contact will lead to a decrease in groups' barriers, thus ending some of the conflict. Another way to decrease barriers and increase integration is the incorporation of each group into larger groups until groups are fully merged into the larger society. Is the merging of all groups really possible or even desired? Diversity training would arguably be against assimilation but still favor incorporating all groups into a whole, which is the reason they teach the principles of pluralism.

Feminist Theory

Many theorists argue that each individual has too many group affiliations to merge into any single identity (Collins 1991; Lengermann and Niebrugge 1996; Simmel 1955). This idea is one of the main premises behind feminist theory (Lengermann and Niebrugge 1996). Also, feminist theorists argue that the different social locations of individuals lead to varying attitudes and opinions.

Simmel (1955) states,

As the individual leaves his [sic] established position within one group, he [sic] comes to stand at a point at which many "intersect." The individual as a moral personality comes to be circumscribed in an entirely new way, but he [sic] also faces new problems. The security and lack of ambiguity in his [sic] former position gives way to uncertainty in the conditions of his life. (pp.

141-42)

This quote illustrates one of the main components of feminist theories. The idea is that people in less privileged positions learn to navigate and understand both their social worlds and the social worlds of the privileged. Also, groups that are oppressed see more clearly the effects of stratification and domination. This analysis seems to suggest that women and minorities, having already been exposed to it, are more open and tolerant of diversity and diversity training.

Although Blau (1977) was not writing from a feminist theoretical perspective, it is useful to interject some of his theorems at this point. Blau contended that structurally, minority groups will have more intergroup contact with members of a majority group than will members of the majority group with them. He went on to state that an increase in relations with people who are different will make a person more tolerant of others and provide for further intellectual insight. It follows, then, that women and minorities will have more insight into the realities of white men or any other group that has more power than will white men into the realities of women and minorities. These same women and minorities, then, are more aware and tolerant of a diverse workforce because they will already be more familiar with members of groups other than their own.

A major task of feminist sociology is the exploration of the viewpoints of less privileged groups because of the special insight they have about the dominant culture (Lengermann and Niebrugge 1996). "A major factor in privilege is that the viewpoints of favorably situated actors become the viewpoints of society" (p. 473). Because of women's historically traditional social role as moderators of many different people they have learned to balance others' views with their own, "Women thus find knowledge not by accepting unilateral claims to truth but by balancing and weighing the accounts of reality presented to them by a variety of others" (1996, p. 473). Again, the suggestion is that women are more open to diversity than are men.

Intersection of Conflict and Feminist Theory

Adding to the analysis set forth about women, Lengermann and Niebrugge (1996) include the idea that any individual who occupies a subordinated position does not have the comfort of thinking there is any existing standardized other. Instead they must learn to play the role of the genuine other, which is everyone who has more power or resources than they do. Patricia Hill Collins (1991) further expands on this idea of a subordinated person

learning to navigate the social worlds of dominant people. Most important in this discussion of people seeing things from different vantage points is Collins' insistence that people who experience marginality are more likely to point out the inconsistencies between an insider's account of knowledge and that of their reality. In other words, a person on the outside can point to what is wrong more easily than can the insider who has taken-for-granted assumptions about life.

Collins acknowledges that group members share a similar sense of reality, due to their similar experiences in the group, which differentiates them from others. The similarities become stronger only if the members share the same social class, gender, or racial status. Through the process of becoming an in-group member one begins to share an understanding of taken-for-granted knowledge with others in that group, which leads to mutual attitudes and opinions. Therefore, women as a group share attitudes and opinions with each other, but black women also share attitudes and opinions with black men because of their race.

Taking it one step further than Lengermann and Niebrugge (1996), Collins specifically addresses the issue of the intersecting oppressions of race and gender. Through the lived reality of interlocking systems of oppression black women then come to have an understanding of the world

in a way no other group has. Black women

therefore have a clearer view of oppression than other groups who occupy more contradictory positions vis-a-vis white male power--unlike white women, they have no illusions that their whiteness will negate female subordination, and unlike Black men, they cannot use a questionable appeal to manhood to neutralize the stigma of being Black (Collins 1991, p. 41).

This quote further illustrates the notion that individuals occupying differentially located power positions will have different attitudes and opinions toward issues of diversity and diversity training. It would follow, then, that black women are more open than white women, black men, or white men.

Applying the concepts set forth by both conflict and feminist theorists to the current reality in the U.S. workforce, it can be seen that there may be conflict and differing opinions of diversity training in the workplace. However, as the conflict theorists suggest, there will always be social change in which different groups may have conflict. The goal of diversity training is to create a sense of pluralism that will lessen the struggle for control over resources and power. People in subordinate positions have already learned a large part of the lesson of diversity training by having contradictory social roles (Lengermann and Niebrugge 1996). Their location in subordinate positions may explain why diversity training concepts are

already familiar to them. Lengermann and Niebrugge state that,

in combination, these ideas suggest the need for renaming role conflict as role balancing. Then the ability to role-balance, one of women's and other subordinates' primary abilities and experiences of space and time, would come to be explored as a positive social value (p. 481)

Conflict and feminist theory both help to explain why it can be presumed that members of different social groups have different opinions and attitudes toward diversity. Following with the theory then, not only do women and men have different perspectives but also white people's opinions differ from black people's opinions on diversity.

CHAPTER III

LITERATURE REVIEW

Diversity training is an all inclusive program designed to alleviate group tensions by teaching a sense of pluralism in the workforce (Bergmann 1996; Galen and Palmer 1994; Thomas 1991). Why does a society as diverse as the U.S. need diversity training in the first place? Should there already be a sense of multiculturalism? The historically predominant idea in U.S. society in general and the workplace specifically has been that groups should assimilate into the dominant culture (Thomas 1991).

Functions of Diversity Programs

However, Thomas argues that there is a shift in thinking. People no longer want to assimilate; they want to retain their uniqueness while at the same time being allowed to participate equally in the workforce. Accompanying that shift in attitude is a shift in the demographic makeup of the U.S. workforce. Galen and Palmer report that by the year 2005 "half of all labor force entrants will be women, and more than one-third will be Hispanics, African Americans, and those of other races" (1994, p. 51). Also, issues such as sexual orientation are being discussed in a

more open forum now.

Social structures "adjust to changing conditions by changing themselves" (Blau 1977, p. 117). The changing face of employees will logically lead to more intergroup contact, which in turn promotes more social diversity. This demographic change and the ideological switch to pluralism rather than "fitting in" sets the stage for current diversity programs in the U.S. Diversity programs can be seen as the tools by which businesses are changing themselves. In order for diversity programs to be successful, one must identify the attitudes and beliefs of the people these programs seek to teach (Thomas 1991). To make the program more successful Thomas is arguing for testing, through research methods, the prior opinions of the workforce before a diversity program begins. Questions that arise relate to the attitudes of employees and the openness of employees to diversity training.

The more contact members of one group have with members of other groups, the more open minded they become (Blau 1977). However, he also notes that members of a majority group, because of their large number, have less contact with members of a minority group than vice versa. Therefore, one can presume that members of a majority group would be less open minded than would members of a minority group. It is easier for women than for men to ignore differences, such as

racial lines, in order to appreciate commonalities (Hacker 1992).

Diversity programs include topics that range from differences in age and sexual orientation to tenure and location in the corporation. However, other main focuses of diversity programs are teaching and understanding differences in sex and race. Because of the tendency in the U.S. to relate programs that deal with sex and race to affirmative action, it becomes imperative to give a brief overview of that program.

Overview of Affirmative Action Programs

Many researchers see affirmative action and diversity initiatives as comparable programs (Adelman 1997; Myers 1997; Staples 1995). The two programs have inherently different goals, affirmative action to promote legal equity and diversity to promote an appreciation of pluralism.

It is important to note that there is a difference in opinion regarding how these programs relate to each other. Some see diversity programs and affirmative action as complementing each other in the goal of reaching more overall equity in our society (Bergmann 1996; Thomas 1991). Other see diversity, as it stands today, as an avoidance tactic used by companies to avoid dealing with the real issues of racial equity in the United States (Lynch 1997;

Myers 1997). Myers goes further to state that diversity programs are an offshoot of affirmative action programs in the sense that the fear of a white backlash led corporate America to find a new way to make everyone, including white men, feel they benefitted from having minorities and women in the workplace.

Affirmative action is a program that aims at ensuring the equal inclusion of certain groups of people in industry and education. Executive Order (E.O.) 11246, which was originally started by President Kennedy as a program to increase black employment in the public sector, implements affirmative action (U.S. DOL 1999). President Nixon then added other people of color and women to the list of beneficiaries (Staples 1995). Affirmative action programs are designed so that companies will implement specific goals and guidelines to open opportunities for minorities and women in areas of industry or academe that have traditionally been closed to them. Specific numerical quotas and goals are prohibited by the 1964 Civil Rights Act, and E.O. 11246 speaks only of "good faith goals and timetables" (University of Texas at Austin 1999, para. 5). However, the courts, as a result of successful discrimination lawsuits, have implemented quotas for some companies to ensure that there is racial, ethnic, and gender equity in that workplace (University of Texas at Austin

1999). The myth that all affirmative action policies have goals and quotas has furthered the belief that affirmative action is inherently unfair, a situation that leads to an attack on it and a call for race-neutral policies or "diversity goals."

Staples (1995) points out some of the prevailing myths about affirmative action, such as the myth that white men have become the victims of affirmative action.

Somehow, black Americans have shifted, in image, from being violent criminals, drug dealers, wife beaters, sexual harassers, welfare cheaters and underclass members to privileged members of the middle-class, who acquired their jobs through some racial quota system at the expense of white males who had superior qualifications for those same jobs. (p. 2)

However, the facts do not support the belief of discrimination against white men. White men, who make up approximately 30 percent of the U.S. population, account for about 75 percent of the highest paying jobs. Groups that have been helped by affirmative action programs, minorities and women, account for about 70 percent of the population (Staples 1995). Although there is a myth that affirmative action has hurt the majority of the population through reverse discrimination, affirmative action was instead designed to help a larger group of the population. The notion of reverse discrimination does not hold up either. A study that looked at 3,000 Federal discrimination cases

found that only 100 of the cases were filed under the guise of "reverse discrimination" (University of Texas at Austin 1999). This study leads one to believe that the prevalence of reverse discrimination has become larger than it is.

Opposition to Diversity in the Workplace

We are beginning to see diversity in the workplace as a necessity because of the changing makeup of the U.S. workforce. In spite of the perceived need for diversity training, white men still seem to feel threatened (Lynch 1997). Explanations about the causes of white men feeling victimized include: now white men are having to compete with individuals they have not always seen as serious competitors (Galen and Palmer 1994); white men still view themselves as having skills superior to those of people of color and women (Staples 1995); and affirmative action goes against the principle of fairness (Lynch 1997). Galen and Palmer state that white men are "feeling frustrated, resentful, and most of all, afraid. There's a sense that, be it in the job or at home, the rules are changing faster than they can keep up" (1994, p. 50). The recurring perception behind this victimization is that white males feel that they may be losing jobs to less qualified workers, i.e., people of color and women. Staples (1995), however, believes that the frustration and resentment felt by white men can be

explained by the fact that people of color and women have penetrated the boundaries of upper management and white collar jobs. That penetration represents a threat to power that has historically belonged to white men. These feelings are being taken seriously by corporations, such as AT&T, who are having specific seminars aimed at helping white males cope with their feelings of misplacement (Galen and Palmer 1994).

