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## Black and White Faculty in White Research Universities

### *Introduction*

The claims regarding the failures and successes of affirmative action programs (herein restricted to female and male black faculty) are appreciably more extensive than is the evidence to support various contentions. Furthermore, both the debates and the data contain contradictory and conflicting assertions. There is agreement that the number of black faculty in white universities is small (less than 3 percent) [6, 13, 17], and that enrollments in professional schools (dentistry, law, and medicine) [3, pp. 74–78] increased during the 1970s; however, the rate of increase in the percentage of black faculty is very small [24]. The Ladd and Lipset [25] survey of U.S. faculty members of the professoriate of major research universities found that the “proportion has remained basically the same over the last decade.” Moreover, according to Ladd and Lipset, “blacks are no more heavily represented in the young faculty groups than in the older, and they remain clustered at the less prestigious schools.” Steele and Green [39] also see little likelihood of an increase.

As for those blacks who are on the faculties of white colleges and universities, the rhetoric is strong but the evidence is scarce. That blacks are used as showcases in ceremonial functions, have to serve on innumerable committees to guarantee a black presence, and give a disproportionately high amount of their time to the counseling of black students [30, p. 20] is countered by innuendos that blacks receive favored treatment with, for example, lighter teaching loads. One hears of negative tenure decisions centered on the issue of whether publications in “black”

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journals are “scholarly,” this position being supported by claims that affirmative action will lower the quality of research [26]. Sowell [38] believes affirmative action programs have had consequences that are just the opposite of their goals. Etzioni’s [16, p. 1087] editorial on the negative effects of using race as a criterion in hiring academics prompted a spate of letters to *Science* [36, pp. 101–2], which typify the debate on universalistic versus particularistic standards in academe, on quotas and goals, and on who is qualified to teach black students. In addition, there are the charges of racism and “reverse” discrimination, unequal and inequitable treatment, advancement only because of race, and the like. Anderson, Frierson, and Lewis [4, p. 93] sum up one position when they say, “Primary among the obstacles which block black upward mobility in white academe is white prejudice and discrimination.”

In addition to an attempt to shed some light on the issues just raised, this study recognizes that affirmative action goals have always included more than simply increasing the number of black professors in predominantly white institutions, as difficult and important as this objective may be. Effective goal accomplishment has also meant that blacks would acquire academic positions at high-status white universities and would succeed. Increasing numbers of blacks at less-prestigious institutions or a revolving-door phenomenon would be, at best, little more than a perpetuation of second-class citizenship.

Hence, this study focused on the critical concern of success at prestigious institutions and the issues that Lester [26] raised—scholarly productivity by black faculty, the maintenance of universalistic quality criteria, and implications that these two issues have for the general health of the academic environment.

### *Related Research and Theory*

To date, the research on black faculty has consisted of demographic studies [5, 11, 20]. These surveys show the potential supply of black academics and their distribution across institutions. They report small gains in numbers and an inadequate pool of future students to meet equity goals. They tell nothing, however, about the degree and kind of success those blacks who have acquired positions in white institutions have had.

Also, most studies on black faculty unfortunately have limited applicability for the purposes of this inquiry. Moss’s [32, 33] research on black professors in a white institution, and vice versa, is dated, especially in relation to a post-affirmative-action climate.<sup>1</sup> The more contemporary

<sup>1</sup>The studies on black faculty in predominantly black colleges are also few in number. They are not included here.

research by Mommsen [28, 29] and Rafky [35] deals with black faculty problems—mobility and teaching black studies, for example—but not with working conditions and career development in white environments. Wilburn [43] does deal with careers, but only in science and engineering. Bend [7] and Moore and Wagstaff [31] have provided some demographic data, but their work suffers either from a low response rate or from lack of information on working conditions in predominantly white environments. Walker's [42] and Hodge's [21] studies cannot be generalized because they come from a small number of institutions or from a selected setting.

Traynham and Green [41] report on the meeting of equivalent compensation goals in a newly formed regional university. Freeman [17] infers from income data gathered in the Carnegie surveys that monetary rewards for blacks and whites are nearly equal, a point Moore [30] disputes.

With regard to "making it" in white research universities, the account by Middleton [27] at Berkeley and the study by Anderson, Frierson, and Lewis [4] at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill report little optimism for those who endorse affirmative action goals. However, isolated interviews in the first instance and a sample of only sixteen in the second, neither with comparative data from white faculty, require these reports be held in question. For the most part, then, prior research neither illuminates the issues raised nor contributes much of a base upon which to build. This study, therefore, breaks new ground.

