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To cite this article: Destiny Peery & Jennifer A. Richeson (2010) Broadening Horizons: Considerations for Creating a More Complete Science of Diversity, *Psychological Inquiry*, 21:2, 146-152, DOI: [10.1080/1047840X.2010.483571](https://doi.org/10.1080/1047840X.2010.483571)

To link to this article: <https://doi.org/10.1080/1047840X.2010.483571>



Published online: 11 Jun 2010.



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Article views: 118

Broadening Horizons: Considerations for Creating a More Complete Science of Diversity

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“The way to stop discriminating on the basis of race is to stop discriminating on the basis of race,” opined Supreme Court Chief Justice Roberts in a recent court decision striking down a school integration plan in a highly segregated public school district (*Parents Involved in Community Schools v. Seattle School District No. 1*, 2007). This quote and the case from which it stems reflect not only the role that law and other social institutions play in prejudice and discrimination (either by inadvertently allowing it or protecting against it) but also the role that such institutions play in shaping how people construe the problem of discrimination and, thus, its solution.

Victoria Plaut (this issue) argues that social psychology has an important role to play in the development of an empirically based science of diversity. She points to the extant research in the field on category-based information processing (see Fiske, 1998, for a review) and more recent research on the effects of different models of interethnic diversity on intergroup attitudes, judgments, and interactions (e.g., Vorauer, Gagnon, & Sasaki, 2009; Wolsko, Park, Judd, & Wittenbrink, 2000) as examples of the potential contributions that social psychology can make to shape lay and institutional understanding of the promise and perils of diversity and various models of interethnic relations. At the same time, Plaut (this issue) argues that in order to develop a meaningful science of diversity, social psychologists will need to incorporate the socio-historical context in which lay beliefs about diversity have been shaped. Most notably, she highlights the role of the law in promoting and enforcing either “race conscious” or “colorblind” models of diversity and encourages social psychologists to seriously consider both the historical and contemporary influence of the law on individuals’ beliefs, preferences, and reactions to diversity.

Both the call for a “diversity science” and the necessary interdisciplinary sociocultural approach required to achieve it are important challenges to contemporary social psychological research on intergroup relations. In the sections that follow, we first echo Plaut’s (this issue) review of important legal precedent in the development of the “colorblind ideal” as well as present

additional evidence regarding the limitations of this approach to interethnic relations. Next, we expand on her review with a broader discussion of the legal foundations of race and argue that this is another area in which a social psychological “diversity science” must understand and intersect with the law. After, we propose several areas that are ripe for future research, including (a) the views, judgments, and reactions of members of racial minority groups to various models of diversity, and (b) the potential insight to be gained on interethnic models of diversity from an examination of parallel models of diversity regarding identity dimensions other than race (e.g., gender). Last, we conclude with a brief discussion of how changing societal demographics may continue to shape, and potentially reshape, both legal and lay perceptions of and beliefs about racial categories, models of diversity, and discrimination.

Colorblindness v. “Color-Consciousness” in Law and Psychology

Plaut (this issue) argues for the importance of examining the legal foundations of prevailing beliefs about diversity. In this section, we first echo Plaut’s examination of colorblindness in law and psychology, bringing to bear new empirical research from our lab, followed by a discussion of the potential for psychological research to shape lay beliefs and legal considerations of colorblindness. After, we present a parallel examination of the legal underpinnings of contemporary constructions of race—an equally important and relevant topic for diversity science.

The Colorblind Ideal? Law v. Psychology

Understanding the legal (and other institutional) foundations that lead to lay beliefs about diversity is paramount. The target article highlights how the colorblind ideal has made its way through the legal world via court decisions. Plaut (this issue), importantly, identifies the birth of the colorblind ideal in the famous dissenting opinion by Supreme Court Justice Harlan in

Plessy v. Ferguson (1896) at the end of the 19th century. In this opinion, Harlan expressed concern at the majority's decision to allow racial discrimination in car assignment on a train because allowing this discrimination on the basis of race was counter to the foundational principles of the Constitution as a colorblind document. Particularly since the seminal *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954) decision striking down the "separate but equal" doctrine established by *Plessy v. Ferguson* several decades before (with the Court holding that "separate . . . [is] inherently unequal"), the Supreme Court has remained fond of the colorblind ideal as articulated by Justice Harlan.