Another way that white men are combating this influx of affirmative action initiatives is to state that these initiatives go against the very principles of fairness on which this country was founded (Lynch 1997). By using this type of rationale white men are able to attract white democratic liberals and conservatives who claim to want fairness for all and, therefore, can be convinced that affirmative action is reverse discrimination. Then, diversity programs become a type of "smoke screen" to avoid the unfair language of affirmative action.

In the best of cases, "diversity" becomes something of an affirmative-action smoke screen for institutions committed to opening up opportunities for historically disadvantaged minorities, but leery of running afoul of recent court cases. (Myers 1997, p. 26)

Is there really a backlash to affirmative action? Very few studies have actually empirically studied this notion of a white backlash. Sears, Van Laar, Carrillo, and Kosterman

(1997) did a study examining why whites may oppose race-based policies and found that the notion that this opposition is due to the unfairness of the policies is untrue. Taylor (1995) examined data to determine whether the idea of a white backlash to workplace affirmative action was actually a reality.

Marylee C. Taylor's study specifically examines the idea of a white backlash to affirmative action programs. Using 1990 General Social Survey data, Taylor compared data on white workers' racial attitudes and beliefs from workplaces that employ affirmative action and those that do not. There were 641 white respondents who answered the question about whether their employers used affirmative action policies. Of the 641 approximately half answered that their workplace had affirmative action hiring and promotion. Taylor then used affirmative action as an independent variable and measured its effect on three different elements of attitudes, which included "traditional race prejudice, support for race-targeted intervention, and policy-related beliefs" (1995, p. 1388).

Taylor found, first, that working in a place where affirmative action is employed may slightly discourage prejudice among whites. Second, whites who work in workplaces with affirmative action tend to support race-targeted intervention. Last, affirmative action workplaces

encourage beliefs that allow for the rationale of social intervention for the bettering of the lives of minorities. All of these findings seem to suggest that whites employed in an affirmative action workplace develop some of the pluralistic attitudes that diversity programs are trying to achieve. Taylor (1995) also argues that it has been too easy for people to assume that whites working in affirmative action environments would resent the program and, therefore, develop negative racial attitudes. The conclusion was that none of the variables she looked at indicated a white backlash toward affirmative-action policies. These findings would dispel the notion that we need to eliminate affirmative action for more friendly and less offensive diversity initiatives.

Taylor notes that the GSS data she used left out some information that could have been helpful. For instance, it did not tell how long the white respondents had worked at their present workplaces, how much exposure they had had to the actual affirmative action policies used in their workplaces, or how they had perceived those policies had affected them. The most important omission may be the length of time the respondents had worked at their current jobs because according to Blau's (1977) theoretical claims the more exposure individuals have with diverse groups, the more open they are to different people.

Another speculation of Taylor's is that the "proportion of black workers in the firm correlates negatively with support for race targeting and with policy-related beliefs, partially, though not entirely, counteracting the positive impact of affirmative action" (1995, p. 1407). This speculation may suggest that over time, with the presence of minorities and women, people begin to think the goal was achieved and there is no longer a need for affirmative action. However, this assumption has not been tested so it seems important to include the length of time in the workforce and at the current job in my study.

In addition to Taylor's findings, Sears et al. found in their study of whites' attitudes toward racial policies that "racial predispositions dominate all other factors in terms of individual correlations or regression coefficients" (1997, p. 44). Attitudes such as political ideology and authoritarianism had little effect. The importance of this study is that the conclusions eliminate the "unfairness" argument for abolishing affirmative action by directly refuting claims that white opposition to race-based policies is based on issues such as fairness. So, if the real issue is racism, the programs used in the workplace would have to be drastically different, with a change in the focus and goals. This study also found that racial attitudes were not limited to "a few poorly educated ethnocentrics or believers

in white supremacy" (Sears et al. 1997, p. 49). Their findings suggest that the same corporate, white men who are saying they want to get rid of race-based policies so everyone can have a "fair" chance, including themselves, may be driven by racial attitudes rather than attitudes of fairness.

Many have argued that diversity programs are being implemented to replace the affirmative action policies because those policies have caused such a heated debate. The argument has been to get rid of affirmative action because it was unfair and did not truly achieve anything. However, it is important to note the positive benefits that have come from affirmative action policies. In 1993 women accounted for 29.9 percent of managers, which was up from 10.2 percent in 1970 (U.S. DOL 1999). This improvement taken with Taylor's findings seems to suggest that affirmative action alone may be adequate. It has not only increased the number of minorities and women in the workplace but has also seemed to decrease racial attitudes among the masses of people exposed to them. However, diversity programs incorporate more than just issues of race and gender and some authors suggest implementing the two programs together for the best effectiveness (Bergmann 1996; Thomas 1991).

Research on Diversity Programs

In contrast to affirmative action policies, diversity programs or initiatives are supposed to teach equality through workshops and sensitivity training. This taught respect for pluralism will encourage people to open the doors to minorities and women. With this new respect there should be no need for quotas and goals, which white males find so offensive. Diversity programs are not enforced by the government as is affirmative action. Rather they are supposed to be used voluntarily by organizations (Richard and Kirby 1997). Diversity programs are now including race, sexual orientation, and disability status (Myers 1997). The idea is to create a sense of egalitarian pluralism and make all people feel as if they belong, including white males. Thomas (1997) argues that a taught sense of pluralism will create a more productive workplace.

As previously explained, the logic behind developing workplace diversity programs is to ensure a more egalitarian, pluralistic environment in which everyone appreciates and respects others. Through learning and understanding, people will become more empathetic toward others' situations, and voluntary equality would follow, rather than the forced equality resulting from affirmative action. It is useful to review research that can be used to

support the idea that race-based policies do not work and that only a change in beliefs and attitudes, through diversity training, will. The studies are important because of the implications that a change in policy is needed. These studies are numerous, and they examine the relationship between race and attitudes toward race-based policies (Alvarez and Brehm 1997; Kulinski, Sniderman, Knight, Piazza, Tetlock, Lawrence, and Mellers 1997; Sears et al. 1997; Tuch and Hughes 1996).

Studies Examining Opposition to Race Based Policies

Tuch and Hughes (1996) deal with some theoretical explanations of whites' attitudes toward racial policies. The first concept they try to explain is known as the "principle-implementation gap," which is the "white endorsement of principles of racial equality on the one hand, and intransigence on policies intended to redress racial inequities on the other" (1996, p. 724). One explanation for this apparent contradiction is that whites blame blacks for their own situation, or disadvantage as it may be, so whites view any outcomes as fair (Hacker 1992; Tuch and Hughes 1996). Another reason for the opposition to race-targeting programs is that whites fail to see the extent of discrimination directed at blacks (Kluegel and Smith 1986). The last explanation for the opposition to

race-targeted programs is a theory of group interest that states whites will not support government-funded programs that do not benefit them (Bobo and Kluegel 1993). In other words, people will not support something that is not in the best interest of the group with which they identify.

Working from these theoretical positions Tuch and Hughes (1996) found that whites who do not support government-sponsored intervention policies feel that way because

they do not believe that blacks face a significant degree of discrimination or are particularly burdened by the legacy of past discrimination; they attribute racial inequality to perceived lack of effort or ability on the part of blacks themselves; they do not subscribe to egalitarian norms of social justice; and they perceive that such support would threaten their own group self-interest. (p. 741)

In a different study Bobo and Kluegel (1993) found that whites are more opposed to racially targeted policies than to comparable policies aimed at the poor of all races, an idea that would go along with the group interest theory because whites are poor also.

As previously stated, one explanation of whites' negative attitudes toward race-targeted policies was the lack of belief that discrimination occurred against blacks. Bobo and Kluegel state that one reason why some whites do not believe that discrimination is directed at blacks is that "the black-white difference in perceived discrimination may be "experience-driven" as many whites simply have not

experienced the discrimination encountered by blacks" (1993, p. 459). It can be argued that white women have experienced some discrimination, therefore allowing for women to have more empathy than white men have toward those against whom discrimination is aimed. It seems logical that it would follow that white women would be more likely to support racial policies and diversity training than would white men.

The previous research is important to think about when doing research on workplace diversity programs because it seems to imply that diversity programs are the only way to create an equal playing field. The study of Sears et al. (1997) also seems to suggest that a better racial understanding, possibly through diversity programs, will be the only way to make our society more egalitarian. Yet, Taylor's (1995) research offers a positive view of the consequences of affirmative action programs. It seems to suggest that affirmative action programs also work to develop more egalitarian attitudes. Bergmann (1996) argues that even with diversity programs intact we should not discard affirmative action, for it has produced many improvements. Also, Taylor's study provides rationale for looking at how people's length of exposure can affect their attitudes toward diversity in the workplace, information which would provide a clue to their attitudes outside of work also.

Studies on Attitudes

Some studies have been conducted dealing with attitudes of a diverse range of workers. The studies vary in the number of demographic variables they look at, but many examine sex, and a few look at other demographic variables that are in this study. The studies can be divided into two main groups: those dealing with overall diversity and those dealing with attitudes toward gays and lesbians.

As previously discussed, diversity issues are becoming highly charged in the workforce (Mobley and Payne 1992). Exactly how are workers viewing these issues? One study examines sex and ethnic differences in workers' perceptions of diversity (Mor Barak, Cherin, and Berkman 1998). This study was conducted at an electronics company in a multicultural community. The researchers examined the perceptions of 2,686 employees along two different dimensions, organizational and personal. Through factor analysis the study showed that white men felt that the company was fairer than did any other group. Conversely, white women and minority men and women were more comfortable with, and perceived more value in, diversity than did white men (Mor Barak et al. 1998).

Along the same line Collinwood (1996) found similar results in a survey conducted by Working Woman and the YMCA.

The study surveyed only women but did so along racial lines, reaching nearly 1800 respondents. One conclusion of the survey was, "women and minorities manage a diverse workforce better" (Collingwood 1996, pg. 23). Respondents reported that women and minorities are capable of understanding a broader range of problems, therefore searching for better solutions, than are their white or male counterparts. Hunter and Sellers (1998) suggest that even though racial inequality issues are more important than gender inequality to African Americans, minority group membership can become a catalyst for gender equality attitudes.

Studies examining antihomosexual attitudes have found that men express more hostility about gays and lesbians than do women (Herek 1988; Kite and Whitley 1996; Kunkel and Temple 1992; and Seltzer 1992). Kunkel and Temple conducted a study involving 507 respondents that dealt with people's fear of AIDS and homosexuals. Married people were less likely to be homophobic than were those respondents who were never married. Seltzer (1992), however, found conflicting results. In a national sample of over 2300 adults results showed that married people were more likely to hold antihomosexual attitudes. Also, respondents who were older, less educated, and from the South reported more antihomosexual attitudes than did other respondents.