While the issues raised in the affirmative action debate discussed above were used to select the topics for study, three sets of empirical findings and theoretical concepts directed the instrument design and analysis. The first of these came from research on faculty work roles, especially in university settings. Studies by Blau [10], Fulton and Trow [19], and Blackburn, Behymer, and Hall [8] were used to identify variables and to frame questions on work load, scholarly productivity, and the like. For the issues related to universalistic versus particularistic criteria, the general literature on the sociology of professions was consulted (see, e.g., Sherlock and Morris [37]).

Kanter's [22, 23] work on female tokens was adapted for the special conditions in this research. Hypotheses regarding black faculty—for example, performance pressure, isolation from critical informal networks, and need to overachieve—were generated and tested from her work on how group structures shape interaction contexts and influence particular patterns of token/dominant interaction, and how these lead to visibility, polarization, and assimilation phenomena. Epstein's [15] research on black professional women was also in this setting. Her findings were not substantiated, nor were those of Alperson [2] who found the minority faculty woman doubly disadvantaged.

*Sample and Methodology*

The sample consisted of female (18 percent) and male (82 percent) black, and female (25 percent) and male (75 percent) white faculty members with the ranks of assistant to full professor in the arts and science departments of all Big Ten universities. The white professors were selected randomly to match the identified black faculty members after stratifying by discipline and rank. Eighty-one black academics (60 percent of the total black tenure track population) and ninety-two white academics completed a pretested five-page questionnaire<sup>2</sup> dealing with racial climate, equality in the department, affirmative action, relationships with the department chair, work effort, reward system, research record, job satisfaction, and related demographic variables.

The instrument was pretested on both black and white faculty outside the sample institutions. Some of the attitude-type questions (agree/disagree) were taken from the Carnegie questionnaires. Self-reports on hours worked have been demonstrated to be highly reliable [18]. Allison and Stewart [1] have validated faculty self-reports of publications against public records; Blackburn et al. [9] have confirmed these data against faculty vitae. There are good reasons, therefore, to have high confidence in the data. Chi-square analysis was used on some categorized factors. Two-way analysis of variance was the principal statistical technique employed (see Elmore [14] for details). Race, academic discipline, and interaction effects were tested against the dependent variables.

Having selected the white faculty sample to correspond to the available black population on the basis of rank (approximately 30 percent assistant, 40 percent associate, and 30 percent full professors) and discipline, it is not surprising to find the respondents alike on other demographic characteristics as well—age, sex, tenure status, and number of years in higher education—although whites have been at their current institutions a little longer than have blacks (averages of 10.5 versus 8.0, respectively). Even their work experiences prior to current positions are alike, that is, pre-

<sup>2</sup>There was a brief additional section of the instrument for black faculty only. White faculty were oversampled so that follow-up expenses could be saved (response rate = 40 percent). Black faculty were extensively pursued (three letters, phone calls) so as to obtain as large a return as possible.

Obtaining a black faculty roster was no easy task. While the aim was to restrict the analysis to arts and science professors, some black respondents turned out to be in professional schools. For example, the obtained list would suggest that the professor was in psychology but the questionnaire would show the person to be in educational psychology and in the school of education. Since it seemed a waste to throw away rare data obtained with great labor and difficulty, a “technical/professional” category was established to compare with humanities, natural science and social science academics.

dominantly at research universities. One principal difference between the groups does exist, and that is in their academic preparation. While graduate schooling was remarkably similar, namely, at highly ranked research universities, almost 50 percent of the blacks earned their B.A.s from predominantly black liberal arts colleges; a number less than the average current undergraduate enrollment for blacks in higher education. Overall, then, differences found or not found between the groups with regard to work effort, scholarly productivity, academic values, and career advancement cannot be attributed to typical demographic variables.

### *Findings*

#### *Allocation of Work Time*

The principal finding with respect to work effort is the complete absence of racial differences, as Table 1 demonstrates. There are differences between disciplines, but these are in accord with typical university norms. Science faculty have more outside support with which to purchase time away from teaching and to reinvest in research, for example.

There is one interaction effect—in time given to community service—where black natural science and white social science faculty give fewer hours. In general, however, what is striking are the similarities, not the differences. The assertion that black faculty receive special favors, or have extra heavy assignments, or that they are overburdened on committees so as to guarantee a “black presence,” or that they must work twice as hard to get half as far—the Kanter [22] prediction—are not substantiated by the reports of these faculty. Some black faculty, of course, are greatly overloaded in service functions; they seem always to be available for those never-ending “critical” occasions. However, some white faculty are also overloaded. And then there are faculty, both black and white, whose visible contribution to the organization is less than the mean, as the near equality of the results indicates.