Decisions as recent as *Ricci v. DeStefano* (2009), dealing with a claim of discrimination by White firefighters in New Haven, Connecticut, denied a promotion in light of a potential claim of discrimination by Black firefighters, have continued to reinforce a colorblind ideal in law. In this case, the Court ruled in favor of the White firefighters on the basis that their employer's decision to deny promotions based on an exam that produced disparate outcomes between racial groups was actually "reverse discrimination." The Court saw the fire department's attempt to avoid promoting only White firefighters as itself discrimination on the basis of race. Given law's acknowledged power to create and reinforce values through opinions such as this one (see, e.g., Sunstein, 1996; Tyler, 2006; Tyler & Jost, 2008), it is no surprise that colorblindness has taken such a hold, becoming the dominant diversity ideology, particularly among members majority status racial groups.

Despite its general popularity as the best route to prejudice reduction, empirical consideration of how colorblindness affects a person's level of bias or likelihood of exhibiting prejudice has been far less optimistic. As noted in the target article, what is particularly troubling about this acceptance of colorblindness as the ideal is the evidence suggesting that endorsement of this ideology is associated with both greater explicit (Wolsko et al., 2000) and automatic forms of racial bias (Richeson & Nussbaum, 2004). For instance, one study in our lab examined whether exposure to a colorblind ideology results in greater automatic ingroup favoritism for Whites compared not only with exposure to a multicultural ideology but also with exposure to no ideology (Richeson & Trawalter, 2010). In other words, we examined whether inducing colorblindness increases racial bias or, rather, whether inducing multiculturalism reduces it. Specifically, similar to the procedures employed in Richeson and Nussbaum (2004), White and Asian American participants in this study were exposed to prompts that endorsed either a colorblind approach to interethnic relations or a multicultural approach (see Wolsko et al., 2000, for prompts). In addition, a control group of participants was not exposed to either prompt. After, partic-

ipants completed an evaluative Implicit Associations Test (IAT; Greenwald, McGhee, & Schwartz, 1998) regarding the groups "White Americans" and "Asian Americans."

Consistent with the results reported in Richeson and Nussbaum, White participants in the colorblind induction condition expressed more automatic pro-White (anti-Asian) IAT bias than did participants in the multicultural induction condition. Of interest, the IAT bias scores of White participants in the control condition did not differ reliably from those found among participants in the colorblind condition but were significantly greater than those found among participants in the multicultural condition. In other words, induced colorblindness did not increase individuals' pro-White automatic bias, but, rather, induced multiculturalism decreased it. This pattern of results suggests that the White participants in this study may have already held a colorblind approach to interethnic relations, consistent with the findings of previous research examining White and racial minority individual's ideological preferences (e.g., Plaut, 2002; Ryan, Hunt, Weible, Peterson, & Casas, 2007) and, thus, the colorblind induction had no effect on their level of automatic ingroup favoritism. The multicultural induction, however, seems to have attenuated White participants pro-White IAT bias, suggesting the potential promise of shifting White individuals' ideologies to incorporate more of a multicultural perspective.

Although the growing empirical evidence documenting the positive correlation between colorblindness and racial bias is relatively recent, it is clear from the *Ricci v. DeStefano* (2009) and *Parents Involved in Community Schools v. Seattle School District No. 1* (2007) cases that the Court continues to herald colorblindness as not only the ideal but also the only viable route to avoid racial discrimination, including against Whites. Of course, it is not clear that this contradiction in beliefs about and actual correlates of colorblindness is due to the shift in legal and political use of colorblindness from a means to rid society of discrimination against minority groups to a means to rid society of "reverse discrimination" against majority groups (see Duncan, 1999–2000; Kull, 1992, for a full discussion of the two phases of colorblindness in the legal domain) or, rather, simply a reflection of how embedded the colorblind ideal has become. If it is the latter—that is, a bottom-up effect—then efforts to alter lay beliefs about the merits of colorblindness may be efficacious in changing the Court's perspective. Alternatively, because the law is challenged with guaranteeing the equal protection of its citizens, it is possible that research suggesting overwhelmingly that colorblindness actually undermines rather than facilitates such protection could theoretically engender another shift in the Court regarding the relative merits of "race-consciousness" and colorblindness that should, in turn, affect lay

beliefs. In either event, it is imperative for social psychologists to consider the implications of their research for the legal construction and use of colorblindness as a remedy for racial discrimination.