Present Study

Instead of studying people's reactions to affirmative action and diversity programs this study looks at what makes a person more receptive to the things that diversity programs are trying to teach. I not only look at how sex, race, and age affect one's attitude but also examine how one's past experiences in the workplace determine her/his predisposition.

A flaw of many of the studies reviewed is that the researchers did not consider gender as an independent variable. In this study that variable is treated as independent. The review of literature raises several questions. Do diversity programs affect all people the same way? Is there a difference in the attitudes of different racial groups? Does gender make a difference in one's attitude toward diversity in general and toward specific diversity programs in the workplace? Through the use of multiple regression I answer those questions. The following section presents research methods.

CHAPTER IV

RESEARCH METHODS

This thesis research was conducted to determine the effects of employees' social backgrounds and their work experiences on attitudes toward workplace training and policies concerning diversity and equality. It has been suggested in the previous chapters that race-targeted programs or diversity training alienate whites and lead to frustration. Some writers have hypothesized that white men feel this frustration more than any other group. It also has been suggested that any group that is subordinated in typical societal arrangements will be more likely to be tolerant of diverse experiences. This chapter deals with the procedures used in this thesis to investigate the possible effects of employees' backgrounds and work experiences on their opinions about diversity in three branches of a governmental agency in a small city in the Southeastern United States.

The government agency selected as the research context has had some diversity among its workers for years. Moreover, in this agency, African-Americans hold almost a fifth of all the jobs. One of the specific branches has a

management staff of nine, six of whom are African-Americans, including four females. This workforce and supervisory structure undoubtedly creates a unique atmosphere for the majority of the workers.

Feminist theorists (Collins 1991; Lengermann and Niebrugge 1996) and Blau's (1977) writings on intergroup contact would suggest that workers in these contexts may have more favorable attitudes toward diversity than employees who have never been exposed to cross-raced work relationships. This thesis empirically tested this experience idea as well as other ideas with regard to employee attitudes toward diversity.

Sample

The data for this research were collected from employees at three branches of a government agency in the Southeastern U.S., hereafter referred to as Green (branch 1), Purple (branch 2), and Yellow (branch 3). Permission to conduct the study was obtained from the managers of each branch. Obtaining permission included providing the managers a copy of the research instrument for review and a pledge of confidentiality. Questions about which managers had questions were either clarified, altered, or omitted from all questionnaires. Consultation with the managers also occurred regarding the most convenient days and times

to distribute and collect the questionnaires.

The data collection for each branch was slightly different. The Tuesday before the research began at the Green branch the researcher placed a notice on the employee bulletin board identifying the researcher, the nature of the research, and distribution procedures. Stress was placed on the fact that the research was not affiliated with the agency or with any of the other employees. The employees at this plant come in at different times so it was necessary that the researcher sit in the break room for an extended period of time in order to give the workers a copy of the questionnaire and an unidentifiable envelope. Given that the first group of employees reported to work between 2:00 and 5:00 p.m. and the next group reported between 11:00 p.m. and 1:00 a.m., the researcher stayed in the break room two consecutive days from 1:30 to 5:00 p.m. and from 10:30 p.m. to 1:00 a.m. to pass out questionnaires.

The researcher introduced herself to each employee and briefly explained that the research was being conducted to complete a Master's thesis. Each employee was told to complete the questionnaire while off the clock and to bring it back the next day. Employees who did not work on the first day were given a copy of the questionnaire on the second day. They were also informed that a secured lock box would be in the break room the next day in which to place

their completed questionnaires. As an incentive, the researcher baked cookies for the employees and placed them beside the lock box in the break room. Each employee was told to place the completed questionnaire in the unidentifiable envelope.

Seventy-three questionnaires were distributed to Green branch employees. Reasons for some employees not being given a questionnaire included some employees being on vacation, others did not work either day questionnaires were distributed, and four refused to accept a copy of the questionnaire. Of the seventy-three questionnaires distributed at the Green branch, forty-five were returned for a response rate of 62 percent.

Research was conducted at the Purple branch with procedures similar to those used at the first branch. Another notice identical to the Green branch's notice, with exception of the branch manager's name, was placed in the break room. Employees begin to report to work at 2:00 p.m. and continue to come in every thirty minutes to an hour until 7:30 p.m. when the last shift reports to work. Therefore, the researcher sat in the break room from 1:30 to 7:30 p.m. for two consecutive days in order to distribute and collect the questionnaires.

As before, the researcher introduced herself to each employee with a brief explanation of the research purpose

and the instructions for completing and returning the instrument. As before, employees who did not receive a questionnaire until the second day were informed that there would be a secure collection box in the break room in which to put their completed questionnaires. As an incentive at the Purple branch, the researcher included a raffle ticket with each questionnaire. Employees who completed the questionnaire could return one half of the ticket stub for a chance to win a gift certificate for dinner for two at a local restaurant.

At the Purple branch 148 questionnaires were passed out over the two day research period. Again, some employees were on vacation, some did not report to work either day, and one refused the questionnaire. One hundred fifteen completed questionnaires were returned, for a response rate of 78 percent.

Research at the Yellow branch was conducted in a very different way from the first two branches. The manager of this branch thought it best to allow the researcher a short time to speak to all employees at once at an employee meeting. At 9:00 a.m. on the research day employees were gathered together and the manager introduced the researcher with a brief explanation of what she was doing at the branch. Then the researcher explained a little more about the research and the questionnaire and informed the

employees that she would be back the next morning to collect completed questionnaires. In addition, they were informed that during the next two days the secure lock box, in which they could return their completed questionnaires in the envelopes provided, would be available.

One hundred sixteen questionnaires were distributed at the Yellow branch, but only fifteen were completed and returned over the three-day time period allowed for the research. At the Yellow branch the response rate was only 13 percent.

The researcher believes that the difference in response rates among the three places resulted from several different factors. First, in the two branches where the researcher was able to introduce herself to each individual as well as stay in the break room for extended periods of time, respondents were able to become more familiar with the researcher. Also, sitting in the break room created some sense of responsibility for compliance on behalf of the respondents. That constant presence became a reminder for those who had forgotten the second day so they remembered to place a completed questionnaire in the collection box on the third day.

The incentive used at the Purple branch also was believed to have had an effect on the high response rate of that facility. Because the cookies were not placed by the

box until the last day at the Green branch, they can not account for the majority of returned questionnaires but could have boosted the response rate of later respondents. Last, it became clear to the researcher that the workers at the Yellow branch were not as involved in their workplace as those at the other branches. This fact was made clear by not only the workers at the Green branch, which is affiliated with the Yellow branch, but also by the manager of the Yellow branch.

Sitting in the break room of the Green branch allowed the researcher to learn that the majority of the workers, and the workers at the Yellow branch, do not highly regard their boss. Because the researcher was introduced by the manager at the Yellow branch, it may have seemed that this research was linked to the manager. This impression was not conducive to cooperation among the employees at the Yellow branch. Because the Yellow branch workers are affiliated with the Green branch employees, and to a lesser degree the Purple branch employees, their opinions were deemed relevant and the fifteen questionnaires obtained at the Yellow branch were included in the total sample.

Overall, then, 337 questionnaires were passed out and 175 were returned, for an overall response rate of 52 percent. This rate of response was judged to be adequate for purposes of this thesis (Babbie 1999). The working

sample size is therefore 175.

Of the 175 respondents, 108 (62%) were female and 66 (38%) were male; one respondent left that question blank. One hundred fifty-four (88%) were white, fourteen (8%) were black, three (2%) were Hispanic, and two (1%) were in each of the categories "other" or missing. The majority of respondents, 99 (57%), had some college or technical school while 53 (30%) had graduated from college. Eighteen (10%) were high school graduates and five (3%) continued their education beyond college. Over half of the respondents, 61 percent, grew up in a small city or rural farm area while the other 39 percent grew up in mid-sized to metropolitan cities. The majority (58%) of the sample was married compared to 23 percent who had never been married, and the remaining 19 percent were either divorced, separated, or cohabitating. Finally, ages ranged from 18 to 62, with a mean age of 32.

Questionnaire

The questionnaire used for data collection was designed by the researcher and included original as well as borrowed questions from two other studies. For a list of the borrowed questions see Table 1 in the next section. See Appendix A for a complete copy of the questionnaire.

The questionnaire contained sixty-seven questions--

seven that were about social background of the respondent, twenty-two that were about job-related experiences, and thirty-eight that were attitudinal questions. The job-related experiences covered topics dealing with whether or not the respondents worked or ever had worked with a considerable number of women and minorities. Other items dealt with whether or not they had ever been supervised by women or minorities, had ever had diversity training, if so, the topic, and the number of years they had been in the workforce. The attitudinal questions asked a broad range of questions on diversity and equality-based issues. For example, in several different forms the questionnaire asked how the respondent felt about workplace diversity issues. Also, there were questions that dealt with more specific parts of diversity that were based on gender, race, and sexual orientation.

The front of the questionnaire was a cover letter (Appendix A) that explained the purpose and nature of research, and explaining consent and anonymity. The respondents were guaranteed anonymity and were told not to put their name on the questionnaires. Confidentiality was pledged by the researcher, who agreed not to reveal the name of the workplaces used when results were reported.

Dependent Variables

Attitudes toward diversity as well as attitudes toward gender equality, racial equality, and equality based on sexual orientation were the four topics conceptualized as potential dependent variables in this thesis. Each of these variables was developed by using multiple questions and the ability to combine them through statistical index construction procedures (Singleton, Straits, and Straits 1993). Combining several measures into a single index generally gives a more accurate overall representation of the concept being measured by avoiding biases common to a single measure (Singleton et al. 1993).

The attitudinal questions were asked in a Likert form, having only four possible answers: strongly agree(4), agree(3), disagree(2), and strongly disagree(1). In order to guard against a response set, question wording was reversed for some of the items to use positive phrasing for some and negative for others.

Building each index began with conducting a reliability analysis on several conceptually related items from the questionnaire. This process helped the researcher test the unidimensionality and internal consistency of each index (Singleton et al. 1993). The goal of index building was to have questions that had high item-total correlations, to

ensure fit with the entire index, and a high overall index alpha to indicate that the complete index is internally consistent.

The diversity index measured the respondent's overall attitude toward general diversity in the workforce. To begin building this index the researcher used eleven attitudinal items from the questionnaire each dealing with diversity in general, such as: diversity being important in the workplace; diversity being a positive change for our society; and being exposed to members of all races and sexes. Also, ideas such as agreement that it was acceptable for employers to use special procedures to recruit women and minorities; acceptance of a minority supervisor; respondent speaking up when someone makes a prejudiced statement; and belief that not enough time is spent on diversity awareness in the workplace were included in index building (See Appendix B for a complete list of the original questions).