#### *Scholarly Productivity*

As can be seen from Table 2, these faculty, especially those in the sciences, place a high value on research. Furthermore, they are highly productive with regard to both scholarly articles and books. As was the case with work effort, the differences that occur on this role dimension are disciplinary: more books but fewer articles from the humanists. There are no racial differences.

TABLE 1  
Mean Faculty Hourly Work Effort Per Week

Questionnaire Item (N)	Humanists		Natural Scientists		Social Scientists		Technical Professionals		F		
	Blacks (12)	Whites (18)	Blacks (13)	Whites (17)	Blacks (28)	Whites (34)	Blacks (15)	Whites (10)	(p in parentheses)		
									Race	Discipline	Interaction
Teaching (class hours)	8.33	10.05	5.33	6.41	6.37	5.51	7.50	7.58	6.45	(<0.01)	
Teaching (preparation, grading, etc.)	19.25	17.78	10.50	10.64	12.17	16.89	14.80	12.25	4.17	(<0.01)	
Counseling and advising students	5.66	4.61	7.30	5.05	7.21	4.70	6.06	6.70	3.75	(<0.01)	
Research and scholarly writing	14.25	10.38	21.58	20.63	14.58	15.22	14.71	9.81			
University service (e.g., committees)	3.33	5.88	3.76	3.94	5.60	5.50	4.57	5.63			3.11
Community service	3.28	2.38	1.50	4.40	5.33	0.81	5.35	5.30			(<0.02)
Consulting without pay	2.75	1.60	1.50	1.42	2.00	1.95	4.26	2.91	2.98	(<0.03)	
Consulting with pay	2.75	1.00	0.50	1.20	2.75	0.90	1.71	2.50			
Total	59.60	53.68	51.97	53.69	56.01	51.48	58.96	52.68			

Notes: The total hours reported are in close agreement with those reported in other faculty workload studies in research universities and hence add credence to the data (see, e.g., Thompson [40], for a report on a number of universities—University of California at Berkeley, University of Washington, and others). The most recent workload study is by Ladd [24, p. 9] on his 1977 study survey. He reports an average of forty-six hours per week for faculty in research universities. However, when examining his survey instrument one finds he has not asked for total weekly hours; instead he asked respondents to check a range of specified hours on different faculty activities. However, he did not include all faculty work efforts. Hence, his assertion is an underestimate of some unknown number of hours greater than forty-six.

TABLE 2  
Research Interest and Productivity

Questionnaire Item	Humanists		Natural Scientists		Social Scientists		Technical Professionals		F (p in parentheses)		
	Blacks	Whites	Blacks	Whites	Blacks	Whites	Blacks	Whites	Race	Discipline	Interaction
	1. Do your interests lie primarily in research or in teaching? <sup>†</sup> *	2.46	2.50	3.23	2.64	2.93	3.07	2.43	2.30		6.72
2. Number of articles in professional journals in past three years. <sup>†</sup>	2.69	2.00	3.23	3.26	2.69	2.90	2.68	2.30		4.06	(<0.01)
3. Number of books published or edited in last three years (alone or in collaboration) <sup>‡</sup>	1.76	1.75	1.38	1.47	1.60	1.70	1.86	1.61			

\*4 = Very heavily in research; 3 = both, but leaning towards research; 2 = both, but leaning toward teaching; 1 = very heavily in teaching

<sup>†</sup>6 = 20; 5 = 11-20; 4 = 5-10; 3 = 3-4; 2 = 1-2; 1 = none

<sup>‡</sup>4 = 5; 3 = 3-4; 2 = 1-2; 1 = none



### *Work Environment*

*Racial climate.* Just as academic preparation and allocation of work effort were expected to relate to scholarly productivity, so can the quality of the work environment be predicted to have consequences. Racism, equality of treatment, and access to critical scholarly networks are three environmental aspects reported upon here.

Blacks differ significantly from whites in their belief that American colleges and universities are racist ( $F = 30.02$ ;  $p < 0.01$ ) (see Elmore [14]). On a four-point scale, from 4 = strongly agree to 1 = strongly disagree, white faculty average about 2.5 whereas black faculty average about 3.0. However, when issues of racism are raised in relation to the more immediate working environment of the department, whites and blacks both agree that there is a positive racial climate in their individual departments (although whites assert this more positively than blacks—means of 3.0 versus 2.8,  $F = 4.18$ ,  $p < 0.04$ ). Furthermore, both groups clearly disagree with the claim that they “have been discriminated against in their current department.” In addition, when only blacks were asked if the racial climate in their department was “satisfactory for personal growth, recognition, and achievement,” expressed agreement ran as follows: natural scientists, 92 percent; social scientists, 86 percent; humanists, 82 percent; and technical/professional, 56 percent.<sup>3</sup>

*Equity of treatment.* Table 3 provides supportive data for nonracist departmental environments. Here the only racially significant difference finds blacks giving a more positive response than whites to the question of equitable treatment. Questions for blacks only regarding inclusion within informal white faculty networks related to scholarly work and the need for more departmental black colleagues for joint scholarly efforts produced both positive and negative responses with no consistent patterns by discipline. In summary, except for differences on the racist character of the university, a generally positive and equitable racial climate and work environment are supported by the respondents. However, it does not follow that departmental and racial norms are the same for all values, as the next set of findings shows.