The Construction of Race: Law v. Psychology

As important as the law is for understanding lay beliefs regarding colorblindness, the law presents additional interesting questions that a diversity science must consider. Most notably, the law has helped to create the very categories we use when people reason about diversity. It is the legacy of legal rules that defined race, in particular, that have created the social, lay beliefs still adhered to for racial categorization and the theories relied upon to understand the concept of race (Banks & Eberhardt, 1998).

The historical legal treatment of race incorporated both social constructionist and biologically deterministic theories of race. With the need to segregate and divide racial and ethnic groups (beginning, e.g., with the important division of “Black slaves” vs. “White free persons”), the law promulgated rules about who belonged in which racial categories on the basis of both social context as well as biological ancestry. The legal standards of race determination that relied on blood quantum or “yardsticks of ancestry” (Pascoe, 2009) formed the foundation for racial determination rules like the “one-drop rule” (that one drop of non-White blood makes one non-White; Hickman, 2003; Rockquemore & Arend, 2002) and the principle of hypodescent (that the race of a mixed-race person is that of the socially subordinate parent’s race; Harris, 1964). The rules and laws were implemented and applied when what were thought to be essential, obvious visible and/or biological (e.g., parentage) markers of racial category membership were insufficient or ambiguous. Indeed, these rules, legal and social, dictate that small amounts of non-White blood make a person legally and socially non-White. That is, they serve to overexclude individuals from the “White” racial category and thus maintain a rigid White/not-White boundary.

Many would argue that these rules have fallen out of favor and represent archaic notions of race, particularly in light of a salient, mixed-race population in the United States that now has the institutionally supported choice to identify as multiracial (e.g., to check multiple racial categories on the U.S. Census). Recent social psychological evidence, however, suggests otherwise. Peery and Bodenhausen (2008), for instance, found evidence suggesting that the aforementioned legal constructions of race continue to shape contemporary racial category perception. Specifically, perceivers were shown racially ambiguous persons who were revealed to have one Black and one White parent (i.e., to be “biracial”). Peery and Bodenhausen (2008) examined how per-

ceivers categorized these racially ambiguous individuals both automatically (i.e., reflexively) and deliberately (i.e., reflectively). Results revealed that participants were more likely to automatically categorize the racially ambiguous individuals as “Black and not White,” rather than as *both* “Black and White,” “*neither* Black nor White,” or as “White and not Black.” These results reflect the application of the most restrictive standards for race determination set by law and later incorporated into social definitions of racial categories in the form of the principle of hypodescent (see also Lythcott-Haims, 1994). Of interest, the same study participants, when given more time to deliberate about the racial categorization of the biracial individuals, classified them as “multiracial” more often than as either “Black” or “White.”

This research reveals another important topic for which a comprehensive diversity science, and thus social psychologists, will have to consider the implications of legal and social history. Indeed, it is necessary to understand how the social categories at the center of discussions of diversity were created in the first place, how they have changed, and how the law supports or undermines these processes. Taken together, we concur with Plaut (this issue) that it is important to situate empirical research on multiple dynamics of diversity within a larger sociocultural, historical, and legal framework.

Research Directions for “Diversity Science”

In the target article, Plaut offers a number of promising avenues for future research in diversity science. In the following paragraphs, we present two such avenues, namely (a) research from the perspective of racial minority individuals on models of diversity and (b) research on models of diversity in domains other than race.

Minority Perspectives on Diversity

As pointed out by Plaut (this issue), and written about in more detail by Shelton (2000), intergroup phenomena studied from the perspective of members of dominant groups should not necessarily be assumed to be similar (or different) for members of low-status groups. The emerging research on models of interethnic diversity is certainly implicated here, and thus, research from the “minority perspective” will certainly need to keep pace with that generated from the “majority perspective” prior to making strong claims about the promise or pitfalls regarding particular diversity models.