The procedures used to judge the items that did not fit well with the overall index were low item-total correlations and a value higher than the overall alpha in the alpha-if-item deleted analysis. The former indicated low interrelations with other items, and the latter showed more consistency when the item was removed. Both of these evaluative techniques indicated the need remove the same group of items from the index. Analysis showed that five

items should be removed from the final product, in order to obtain the most reliable index, including one variable that was an inadvertent duplicate question from another part of the questionnaire.

The seven items that remained in this index yielded a coefficient alpha of .8856, which suggested very high internal consistency. Table 1 lists the exact questions, as well as the descriptive statistics and alpha for the diversity index. Questions derived from an Attitudes Toward Diversity Scale (Montei, Adams, and Eggers 1996) will be marked in the table by an (ATDS) beside them. Those questions derived from a study conducted by Dr. John Faine (Faine 1996) will be marked in the table by a (JF) beside them.

Scores representing responses on the diversity index ranged from 7 to 28 with a mean score of 21 (SD=4). The higher the score, the more the respondent was agreeing with the following issues: diversity is important in the workplace; diversity is a positive change for our society; an important part of that is being exposed to members of all races and sexes; it is acceptable if the employer uses special procedures to recruit women and minorities; it is okay if the employee has a supervisor that is a minority;

Table 1: Index Items and Descriptive Statistics

Item	Index	Mean	SD	Item-Total Correlation
<u>Diversity</u>				
1.	I feel that diversity is important in a workplace.	3.34	.6956	.6988
2.	An important part of diversity within a workplace is being exposed to members of all races and sexes.	3.33	.7102	.6585
3.	I feel that growing diversity in workplaces is a positive change for our society.	3.26	.7336	.7712
4.	I would like more diversity in the workforce.	3.06	.8117	.7440
5.	Because of the importance of diversity, it's okay if an employer has to use special procedures to recruit women and minorities to our workplace.	2.18	.9545	.5428
6.	I feel that diversity is good for an organization even if it means I will have a supervisor who is a minority. (ATDS)	3.20	.7108	.6246
7.	I feel that too much time is spent on diversity awareness in the workplace. (reverse scored)	2.79	.7870	.7493
	Alpha total for index.....	.8973		
<u>Sexual Orientation</u>				
1.	I believe that all employees should have the same opportunities for promotion and development, regardless of whether they are gay or lesbian. (JF)	3.56	.8612	.5490
2.	I would accept a family member who was openly gay or lesbian the same as any other family member.	2.99	.9412	.6976
3.	If a person is qualified to do a job, his/her sexual orientation would not matter to me. (JF)	3.50	.7015	.5029
4.	I would accept my child if he/she were openly gay or lesbian.	3.06	.9324	.6794
5.	I would work for a gay or lesbian supervisor.	3.23	.7371	.7064
6.	I think gay/lesbian people have the right to be open about that fact while at work.	2.31	.9287	.5607
7.	I would feel uncomfortable meeting a gay/lesbian co-worker and his/her friends after work in a public place. (reverse scored)	2.67	1.016	.4946
	Alpha total for index.....	.8437		

and not enough time is spent on diversity awareness in the workplace. A frequency distribution showed approximately 55 percent of the scores were 21 or less and 45 percent were 22 or higher.

The sexual orientation index measured the respondent's attitude toward equality with regard to gay and lesbian issues. To begin building this index seven items were used from the questionnaire (Appendix B) that measured the respondents attitudes about sexual orientation issues in the workplace as well as in the home. Four questions dealt with rights and fairness issues for gay and lesbian people in the workplace. For instance, included were the right for promotion and development, the right to be treated equally, and the right to be open about their sexual orientation while at work. Three questions dealt with personal acceptance of gay or lesbian people in close social relationships outside work. For example, questions asked whether or not the respondent would accept a child or family member who was openly gay or lesbian, and whether the respondent would feel uncomfortable (reverse scored) meeting a gay/lesbian co-worker after work in a public place.

Item-total correlations and alpha-if-deleted analyses again were used to develop a reliable index for sexual orientation equality. All seven questions had acceptable correlations and alpha-if-deleted numbers indicated that all

seven items should be retained in the index. The coefficient alpha for the sexual orientation index was .8437, which again suggested that the index had very high internal consistency. Again, see Table 1 for a complete list of questions and descriptive statistics.

Scores for the sexual orientation index ranged from 7 to 28, with a mean score of 21 (SD=4). The higher the score, the more the respondent was in favor of equal rights and treatment of gay and lesbian people in the workplace and her/his own home. A frequency distribution showed approximately 48 percent of the scores are 21 or less and 52 percent are 22 or higher.

The gender equality index measured respondent's attitudes toward equality based on sex (i.e., female and male). To begin building this index seven questions were used from the questionnaire (Appendix B) that measured the rights women should have in the workplace; equal promotion and development; and the respondent's own personal preferences, such as preferring a male supervisor at work. One question dealt with the respondent's opinion about the equality of women and men in the home.

Once again the same type of evaluative techniques used with the diversity and sexual orientation indices were used with the gender-equality index. Out of the original seven questions only three fit statistically well enough to be

included in the index. Those three questions all dealt with women and men being treated equally in the workplace and having the same opportunities for advancement and promotion. The coefficient alpha for the gender equality index was .8490, which suggested that these three items were very internally consistent. Of the 174 cases in this index, 127 (73 percent) answered strongly agree (4) to all three questions. Because most respondents had such favorable opinions on all three, there was very little variation in scores: mean=11 and standard deviation=1. Because of this clustering of total scores it was judged that there was not sufficient variation in results to sustain a meaningful analysis. For these reasons the gender equality index could not be used for further analysis. All hypotheses relating to this index, therefore, were omitted from further findings and analyses.

The racial equality index measured the respondents' attitudes toward equality based on race. To begin building this index six items were used from the questionnaire (Appendix A) that measured racial equality and rights issues in the workplace. Items included the ideas that all races should have equal promotion and development and whether or not the respondent would accept a close relative who married someone of another race.

The item-total correlations and alpha if item deleted

analysis were used again to judge whether to retain items in the index. Of the original six questions, only three items statistically made a good index. Similar to the gender equality items, these items all dealt with equal treatment and advancement opportunities for people of all races at work. The coefficient alpha for the racial equality index was .8343, which again suggested that these three items were very internally consistent. Yet, as with the gender equality index, there was too little variance in the overall pattern of respondents' answers to form a meaningful racial equality index.

Frequency distribution analysis showed that, out of 174 cases, 127 (73 percent) respondents answered strongly agree (4) to all three questions. These results showed too much clustering of opinions for them to form an index. For this reason the racial equality index and all hypotheses relating to it were omitted from further measurement and findings analyses.

Hypotheses

Hypotheses tested, therefore, dealt with both the diversity and sexual orientation indices only. The hypotheses involved two kinds of explanatory variables--work experience issues and social background traits. Hypotheses listed below are in groups according to the index to which they refer. Hypotheses one through eight dealt with the

diversity index, and nine through fifteen dealt with the sexual orientation index. Based on review of the literature (RL) and theoretical perspectives from conflict (CT) and feminist (FT) theories, the following hypotheses were tested:

- H1: Younger workers are more likely to favor diversity than are older workers. (RL)
- H2: Nonwhites are more likely to favor diversity than are whites. (RL, CT, FT)
- H3: As education increases, attitudes favorable toward diversity increase. (RL)
- H4: Women are more likely to favor diversity than are men. (CT, FT)
- H5: Respondents who are not married are more likely to favor diversity than are respondents who are married. (RL)
- H6: Respondents who grew up in a larger city/town are more likely to favor diversity than are respondents who grew up in a smaller city/town. (CT, FT)
- H7: Workers who have recently entered the workforce are more likely to favor diversity than are workers who have been in the workforce for a long period of time. (RL)
- H8: Employees who have working experience with women and minorities are more likely to favor diversity than are employees without working experience with women and minorities. (RL, CT, FT)
- H9: Younger workers are more likely to favor equality based on sexual orientation than are older workers. (RL)
- H10: Women are more likely to have more positive attitudes toward equality based on sexual orientation than are men. (FT)

- H11: Respondents who grew up in a larger city/town are more likely to have a more positive attitude toward equality based on sexual orientation than are respondents who grew up in a smaller city/town. (RL, CT, FT)
- H12: Employees with higher levels of education are more likely to favor equality based on sexual orientation than are employees with lower levels of education. (RL)
- H13: Respondents who are not married are more likely to favor equality based on sexual orientation than are respondents who are married. (RL)
- H14: Nonwhites are more likely to favor equality based on sexual orientation than are whites. (FT)
- H15: Workers who have recently entered the workforce are more likely to favor equality based on sexual orientation than are workers who have been in the workforce for a long period of time. (RL)
- H16: Employees who have working experience with women and minorities are more likely to favor equality based on sexual orientation than are employees without working experience with women and minorities. (RL, CT, FT)

Independent Variables

Several independent variables were taken into consideration to examine their potential influence on the dependent variables. These independent variables can be categorized into two types, social background variables and work experience variables. All were variables expected to affect attitudes toward diversity based on previous research.

Among the background variables, being female (1) vs. male (0) was included as was being older ($\geq 31=1$) or younger

($\leq 30=0$). Being married (1) versus not being married (0) was another explanatory variable as was being white (1) versus nonwhite(0). Level of education was dichotomized as college graduate or more (1) versus some college or less (0). Size of the community of origin was measured being mid-sized to metropolitan city (1) and all smaller places (0).

Among the work experience variables, years of employment since age 16 was dichotomized for the purposes of analyses (Lo through 12=1 and 13 through Hi=2). Having working experience with women (1) versus not having that experience (0) was a variable included in the analyses. Also, having working experience with minorities (1) versus not having that experience (0) was included.

Measurement Evaluation

Prior to analyses, measurement evaluation procedures were used to ensure that the research instrument had reliability and validity. Parallel-forms reliability assessments were made to check the overall reliability of the results. The point of this type of procedure is to test two alternate forms of a measure to find out if the correlation of answers between the two indicates a reliable measure.

Several crosstabulations between similar measures were made. For example, one such analysis was run on two items (toomuch2 and muchtime2) that were identical questions,

dealing with too much diversity being in the workplace, but were placed in different parts of the questionnaire. Another analysis contained items pertaining to women and men being treated equally in the workplace and whether or not all employees should have the same advancement opportunities. The same types of pairings of items were used for race. Another pair tested for reliability dealt with sexual-orientation issues that involved respondent accepting an openly gay/lesbian child and the respondent's acceptance a family member being openly gay/lesbian. Another pair which was tested for reliability was whether the respondent felt that diversity is important in the workplace and whether the respondent felt growing diversity is a positive change for our society.

In all cases of the parallel-form crosstabulations the results provided evidence of consistency. Each relationship yielded significant ($p < .001$) results as indicated by the Chi-square test of independence. Also, all crosstabulations yielded very large measures of associations (Gamma values ranged from .8 to .9). These results indicated that the results from the questionnaire were reliable.

Construct validity analysis was used to assess the validity of the survey results. One way to test construct validity is testing for correlations between social background variables that are theoretically expected to be

related to the indices being measured (Singleton et al. 1993). Several crosstabulations of dichotomized diversity/sexual orientation index scores by selected social traits were completed. Results indicated that index score results were valid. For example, it was hypothesized that better educated people and those with fewer years in the workforce would be more in favor of equality based on sexual orientation. Results of these crosstabulations were statistically significant ($p < .05$) by means of the Chi-square test and in the predicted direction. In the case of the diversity index, it was predicted that nonwhites would be more in favor of diversity than whites would be and that younger people (26 or younger) would be more in favor of diversity than would older people. Results of the Chi-square test again were statistically significant ($p < .05$) and in the predicted direction. These results along with other crosstabulations were used to conclude that the diversity and sexual orientation indices were valid.

Data Analysis

The questionnaires were collected and stamped with an identification number to ensure correct data entry into SPSS format. Frequency analyses were examined and the data were checked for errors. Then, several types of analyses were conducted. First, index analysis was performed to ensure that the indices, discussed earlier, were in fact internally

consistent.

Next, t-tests were used to examine the bivariate relationships between the independent variables and the two indices. This procedure tested many of the hypotheses stated earlier in the chapter. Finally, multiple regressions were employed to assess the net effects of the independent variables on the two indices. This procedure was used to determine significant relationships between the variables as well as the strength and direction of the relationships. Regressions were run several times in order to isolate the variables that could explain the most variance. All results from the different analytic procedures will be discussed in the following chapter.

CHAPTER V

FINDINGS

In this chapter the results of two types of analyses used in this thesis are presented. T-tests were employed to determine whether sample means on the diversity and equality based on sexual orientation indices were significantly different for various categories of each independent variable.

Stepwise multiple regression analyses examined the combined effect of various independent variables, coded the same as they were in the t-test analyses, on each index and permitted an assessment of the significance and relative importance of each independent variable, controlling for all others, in explaining the variance in each of the indices. Therefore, multiple regression analyses permitted a more comprehensive and in-depth analysis of the relationships between the dependent variable and all of the independent variables than was possible with individual t-tests. Regression analysis also controlled for the interaction effects between independent variables and retained information that would have been lost by collapsing variables into fewer categories (Singleton et al. 1993, p.

458). In particular the stepwise method of multiple regression offers an advantage because it identifies only those independent variables that are significant, and it orders the variables from the most important to the least important (Grimm and Wozniak 1990, pp. 431).

T-Tests

T-Test analyses were employed on both the diversity and sexual orientation indices. Each of the separate hypotheses regarding expected relationships between each independent variable and the diversity and sexual orientation indices that were presented in the previous chapter are assessed with the t-tests.

Diversity Index

As can be seen in Table 2, t-test analyses of mean scores on the diversity index revealed several significant relationships. Results of t-tests for diversity index outcomes by each independent variable are summarized in Table 2.

Scores on the diversity index ranged from 7 to 28, with a mean for the entire sample of 21.17 (SD=4.14). These results suggested that most respondents had a level of agreement somewhat above the middle of the possible scoring range.

It was hypothesized that women would favor diversity more than men would (H4). The mean score was indeed higher

Table 2: Results of T-tests for Diversity Index Outcomes by Each Independent Variable.

Variables	Category Mean	t Value	Significance (2-tailed, p<)
<u>Sex</u>			
Females	21.73	2.001	.048
Males	20.36		
<u>Race</u>			
White	20.77	-3.530	.001
Nonwhite	24.28		
<u>Age</u>			
31 to 62	20.40	-2.718	.007
18 to 30	22.13		
<u>Education</u>			
College graduate or Beyond	21.30	.275	(NS)
High School to Some College	21.11		
<u>Marital Status</u>			
Married	19.99	-4.297	.000
Not Married	22.63		
<u>Size of hometown</u>			
Mid-Sized to Metropolitan City	20.54	-1.693	(NS)
Rural Farm to Small Town	21.64		
<u>Years in the Workforce</u>			
13 to Hi	20.24	-3.295	.001
Lo to 12	22.29		
<u>Work experience with Women</u>			
Yes	21.20	.293	(NS)
No	20.86		
<u>Work experience with Minorities</u>			
Yes	20.61	-2.284	.024
No	22.02		

for females, 21.73, than it was for males, 20.36, and this difference was significant at the .05 level.

Another hypothesis was that nonwhites would favor diversity more than whites would (H2). The category mean for nonwhites, 24.28, was considerably higher than that for whites, 20.77. The difference was significant ($p \leq .001$) and provides support for the hypothesis.

Younger workers averaged a score of 22.13 compared to 20.40 for older workers ($p < .01$). The hypothesis (H1) that younger workers would favor diversity more than older workers was supported.

There was no support for the hypothesis that those with higher educational levels would have a higher diversity score (H3). Education level proved to make little difference on respondents' attitudes toward diversity. The average score for those completing college or beyond, 21.30, was only slightly higher than the score for those completing high school or some college, 21.11. These results were not significant.

Married respondents scored an average of 19.99 while those not married averaged 22.63. The difference between these means was statistically significant ($p < .001$). Respondents who were not married favored diversity more than did married respondents, as was predicted (H5).

It was hypothesized that respondents who grew up in

larger cities would favor diversity more than those who grew up in smaller towns and rural areas (H6). However, the mean score for those respondents who grew up in a smaller town or rural area was 21.64, and the mean for those who grew up in a mid-sized to metropolitan city was only slightly lower (20.54). This difference was not significant, and the hypothesis (H6) was not supported.

It was hypothesized that respondents who had more recently entered the workforce would favor diversity more than those who had been in the workforce longer (H7). Workers who had been in the workforce twelve years or less had a mean diversity score of 22.29 while workers with thirteen or more years in the workforce averaged a score of 20.24. This difference between means was significant ($p < .001$) and provides support for the hypothesis (H7).

It was also hypothesized that people who had worked with women and minorities would favor diversity more than those without that experience (H8). This hypothesis was tested using two different variables, one for experience with women and one for experience with minorities. Respondents who had working experience with women scored on average 21.20 while those who had not had such working experience averaged 20.86. The difference between these means was not significant. There was no support for that part of the hypothesis (H8). However, it was found that

respondents who had work experience with minorities had a mean score of 20.61 while those without this experience averaged 22.02. This difference of means was significant ($p < .05$). Here the results not only did not support this part of the hypothesis, but they also suggest a relationship opposite to that predicted.

Sexual Orientation Index

Table 3 contains the summary data from the t-tests of the mean sexual orientation index score outcomes by categories representing each independent variable. Scores for the sexual orientation index ranged from 7 to 28 with a mean score of 21.33 ($SD=4.40$). Once again, most respondents' total scores on the sexual orientation index were somewhat above the mean of possible scores.

Females were hypothesized to favor equality based on sexual orientation more than males would (H_{10}). The mean score for females obtained was 22.03, compared to 20.17 for males. The difference between these means was significant ($p < .05$), supporting the hypothesis.

It was hypothesized that nonwhites would favor equality based on sexual orientation more than whites would (H_{14}). The average sexual orientation equality score for whites was 21.07, compared to 23.11 for nonwhites. While these results were in the predicted direction, the difference between means was not significant.

Table 3: Results of T-tests for Sexual Orientation Index Outcomes by Each Independent Variable.

Variables	Category Mean	t Value	Significance (2-tailed, p<)
<u>Sex</u>			
Females	22.03	2.639	.009
Males	20.17		
<u>Race</u>			
White	21.07	-1.865	(NS)
Nonwhite	23.11		
<u>Age</u>			
31 to 62	20.67	-2.024	.045
18 to 30	22.07		
<u>Education</u>			
College graduate or Beyond	22.40	2.178	.031
High School to Some College	20.80		
<u>Marital Status</u>			
Married	20.60	-2.276	.024
Not Married	22.19		
<u>Size of hometown</u>			
Mid-Sized to Metropolitan City	21.34	-.040	(NS)
Rural Farm to Small Town	21.37		
<u>Years in the Workforce</u>			
13 to Hi	20.26	-3.198	.002
Lo to 12	22.43		
<u>Work experience with Women</u>			
Yes	21.53	1.520	(NS)
No	19.62		
<u>Work experience with Minorities</u>			
Yes	21.46	.327	(NS)
No	21.23		

Younger workers were hypothesized to be more open to equality based on sexual orientation than were older workers (H9). The mean score obtained for respondents aged eighteen to thirty was 22.07 while the mean for those aged thirty-one to sixty-two was 20.67. The difference between these means was significant at the .05 level, supporting the hypothesis.

There also was support for the hypothesis that people with a higher educational level would have more positive attitudes toward equality based on sexual orientation than would less educated people (H12). Among respondents who had a college degree or more the mean sexual orientation score was 22.40, compared to 20.80 for those having a high school degree to some college. The difference between these means was significant at the .05 level, supporting the hypothesis.

Respondents who were not married had a mean sexual orientation score of 22.19 while those who were married had a mean score of 20.60. The difference between these means was significant at $p < .05$, supporting the hypothesis (H13) that non-married people would be more favorable to sexual orientation equality.

The last social background variable considered was the size of the hometown in which the respondent grew up (H11). Those growing up in a small towns or rural areas had a mean score of 21.37, compared to 21.34 for those growing up in a mid-sized to metropolitan city. Thus, there was no support

for the hypothesis because there was virtually no difference in mean scores between these two groups of respondents.

It was hypothesized that workers who had recently entered the workforce would favor equality based on sexual orientation more than would those who had been in the workforce for a longer time (H15). Respondents who had been in the workforce twelve years or less had a mean score of 22.43 while those having thirteen years or more had a mean score of 20.26. The difference of means was significant at the .01 level, supporting the hypothesis.

It was hypothesized that people having working experience with women and minorities would favor equality based on sexual orientation more than would those without such experiences (H16). Again, this hypothesis was tested using two different variables, one for experience with women and one for experience with minorities. Those respondents who had considerable working experience with women had an average score of 21.53 while those not having working experience with women averaged 19.62. While the results were in the predicted direction the difference of means was not significant. Respondents who had working experience with minorities averaged a score of 21.46 while those without this experience averaged 21.23. The difference between these mean scores was not significant either. Results did not support H16.

Multiple Regressions

Stepwise multiple regressions were employed to assess the significance and relative importance of each of the independent variables used in the t-tests on each index. In the regression analyses the social background variables were first regressed on the indices to assess their separate significance. Then, the three work experience variables were added to determine the overall effect of all nine variables acting together. All variables were coded as they were in the t-tests.

Diversity Index

Table 4 presents the findings from the stepwise multiple regressions designed to explain the effect social characteristics and work experience had on respondents' attitudes toward diversity. The left panel of Table 4 describes the results of Model 1 when only social background variables were considered. The right panel adds the relevant effects of work experiences.