Some initial work has already begun to adopt this perspective (e.g., Plaut, Thomas, & Goren, 2009). For instance, research has shown that members of minority

groups typically do not endorse the colorblind ideal to the same extent as members of dominant groups (e.g., Ryan et al., 2007; Stevens, Plaut, & Sanchez-Burks, 2008). It is also important to note that it may not be the case, although the field does not know yet, whether adopting a colorblind compared with multicultural approach affects minority group members' intergroup attitudes in a manner similar to what has been documented for members of majority groups (but see Verkuyten, 2005). That is, although majority group members prefer colorblindness whereas minority group members prefer multiculturalism, it is possible that the induction of these ideologies has similar effects on members of both groups. Consistent with this possibility, Vorauer et al. (2009) found that both Aboriginal and White Canadians who were provided with a multicultural frame prior to an anticipated interracial interaction engaged in more "positive other-directed remarks" when exchanging personal information with their outgroup interaction partners. This finding suggests, in other words, that multiculturalism does seem to lead to positive effects for both members of majority and minority groups.

Research in our lab investigating the effects of induced colorblindness and multiculturalism on racial minorities' automatic associations, however, has produced less consistent results. For instance, in the Richeson and Trawalter (2010) study described previously in which White participants were found to express greater pro-White (anti-Asian) IAT bias after exposure to colorblindness than after exposure to multiculturalism, the effects of these diversity ideology inductions on Asian Americans' automatic associations were also examined. Unlike their White counterparts, Asian American participants' automatic ingroup favoritism (pro-Asian, anti-White) did not differ as a function of the ideology that was induced. There was no evidence of a positive (or a negative) effect of multiculturalism on Asian Americans' intergroup attitudes. Participants, on average, revealed no bias (i.e., neither ingroup favoring nor outgroup favoring IAT bias on average) in each of the three conditions (colorblind, multicultural, control).

This pattern of results, considered in tandem with Vorauer et al.'s (2009) work, may reflect the ambiguity associated with both colorblindness and multiculturalism for ethnic/racial minorities. For instance, minorities may have mixed views of, and mixed reactions to, colorblindness that depend on the context. Consistent with this possibility, Apfelbaum, Sommers, and Norton (2008) revealed that Blacks' judgments of Whites who employed a colorblind approach to an interracial interaction differed as a function of the context of the interaction. Specifically, Black perceivers preferred White individuals who did not bring up race during interracial interactions, compared with those who did bring up race, in contexts in which race was irrelevant to the encounter (i.e., the interaction task was not facili-

tated by attention to racial categories). Black perceivers who were led to believe that attention to race was relevant to the interaction task, however, preferred Whites who brought up race during the interracial interactions compared with those who did not. Similar to these findings, Purdie-Vaughns and colleagues found that a colorblind environment is not always perceived negatively by racial minorities (Purdie-Vaughns, Steele, Davies, Dittmann, & Crosby, 2008). In a study examining the reaction of Black professionals to a company that promotes either a colorblind or multicultural (i.e., "value-diversity") ideology regarding their employees, they found that the colorblind ideology was only perceived negatively by the Black professionals when it co-occurred with other cues, suggesting that the environment may be hostile or unwelcoming for minorities (e.g., a low level of minority representation in a brochure depicting the company).

Taken together, these results suggest that Blacks and, perhaps, other racial minorities are not always opposed to colorblindness. In fact, there may be circumstances in which colorblindness is preferred. Just like Whites often think that a colorblind approach will protect them from committing racially biased errors (or, at least appearing to do so; Norton, Sommers, Apfelbaum, Pura, & Ariely, 2006), racial minorities sometimes perceive colorblindness as a potential buffer against being treated negatively because of their racial group membership. It is certainly the case that "category blind" situations can result in less discrimination than "category aware" situations (Goldin & Rouse, 2000) and racial minorities are quite aware of this reality. Hence, under certain circumstances racial minorities may alter their behavior to induce a more "colorblind" state in social perceivers. Indeed, a recent *New York Times* article revealed that some Black job hunters are "de-racing" their resumes in hopes of obtaining jobs (Luo, 2009). That is, they are removing any information that signals their racial group membership (e.g., racial affinity organizations) from their resumes to induce a "colorblind" process. Consistent with this anecdotal evidence that minorities may sometimes find safety in colorblindness, Vorauer et al. (2009) found that Aboriginal individuals who were provided with a colorblind frame for an anticipated interaction with a White Canadian partner felt less anxious about the anticipated interaction than did Aboriginal participants who were not provided with such a message. A multicultural frame, interestingly, did not have this anxiety-reducing effect.