Step 1 of the first regression model for the diversity index indicated marital status was the best single predictor of respondents' attitudes toward diversity, followed by race and then by sex. The beta weight for marital status was $-.252$ and was statistically significant ($p \leq .001$). The coefficient of determination (R^2) for marital status alone was $.090$, which means that approximately 9 percent of the

Table 4: Results of Stepwise Regression on Diversity Index by Significant Independent Variables.

Variables	Social Background Model 1		Expanded Model 2	
	b	Beta	b	Beta
Marital Status (1=Married, 0=Not Married)	-2.058	-.252***	-1.867	-.230**
Race (1=W, 0=NW)	-3.104	-.241***	-3.071	-.284***
Sex (1=F, 0=M)	1.311	.157*		NS
Years Employed (2=13+, 1=<13)	X	X	-1.460	-.181*
Constant	24.308		27.834	
R	.410		.460	
R ²	.152		.196	
F	10.574	***	13.829	***

*p≤.05 **p≤.01 ***p≤.001

variance in the respondents' attitudes toward diversity were explained by their marital status.

The beta weight for race was $-.241$ and was statistically significant ($p \leq .001$). The R^2 with the combined effects of marital status and race improved to $.133$. These two variables acting together explained about thirteen percent of the variance in the diversity index scores.

Sex was the final significant indicator in Model 1, with a beta weight of $.157$ ($p < .05$). All three variables taken together explained about 15 percent of the variance in attitudes toward diversity ($R^2 = .152$). Overall the model indicated that respondents who were not married, were nonwhite, and were female favored diversity more than did respondents who were married, white, and male. Results show

that the overall model was significant ($F=10.574$, $p<.001$).

The right panel of Table 4 summarizes the results for Model 2, in which the three work experience variables were also considered in the analysis. Results show that marital status is still the best single predictor of respondents' score on the diversity index. The beta weight for marital status in this model is $-.230$, which is significant at $p<.01$. Taken alone, marital status explained 10 percent of the variance in diversity index scores. Race is still significant ($p<.001$) with a beta weight of $-.284$. Taken together, marital status and race, explained 17 percent of the variance on the diversity index scores.

However, when work experience was included in the model, sex was no longer significantly related to variance in diversity scores. The only work experience variable that made a significant difference in diversity scores was years employed. Its beta weight was $-.181$ ($p<.05$), and adding this to the other significant predictors in Model 2 explained about 20 percent of the variance in diversity scores. The other six variables--age, sex, education, size of hometown, work experience with women, and work experience with minorities--were not significantly related to attitudes toward diversity.

This model shows that respondents who were not white, not married, and who had less than 13 years in the workforce

had higher diversity scores than respondents who were white, married, and had more than 13 years in the workforce. The model was statistically significant ($F=13.829$, $p<.001$) The final equation for predicted diversity scores based in Model 2 is

$$y=27.834 + -1.867(X_1) + -3.071(X_2) + -1.460(X_3)$$

where X_1 is marital status, X_2 is race, and X_3 is years employed.

Sexual Orientation Index

Table 5 presents the findings from the stepwise multiple regressions designed to explain the effect of social characteristics and work experience on respondents' attitudes about equality based on sexual orientation. The left panel of Table 5 presents the results of Model 1 when only social background variables were considered. The right panel presents results when the effects of work experiences were added to the model.

Step 1 of the regression in Model 1 indicated that sex was the single best predictor in determining attitudes toward equality based on sexual orientation. The beta weight for sex was .217 and was statistically significant ($p<.01$). Taken by itself sex explained four percent of the variance in the sexual orientation index scores.

The second predictor in Model 1 was race with a beta weight of -.159, significant at $p<.05$. Sex and race

Table 5: Results of Stepwise Regression on Sexual Orientation Index by Significant Independent Variables.

Variables	Social Background Model 1		Expanded Model 2	
	b	Beta	b	Beta
Sex (1=F, 0=M)	1.976	.217**	1.580	.175*
Race (1=W, 0=NW)	-2.179	-.159*	-2.099	-.155*
Years Employed (2=13+, 1=<13)	X	X	-1.733	-.199*
Constant	22.014		24.832	
R	.262		.330	
R ²	.056		.091	
F	5.628**		6.098***	

*p≤.05 **p≤.01 ***p≤.001

together explained six percent of the variance in the scores on the sexual orientation index. Model 1 was significant (F= 5.628, p<.01).

The results of Model 2 in Table 5 were obtained when the three work experience variables were considered in the analysis. Of the experience variables only years in the workforce was important, and it became the single best predictor in Model 2, followed by sex and race. The beta weight for years in the workforce was $-.199$ (p<.05). The beta weight for sex was $.175$ (p<.05), and for race it was $-.155$ (p<.05). All three variables together explained nine percent of the variance in the sexual orientation index scores. The other six variables--age, marital status, education, size of hometown, work experience with women, and work experience with minorities--were not significant.

The model as a whole was statistically significant ($F=6.098$, $p \leq .001$). Those who had fewer years in the workforce, were female, and who were nonwhite were more likely to have higher scores and more favorable attitudes on equality based on sexual orientation than were those who had more years in the workforce, were male, and were white. The final equation for the predicted scores on the sexual orientation index is stated formally as

$$y = 24.832 + -1.733(X_1) + 1.580(X_2) + -2.099(X_3)$$

where X_1 is years of employed, X_2 is sex, and X_3 is race.

Overall, results show that respondents' attitudes toward diversity are best explained by marital status, race, and by years employed. In comparison, respondents' attitudes toward sexual orientation are best explained by years employed, sex, and race. Implications of those findings are discussed in the next chapter.

CHAPTER VI

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

In building the indices that formed the dependent variables several things became evident. On all but one index, the sexual orientation index, respondents' answers to questions relating to experiences outside of work did not correlate with their responses to those dealing with the workplace environment. Orientation toward diversity, gender equality, and racial equality in the workplace did not extend from the workplace to other social contexts while those toward sexual orientation did.

Indices

The gender and racial equality indices were not good measures for reasons noted in chapter four: not enough variance in response to each item, not enough variance among the answer patterns across the items, and not enough disagreement of answers among respondents. Therefore, the questions that formed each index were all related to equal treatment in the workplace, and almost all respondents replied to them in a very similar positive way.

The question "I believe women and men's careers should have equal status in the family," for example, did not fit

into the index with items such as "women and men should be treated equally at work." This finding could possibly be due to attitudes about the traditional role of women and men in the home. Respondents may have found it acceptable to treat equally someone who is doing the same job as themselves at work. However, if at home someone should have to put her/his career on hold, or give it up, traditional views may well dictate that it be the woman who gives up her career. Results of this thesis research clearly suggest that attitudes toward equality among many people may not be as supported when family roles are concerned.

Moreover, the item "I would accept a family member who married someone of another race" did not fit with questions about racial equality in the workplace. That these types of questions did not fit together is another example of the idea that people may think equal treatment at work is expected, but that closer relations outside work are not necessarily acceptable. On the social distance scales, designed by Emory Bogardus (1933), accepting a close friend or relative marrying someone of another group was the highest level of acceptance possible. On the other hand, accepting someone of another group only in the workplace indicated relatively high social distance. Thus, it is quite likely that although the questions dealing with workplace versus home issues were trying to measure a single

orientation toward equality, there still exist at least two separate dimensions or levels of acceptability.

The findings in this research also suggest the possibility that people are saying they are open to gender and racial equality at work merely because they have been taught that it is politically correct to do so. However, they do not seem to be as open to equality in their personal lives. If this interpretation is true, perhaps diversity training will influence people regarding behavior and beliefs about only the workplace. Yet, if younger people learn to say the right things at work, one could hope they eventually learn to treat people equally in all other aspects of their lives. It is possible that the early influence of equal work and diversity training may socialize younger adults in ways that are less likely to impact the lives of older adults whose marriages and other social experiences are well developed.

It is also possible that bias due to a socially desirable response set occurred with these questions. Gender and race issues have been highly visible in the workplace since the 1970s, and most people know what is expected of them while at work with regard to the treatment of women and minorities. This knowledge of these expectations may be especially true in government employment where the emphasis on equality would be clearly stressed.

People in government work now know what the socially desired answer would be to questions such as "people of all races should be treated equally in the workplace."

Confirmation of such a possible response set seems to come from the fact that the questions regarding equal treatment in the home or other social contexts did not fit with other questions regarding equality. Therefore, the response patterns that did make an index measured only respondents' attitudes toward workplace equality and did not measure attitudes toward true, more extensive equality between women and men or between racial groups. Even this measure of workplace equality, therefore, may have overestimated the extent to which the government employees studied would support open and equal relationships by gender and race.

On the other hand, the respondents' answers to items on the sexual orientation index incorporated similar responses to issues of equality pertaining to both the workplace and the home or other social contexts. One possible explanation of this incorporation of types of questions is due to the lack of social consensus on the topic. While some people have positive responses to equality based on sexual orientation others do not. One reason for this difference is that there have not been the same types of attempts to change attitudes with regard to sexual orientation issues as

there have been in the past to changing attitudes about gender and race. The results obtained in this thesis research show that open expression of non-supportive attitudes based upon sexual orientation were much more likely. Negative verbal and written reactions to questions relating to gay and lesbian issues were noted by the researcher, and they made her aware of the more openly negative responses toward sexual orientation among respondents.

The results of the present study raise important questions about the sources of these more openly negative attitudes toward equality based on sexual orientation. In particular, as will be seen in the discussion of regression results below, the sources of influence on variation in respondents' opinions about sexual orientation equality are complex. That race and gender exerted more influence than did education suggests that differential socialization on sexuality is more important than education experience. On the other hand, that respondents with less employment experience were more open to equality based on sexual orientation suggests that opinions toward gays and lesbians may be more acceptable among younger people. The fact that opinions toward equality based on sexual orientation were both more openly expressed and more diverse among respondents raises important questions that need to be

addressed in future research. The need for sexual orientation issues to be included in diversity training is apparent, and the complexity of the issues should be better understood.

Explaining Attitudes toward Diversity

Results from the t-tests indicated that women, nonwhites, younger people, workers with fewer years in the workforce, and nonmarried people scored higher on the diversity index. These results clearly support the conflict theorists who argue that there is a difference in the way groups with more power will see things compared to groups with less power. In general, whites, males, and older people have more power than nonwhites, women, and younger people (Collins 1975; Dahrendorf 1968). The results obtained in this study showed that these less powerful groups had more positive attitudes toward diversity than the more powerful groups did.

The idea of feminist theory that, because women balance an array of opinions from others, they will be more open to diversity than will men was supported by the results in this research. Present findings go along with the findings of Mor Barak et al. (1998) and Collingwood (1996) that women are more open to, and handle better, diversity issues than do men. However, because gender was less important in the multivariate analysis than was years of experience at work,

the reason for attitudes toward diversity varying less by gender among younger workers is a question that should be addressed in future research. The effects of diversity training on gender equality and more equal relationships by gender among younger people should be assessed in future research.

An interesting finding from the t-test analyses is that those respondents who had working experience with minorities actually tended generally to score somewhat lower on the diversity index than did respondents without that type of experience. One possible explanation for these results was heard by the researcher during the process of collecting the data. Several potential respondents commented that at one time programs such as affirmative action or diversity training may have been necessary. However, now these people felt that the problems of an unequal workplace had been resolved and that everyone, regardless of race, had a fair chance at any job. Consequently, present results may be reflecting negative feelings about the need for more diversity training and not negative feelings about diversity itself. Present findings seemed to go against the conclusion of Taylor (1995) that the idea of a "white backlash" did not exist because those employees who experienced affirmative action were less prejudiced. Yet, this inconsistency in findings may result from the fact that

whites may feel that workplace diversity training has been stressed too much. Future research must be more thorough when separating reactions to diversity training itself and employees' attitudes on equality based on gender and race.

Results of the first regression model in this research indicated that being married and being white were related to less favorable responses toward diversity while being female was related to greater support for diversity. These findings were consistent with those of the t-tests and with much of the previous research (Mor Barak et al. 1998). The second regression model, which included work experience variables, revealed, however, that being female was not significant and that the number of years in the workforce was. Employees with fewer years in the workforce are more supportive of diversity than are those with many years of work experience, adjusting for all other variables. It might be that younger people with fewer years in the workforce, or in one job, have more positive beliefs about equality in general. It may be that trends in society regarding diversity in schools and in other areas, such as recreation, have impacted younger people more. The results of this thesis research clearly suggest that future research attempt to find out why attitudes toward diversity vary less among less experienced workers.

In the present research the finding that the number of

years in the workforce eliminated the significance of being female may have resulted from the nature of the sample. The majority (61%) of respondents in this research were female, and they also tended to have fewer years of average experience than did men (mean for women=14.68 versus mean for men=21.34). Thus, it may be that present results by gender also reflect the dissimilar work experiences of women and men. Older men may be more resistant to diversity training and experience because they have not encountered an open workplace for very long. Again, future research should carefully study why diversity training may impact older males less than younger males.

There was no support in the regression models for hypotheses related to variance in attitudes toward diversity by age, educational level, size of hometown, or working experience with women and minorities. It is suspected that age intertwines with respondent's number of years in the workforce, which was very important. While certainly not all respondents with fewer years in the workforce are younger, it can be reasoned that younger workers do generally have fewer years in the workforce. This reasoning would explain why age, which was significant in the bivariate analysis, would become nonsignificant once the researcher controlled for number of years of experience.

There was very little variation in the educational

level among members of the sample. The majority of respondents indicated they had some college or technical school. Low variation in education in the present sample, therefore, could have accounted for why educational level differences were not important in relation to attitudes toward diversity.

That the size of the hometown was not a significant variable possibly can be explained by the fact that attitudes toward diversity are shaped more by the general effects of mass media, entertainment, sports, and other changes in society than by the differences in community of origin. On the other hand, the sample for this thesis was drawn from a population living mainly in small rural areas or towns. Therefore, a national sample involving greater geographical variation may find a significant difference in attitudes toward diversity by the size of the residential community.

The lack of significance in the regression models for having working experience with women and minorities was unexpected. One possible interpretation of the results is that work experiences with women and minorities were too marginal to impact attitudes toward diversity. Previous research has indicated more open attitudes among men who have had more direct forms of working relationships with women, such as having female supervisors. On the other

hand, results of this research also suggest that relationships outside work (in the home) and the feeling among workers that diversity training is stressed too much may explain why experiences with women/minorities at work are not related to opinions on diversity. Future research needs to determine whether the negative attitudes relate to the training program or to the acceptance of diversity itself.

Attitudes Toward Equality Based on Sexual Orientation

The t-tests concerning the sexual orientation index confirmed much of the research that has been conducted on attitudes toward gays and lesbians. Several studies have found that women are more tolerant and open in their attitudes toward gays and lesbians than are men (Herek 1988; Kite and Whitley 1996; Kunkel and Temple 1992; and Seltzer 1992). Sex also was very significant in the present research results. Other findings of this research seem to support much of Seltzer's (1992) findings--that older, married, or less educated people were less tolerant of gays and lesbians.

In the present research the number of years in the workforce also was related to less support for equality based on sexual orientation. As noted above, these results may be related to the composition of the sample, such as the larger proportion of females with fewer years of experience.

Another possible explanation is that most people in the sample had reasonably high numbers of years of education. The findings of this thesis research suggest that future research of workplace diversity should carefully take into account the more open and diverse attitudes people have toward sexual orientation.

Respondents with higher educational levels also scored significantly higher on the sexual orientation index than did those with lower levels. This finding supports previous research showing a positive correlation between education and liberalism (Lottes and Kuriloff 1994; Misra and Panigrahi 1995). More educated people appear to be more open to differences in sexual orientation. The finding that education was not as important in the regression models may have resulted from the differences in education among respondents related to years of work experience.

Multiple regression analyses confirmed some of the findings of the t-tests and past research. Respondents who had been in the workforce longer were less supportive in their attitudes about gays and lesbians. As with the results in attitudes toward diversity, these results may reflect the fact that younger people are more open to different sexual orientations. However, results may also be in part due to the fact that older employees seem to be tired of diversity training.

Sexual orientation has not been a part of most diversity training, including present research sites. Only recently has it been included (Winfield and Spielman 1995). Workers who had been in the workforce for a long time, in general, have not been exposed to sexual orientation issues at work. Nevertheless, their exposure to past diversity programs may make them less predisposed to experiencing new programs on sexual orientation. In addition, because gay and lesbian issues have been in the public eye for only a relatively short period of time, older employees may not have had as much direct experience with openly gay or lesbian people as younger people have. The results of this research clearly suggest that employers who are considering diversity training should pay special attention to how to deal successfully with the issue of sexual orientation.

Females and nonwhites were more supportive in their attitudes toward gays and lesbians than were men or whites. These findings supported the findings of much past research (Seltzer 1992) and the tenets of feminist theory (Lengermann and Niebrugge 1996). In particular, the findings of this research support Patricia Hill Collins' (1991) theory that black people, and women in particular, are more tolerant because of their own experience in the margins of our society. Knowing what discrimination and stigmatization feel like on a personal level appears to make people less

likely to have prejudiced attitudes toward others who are very different.

There was no support in the regression analyses for the idea that higher educational levels make people more favorable toward equality based on sexual orientation. As mentioned earlier, the small variation in the educational level of respondents in this sample as well as the probable difference in education level by years of work experience may explain these results. Future research should sample employees with more varied educational experiences.

Also, there was no support for the hypotheses related to the effects of age, size of hometown, or working experience with women and minorities on attitudes toward equality based on sexual orientation. Once again, these results may indicate that attitudes toward sexual orientation are more dependent on variables, such as sex and race, which extend across communities. However, the geographical similarity of the sample may also have affected these results. Future sample populations should better represent geographical and community diversity. The finding that working experience with women and minorities was unrelated to sexual orientation attitudes may reflect both the absence of such issues in diversity training and the nonwork issues that strongly shape such opinions.

Results of this thesis research suggest that family

life might be a nonwork factor that is very important in shaping attitudes toward sexual orientation. While being married was related to less support for sexual orientation equality in the t-tests, being married was not important in the regression models. Having children under eighteen at home was found to be related to accepting a gay child unconditionally, one of the sexual orientation index items. In addition, some studies have found a correlation between attitudes toward women's gender-roles at home and attitudes toward homosexuals (Kyes and Tambelaka 1994). Because the large majority of the sample used in this research was composed of women, the possibility exists that some differences in attitudes toward sexual orientation have to do with differences in their attitudes toward marriage, children, and different types of family-life issues. The results of this study suggest that diversity programs that include sexual orientation should take the different views of women regarding family life and children into account.

Implications for Diversity Training

This research raises many questions about how future diversity training in the workplace should be approached. The difference found in the level of support from women and men suggests that the two groups have different needs when it comes to diversity training. It seems that men are more frustrated by diversity training, which could be a result of

their feeling left out. The feeling of marginality is certainly nothing new to women or minorities, but if the purpose of diversity training is to make everyone feel included, then men's perspectives must also be considered.

This research suggests that, because men are less supportive of current diversity, a thorough understanding of their perceptions should be well understood in any given workplace before the training begins. This understanding would help guide the diversity training in more productive ways that might reach men rather than just frustrating them.

These suggestions may help to rejuvenate diversity programs for those employees who seem to be tired of diversity talk. One way to deal with experienced employees, who in this research expressed very little support for diversity, is to include them in a more proactive way. Employees that have been in the workforce for a long time may feel that nothing is wrong with the workplace just as it is. Involving them in discussions about and decisions to reform the workplace may increase the impact of diversity training on them.

Diversity training should not be just thrust at employees without their input. If it is, employees may feel as if they have no part in it and that the training is nothing more than useless words. However, if an employer actively involves employees through interactive workshops on

diversity there may be more positive responses from employees. In some work environments this type of inclusion may involve employing single-sex or single-race workshops in the beginning to get a better understanding of the employees' perspectives. With such knowledge employers could better integrate the newer diversity ideas without completely disregarding employees' perceptions.

Having single sex or single race workshops as a preliminary exercise to diversity training might also assist employers in dealing with the more conservative attitudes, found in this research, among men who had more years of employment. Again, an employer must have insight into these attitudes before more successful diversity training can be structured.

This research also suggests several things about including sexual orientation in diversity training. The results of this study showed the complexity of issues concerning gays and lesbians. An employer must be prepared to deal with the negative verbal reactions she/he may receive when discussing this topic and at the same time try to find a way to encourage positive comments from other employees who are more supportive of gay/lesbian rights. Also, any diversity training including sexual orientation must find a way to incorporate employees' attitudes on the issue in the workplace as well as in the home.

There is no doubt that sexual orientation issues merit diversity training. This research suggests, however, that employers must have someone who is well trained and prepared to deal with the complex nature of sexual orientation issues in order to lead this type of diversity initiative.

Because this research was completed in a single geographical location among people with similar educational levels, the results give us a better understanding of how other issues affect diversity. This research shows that sex, race, and number of years employed do make a difference when controlling for education and size of hometown. These results indicate that different groups of employees may need to be dealt with in different ways while still trying to produce a similar outcome. Women, nonwhites, and those with fewer years in the workforce may have already been exposed to a number of diverse ideas. Therefore, the need for training in how to cope with a diverse workforce may be less necessary for them. However, men, whites, and experienced employees may require that employers spend more time and effort in order to understand the current perspectives of these groups and to attempt to change them. Through that understanding employers may receive a more positive reaction from groups they are not now reaching.

This thesis research does suggest that diversity training is useful when trying to create a pluralistic work

environment. The gender, race, sexual orientation, disability, age, etc. issues that diversity deals with are facts of U.S. society. The issues cannot be ignored because they will not go away. It is possible that any improvements diversity training makes in the workplace today will influence the younger workers more than the older ones. These improvements still provide a step in the right direction because eventually, as the younger workers age, diversity will become a more general and accepted aspect of life both in and outside of work.