In sum, racial minorities may have a particularly nuanced view of the conditions under which multiculturalism is a better approach than colorblindness (and vice versa). A colorblind or multicultural ideology is unlikely to trump all other cues regarding diversity in the environment but, rather, either can contribute to negative (or positive) effects on minorities' attitudes,

psychological well-being, and experiences. Research on the complicated effects of diversity ideology on racial minorities' psychological outcomes, as well as on minorities' complicated beliefs and judgments of these ideologies, therefore, are particularly ripe areas for future inquiry.

Diversity Ideology Beyond Race

Another intriguing direction for research on diversity ideologies may be the inclusion of research that concerns categories other than individuals' racial/ethnic background. Although it is clearly important to consider the implications of these diversity ideologies for race-related attitudes and judgments (these ideologies were born out of concerns about such outcomes), it is likely that similar processes are relevant (and/or will become relevant) to other dimensions of identity. For instance, concerns about "category awareness" versus "category blindness" are particularly relevant to most "invisible" identities, such as sexual orientation, mental illness status, and so on (Goffman, 1963; see also Pachankis, 2007). Research suggests that concerns about concealment (blindness) are particularly salient for many members of these groups given the potentially costly negative ramifications of both "category concealment" and "category awareness" (Cole, Kemeny, Taylor, Visscher, & Fahey, 1996; Quinn, Kahng, & Crocker, 2004). That said, it is possible that a more "multicultural" context in which membership in minority, low-status, invisible groups was valued could certainly alter individuals' concerns about concealment. In other words, a multicultural diversity ideology that included these dimensions of identity could alter the perceived (and actual) contingencies between category awareness and discrimination. Hence, considering the relevance of different models of diversity for other identity dimensions may reveal both the merits and limitations of the models and, perhaps, refine our understanding of their effects.

Recently, Koenig and Richeson (in press) began an exploration of the potential implications of and beliefs about category awareness versus blindness in the gender domain. Specifically, they considered the extent to which individuals endorse "sexblind" versus "sex-aware" ideologies. Analogous to colorblind and multicultural ideologies, sexblindness involves ignoring sex categorization when perceiving and making judgments about others and sexawareness involves recognizing and potentially celebrating sex differences.

We think that the case of gender is particularly intriguing. On one hand, like race, concerns about discrimination in the workplace may promote concerns about categorizing by gender and, thus, potentially engaging in gender bias. Indeed, research has found that "blind" orchestral auditions—that is, when the judges

cannot see the performers—result in a greater number of female musicians being selected than do auditions conducted with the traditional "visible" process (Goldin & Rouse, 2000). On the other hand, like race, the history of gender discrimination in this country may require attention to sex categories in order to remediate past wrongs. Indeed, gender-based affirmative action has been legally sanctioned and found to be an important vehicle through which women have entered the corporate workplace (Clayton & Crosby, 1992). Similarly, it is through legal intervention (e.g., through the enforcement Title IX of the Educational Amendments of 1972) that women and girls have sought gender parity in any number of educational arenas, most notably, in the domain of athletics (Carpenter & Acosta, 2005).

Sex, furthermore, is also a basic human category that has a clear biological basis (unlike race) and, thus, it would not be adaptive for societies to endorse a truly "sexblind" ideology. Perhaps at least in part because of this "special status," contemporary society is far more concerned with potential sex differences in any number of domains (e.g., personality, cognitive ability, leadership styles, etc.) than with race differences, and the pursuit of at least some of these differences is not automatically perceived as sexist. In other words, there certainly is not a public consensus that "category blindness" is more appropriate or ideal than "category awareness" in the gender domain.