Research Limitations

Clear limitations of this thesis research deserve mention. First, the research was done on a very specific population--employees in a governmental agency in a small city. Moreover, the sample came from one geographical area in the Southeast. These issues coupled with the fact that the sample size was only 175 calls for great caution in drawing general conclusions. With such a narrow sampling, it would be very risky to generalize these findings across different regions and populations in the U.S. Future research should include larger, more diverse samples that have more nonwhites and a broader range of educational levels than were obtained in this research to more fully confirm or refute the findings.

Because the items on the gender and racial equality

indices did not form good measures, future research on these issues should include more nonwork place questions.

Including such questions would provide a better and fuller comparison to the workplace questions in order to better assess the different attitudes people have about diversity in the workplace, at home, in schools, and elsewhere. This broader approach also would be better able to avoid the effects of social desirability bias suggested by the results of this research.

To confirm or refute the findings of this thesis research on gay and lesbian issues, particular attention in future research should be paid to the opinions of respondents on marriage, family life, and children. In addition, sex of the respondent in relation to the sex of the subject used in the questions should be given attention. Some research has shown that both men and women are more tolerant of lesbians than they are of gay men (Kyes and Tumbelaka 1994). Other research has suggested that both men and women are more homophobic when the subject of the question is of the same sex as the respondent (Kite and Whitley 1996). The findings of this thesis can be further validated or qualified by research that expands the study of sexual orientation much more.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

Work/Life Survey

PLEASE READ THE FOLLOWING BEFORE COMPLETING THE SURVEY

My name is Stacey Sympson and I'm a graduate student in sociology at Western Kentucky University in the process of completing the requirements for my graduation. The results of this survey are vital to the research I am doing to complete my thesis. Your cooperation would be deeply appreciated.

Your responses on this survey are strictly anonymous. Please **DO NOT** put your name on the questionnaire. Your name cannot be identified in the results of this study, nor will the name of your specific workplace be identified in the results of this study. **It is important that you do not complete this survey while on the clock at your workplace.** My intentions are to have you complete this survey at home and bring it back to work with you the next day where I will be collecting it.

It is important that you realize that this survey is not in any way affiliated with the your employer. The results will be averaged across respondents and used only by the researcher for the intention of completing a Master's Degree. Participation in this survey is strictly voluntary. The results of this survey will add to our understanding of an increasingly diverse workforce and could possibly be used to create better working environments in the future. You may ask me any questions you have that will help you understand this project.

Please keep in mind that this is a survey about your opinions and attitudes. **It will be helpful if you do not discuss this survey with fellow employees or your family members while you are completing the survey.** I would like to have only your thoughts and opinions. Your cooperation is important in identifying valid information. If you have any questions about this research you may contact me at (502)745-5921.

**Work/Life Survey
1999**

Please fill in the blank or check the appropriate boxes:

1. How many years have you worked for your current employer? _____

2. Since age 16, how many years have you been employed? _____

If you had previous jobs, answer #3-9. If not, skip to #10.

In the MAJORITY of my PREVIOUS JOBS:

3. I worked primarily with people of the same race as myself.

yes no

4. I worked primarily with people of the same sex as myself.

yes no

5. I did the same type of work I do now.

yes no

6. I worked the same hours as I do now.

yes no

7. I was supervised by people of the same race as myself.

yes no

8. I was supervised by people of the same sex as myself.

yes no

9. I worked in the same town as I do now.

yes no

10. Which best describes your status as a worker?

full-time part-time

11. I have had considerable experience in working environments with women.

yes no

12. I have had considerable experience in working environments with minorities.

yes no

IN MY CURRENT JOB:

13. I work with people primarily of the same race as myself.

yes no

14. I work with people primarily of the same sex as myself.

yes no

15. I am mostly satisfied with my work environment.

yes no

16. I am mostly satisfied with my work hours.

yes no

17. I am supervised primarily by people of the same race as myself.

yes no

18. I am supervised primarily by people of the same sex as myself.

yes no

19. Does your current employer offer diversity training?

yes no don't know

20. Have you ever received diversity training?

yes (Go to 21,22) no (Go to 23)

21. What topics of diversity training have you received? (Check all that apply)

race
 gender
 sexual orientation
 other: (please specify) _____

22. Check all the following types of diversity training methods you have been exposed to:

watching videotapes _____
 listening to an outside speaker
 engaging in some type of interactive workshop
 other: (please specify) _____

PLEASE GO ON ➡

23. I believe that all employees should have the same opportunities for promotion and development, regardless of whether they:

Please circle your answer to each of the following statements		SA	A	D	SD
a	are female.....	4	3	2	1
b	are male.....	4	3	2	1
c	are a racial minority.....	4	3	2	1
d	attend church.....	4	3	2	1
e	have a disability.....	4	3	2	1
f	are gay or lesbian.....	4	3	2	1
g	are older than 40 years of age.....	4	3	2	1
h	take paternity/maternity leave.....	4	3	2	1

24. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements? For each of the following questions circle your answer where 4 = strongly agree, 3 = agree, 2 = disagree, and 1 = strongly disagree

		SA	A	D	SD
a	I feel that diversity is important in a workplace.....	4	3	2	1
b	Workers who are prejudiced have no place in the workplace.....	4	3	2	1
c	I would openly accept a close relative who married someone of another race.....	4	3	2	1
d	I would feel uncomfortable meeting a gay or lesbian co-worker and his/her friends after work in a public place.....	4	3	2	1
e	An important part of diversity within a workplace is being exposed to members of all races and sexes.....	4	3	2	1
f	I feel that growing diversity in workplaces is a positive change for our society.....	4	3	2	1
g	Women and men should be treated equally in workplaces.....	4	3	2	1
h	If a person is qualified to do a job, his/her race would not matter to me.....	4	3	2	1
i	I would like more diversity in the workforce.....	4	3	2	1
j	I would accept a family member who was openly gay or lesbian the same as any other family member.....	4	3	2	1
k	Because of the importance of diversity, it's okay if an employer has to use special procedures to recruit women and minorities to our workplace.....	4	3	2	1
l	I usually speak up when someone makes a prejudiced statement.....	4	3	2	1
m	I believe both women's and men's careers should have equal status in a family.....	4	3	2	1
n	People of all races should be treated equally in the workplace...	4	3	2	1
o	I feel that too much time is spent on diversity awareness in the workplace.....	4	3	2	1

25. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements? For each of the following questions circle your answer where 4 = strongly agree, 3 = agree, 2 = disagree, and 1 = strongly disagree

	SA	A	D	SD
a Under most circumstances I would prefer a male supervisor at work	4	3	2	1
b If a person is qualified to do a job, his/her sexual orientation would not matter to me.....	4	3	2	1
c This job has improved my technical skills, which will help if I need to obtain a new job.....	4	3	2	1
d I feel my exposure to and attitudes toward diversity have positively changed since working for my current employer.....	4	3	2	1
e I would accept my child if he/she were openly gay or lesbian.....	4	3	2	1
f I think, to succeed at work, minorities must usually work harder and meet higher standards than non-minorities.....	4	3	2	1
g I feel that too much time is spent on diversity awareness in the workplace.....	4	3	2	1
h I would work for a gay or lesbian supervisor.....	4	3	2	1
i Most women in management positions do an outstanding job.....	4	3	2	1
j I think, to succeed at work, white men must usually work harder and meet higher standards than women and minorities.....	4	3	2	1
k I feel that diversity is good for an organization even if it means I will have a supervisor who is a minority.....	4	3	2	1
l If a member of my present work group were prejudiced, he or she would be less likely to fit in with the rest of us.....	4	3	2	1
m It seems to me that most minorities in supervisory positions are less effective than are other supervisors.....	4	3	2	1
n I think gay/lesbian people have the right to be open about that fact while at work	4	3	2	1
o I think, to succeed at work, women must usually work harder and meet higher standards than men.....	4	3	2	1

Please fill in the answer or check the appropriate boxes:

26. What is your age?_____

27. Please indicate your sex.
 female male

28. What category best describes your race.

- black Asian
 white biracial
 Hispanic other: please specify

29. What is the highest level of education you have completed?

- Less than high school
 High school graduate
 Some college/technical school
 College graduate
 Beyond college

30. Which category best describes where you grew up.

- rural farm area
 small city or town
 mid-sized city
 metropolitan city

31. What is your marital status?

- married widowed
 never married separated
 divorced cohabiting

32. Do you have any children under 18 living at home?

- yes no

THANK YOU ☺!

APPENDIX B

Original Questions Used For Building Indices

Diversity Index

1. I feel that diversity is important in a workplace.
2. Workers who are prejudiced have no place in the workplace.
3. An important part of diversity within a workplace is being exposed to members of all races and sexes.
4. I feel that growing diversity in workplaces is a positive change for our society.
5. I would like more diversity in the workforce.
6. Because of the importance of diversity, it's okay if an employer has to use special procedures to recruit women and minorities to our workplace.
7. I usually speak up when someone makes a prejudiced statement.
8. I feel that too much time is spent on diversity awareness in the workplace (reverse scored).
9. I feel my exposure to and attitudes toward diversity have positively changed since working for my current employer.
10. I feel that diversity is good for an organization even if it means I will have a supervisor who is a minority.
11. If a member of my present work group were prejudiced, he/she would be less likely to fit in with the rest of us.

Sexual Orientation Index

1. I believe that all employees should have the same opportunities for promotion and development, regardless of whether they are gay or lesbian.
2. I would feel uncomfortable meeting a gay or lesbian co-worker and his/her friends after work in a public place (reverse scored).
3. I would accept a family member who was openly gay or lesbian the same as any other family member.
4. If a person is qualified to do a job, his/her sexual orientation would not matter to me.
5. I would accept my child if he/she were openly gay or lesbian.
6. I would work for a gay or lesbian supervisor
7. I think gay/lesbian people have the right to be open about that fact while at work.

Gender Equality Index

1. I believe that all employees should have the same opportunities for promotion and development, regardless of whether they are female.
2. I believe that all employees should have the same opportunities for promotion and development, regardless of whether they are male.
3. Women and men should be treated equally in workplaces.
4. I believe both women's and men's careers should have equal status in a family.
5. Under most circumstances I would prefer a male supervisor at work (reverse scored).
6. Most women in management positions do an outstanding job.
7. I think, to succeed at work, women must usually work harder and meet higher standards than men.

Racial Equality Index

1. I believe that all employees should have the same opportunities for promotion and development, regardless of whether they are a racial minority.
2. I would openly accept a close relative who married someone of another race.
3. If a person is qualified to do a job, his/her race would not matter to me.
4. People of all races should be treated equally in the workplace.
5. I think, to succeed at work, minorities must usually work harder and meet higher standards than non-minorities.
6. It seems to me that most minorities in supervisory positions are less effective than are other supervisors (reverse scored).
7. I think, to succeed at work, white men must usually work harder and meet higher standards than women and minorities (reverse scored).

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