Perhaps reflecting this ambiguity, Koenig and Richeson (in press) found that the context (workplace v. social) had a large effect on both men's and women's endorsement of sexblindness versus sexawareness. Specifically, participants endorsed sexblindness more (and sexawareness less) in work than in social contexts. Furthermore, participants, on average, thought that sexblindness was more appropriate than sexawareness in work contexts, but that sexawareness was more appropriate than sexblindness in social contexts. These findings suggest that individuals may primarily employ (and endorse) sexblindness in situations where they believe that gender discrimination is likely to occur (e.g., the workplace). Indeed, we also found that participants' internal motivation to avoid sexism predicted the extent to which they endorsed sexblindness (in both contexts), and the endorsement of sexblindness was negatively correlated with benevolent sexism. In other words, similar to individuals' lay beliefs about colorblindness, these results suggest that people also perceive gender category blindness as a plausible route to the avoidance of sexism.

Although these results are just a first step toward the expansion of work on category blindness compared with category awareness to domains other than race, they suggest the promise of such an approach to highlight potentially unrecognized effects of promoting racial diversity ideologies. As suggested by Plaut (this issue), these beliefs are embedded within

particular histories of societal discrimination and reactions to such discrimination, and thus, the approach that may best ameliorate discrimination against one low-status group may not be effective in reducing discrimination against other groups. Indeed, recent work by Correll, Park, and Smith (2008) suggests that the extent to which members of different groups are currently in an active conflict moderates the effects of colorblindness compared with multiculturalism on intergroup attitudes (Correll et al., 2008). Exploring other category domains, therefore, may expose the underlying psychological, situational, and larger socio-historical factors that have shaped individuals' preferences for category blindness compared with category awareness as well as the effects of inducing these ideologies on intergroup attitudes, judgments, and behavior.

Summary and Concluding Thoughts

Plaut (this issue) represents a first step toward considering the future of the study of diversity in social psychology specifically and social science more broadly. As discussed previously, a new diversity science will need to incorporate the critical institutional (e.g., legal) influences both on people's beliefs about different approaches to diversity and on the construction of the social categories that in some ways define whether an environment is "diverse" in the first place. The inclusion of these sociocultural, legal, and historical perspectives, furthermore, will not only enrich our understanding of the many psychological dynamics of diversity but also reveal the potential real world implications of research in this domain.

Building on the target article, we underscored two (albeit among many) potentially fruitful research directions: (a) investigations of the perspective of minority, low-status group members regarding diversity ideologies, and (b) consideration of the dynamics of models of diversity in nonracial domains, for instance, gender. We won't reiterate the points made previously regarding the merits of these two lines of research, but we would like to point out that, together, they speak to the potential influence of diversity itself (e.g., in the United States, among social scientists, among judges, etc.) on our understandings of and beliefs about diversity. First, a science of diversity must be responsive to and reflective of the concerns and experiences of the diversity that it attempts to address. Although perhaps somewhat esoteric, this point may become particularly concrete in a changing U.S. population. Specifically, as the United States continues to become more racially diverse, understandings of and preferences for different models of diversity may indeed shift once again. Will Whites, for instance, continue to favor colorblindness as the United States shifts to be a so-called majority-minority nation (i.e., members of traditional racial mi-

nority groups make up more than 50% of the population)? Or, rather, will explicit attention to race come back in fashion?

Another important and intriguing way in which changing demographics (i.e., diversity) may affect the processes reviewed here and in the target article is through changes in the makeup of the courts. Specifically, increased representation of women and racial minority judges may shift important legal precedent and constructions regarding race, diversity, and discrimination. A recent article by Boyd, Epstein, and Martin (2010) highlights the importance of understanding the effects of gender diversity among judges. Specifically, in an elegant examination of the actual decisions made by federal appellate judges from 1995 to 2002, Boyd et al. (2010) found that both female judges and panels of judges that include at least one woman decide gender discrimination cases in favor of the plaintiff more often than male judges and all-male judge panels, respectively. In other words, the increased gender and racial diversity among judges may be one of the more important routes through which the law's reasoning about colorblindness/category-blindness will change. Taken together, these potential effects of diversity on beliefs about diversity-related psychological phenomena (e.g., discrimination, race, etc.) reveal the dynamic nature of questions at the very heart of the science of diversity while also highlighting the particular relevance and promise of diversity science in the 21st century.

Note

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