### *Academic Values: Universalistic versus Particularistic Standards*

One way to test the assimilation of blacks into an academic culture that has been created by white males is to examine the existence of univer-

<sup>3</sup>That individual faculty can see the racial climate of their departments as positive and yet assert that the university is racist is an apparent but not necessarily a real contradiction. The racial climate of the university is more than the sum (or average) of departmental climates.

TABLE 3  
Equity of Recognition and Treatment

Questionnaire Item	Humanists		Natural Scientists		Social Scientists		Technical Professionals		F (p in parentheses)
	Blacks	Whites	Blacks	Whites	Blacks	Whites	Blacks	Whites	
	Race		Race		Race		Race		
1. All faculty members receive proper recognition for conducting research	3.30	3.35	3.00	2.87	3.30	3.18	2.94	2.84	2.64 ( $<0.05$ )
2. All faculty members in my department receive the proper recognition for publishing books and articles	3.40	3.38	3.06	3.15	3.24	3.26	3.15	3.05	
3. I have received equitable treatment in my academic department in regard to promotions and acquisition of tenure	3.53	3.10	3.23	3.17	3.39	3.02	3.18	2.76	4.51 ( $<0.03$ )

NOTE: 4 = Strongly agree; 3 = agree; 2 = disagree; 1 = strongly disagree.

salistic standards. In the universities in this population of institutions, research is the principal reward criterion. As a universalistic standard, the reward criteria are to be independent of secondary characteristics (race, sex, friendships, and personality). There are to be no particularistic exceptions, and work qualifications are to be sustained by intellectual values.

Table 4 shows the extent to which the universalistic norm is perceived to be in effect. The two exceptions (items 1 and 2) with respect to criteria for achieving tenure and salary increases are disciplinary, not racial. Faculty in the applied field agree that the criteria are in effect; however, they do so less strongly. With respect to equality of treatment (assertions 3–5), there are racial differences. Here black faculty agree more strongly than do white faculty that professors are equally treated with respect to the distribution of rewards. The racial difference concerning the inclusion of black administrators outside of minority affairs (item 6) is again one of degree, not position.

Additional support for the contention that universalistic standards operate comes from the last three entries in Table 4. While there are racial differences on both affirmative action items (7 and 8), both races are on the universalistic (disagree) side. Finally, the uniformly strong position taken against the assertion that only blacks can teach blacks (item 9) is a strong endorsement for the general claim that universalistic rather than particularistic values are held by faculty at these institutions.

There are, however, two notable exceptions. Whites disagreed with the statement that “any special programs for black students should be administered and controlled by black people,” whereas blacks, while leaning toward disagree, were split (mean = 2.4 for blacks, 1.0 for whites;  $p < 0.01$ ). Blacks were also about evenly divided (2.6) on the statement that “despite concern for past discrimination, academic hiring and promotion decisions must favor the most qualified individual in colleges and universities regardless of ethnic origin,” whereas whites (except for white social scientists who also split on the position) agreed with this statement ( $p < 0.01$ ). The white faculty position is similar to Peterson et al. [34, pp. 246–49]. Indirect evidence from the respondents suggests the “black position” is that particularistic standards can be justified for hiring but universalistic criteria should apply for retention and advancement.

It could be argued that racial differences on the affirmative action items (7 and 8) are the result of white faculty belief that the pendulum has swung too far, that white males are being discriminated against because of their gender and race. If this were the explanation for the observed

TABLE 4  
 Universalistic and Particularistic Criteria

Questionnaire Item	Humanists		Natural Scientists		Social Scientists		Technical Professionals		F (p in parentheses)
	Blacks	Whites	Blacks	Whites	Blacks	Whites	Blacks	Whites	
1. In my department it is very difficult for a person to achieve tenure if he or she does not publish	3.61	3.35	3.75	3.64	3.66	3.80	3.23	3.30	3.87 ( $<0.01$ )
2. In my department it is very difficult for a person to receive significant salary increases if he or she does not publish	3.23	3.10	3.38	3.47	3.46	3.42	3.00	2.80	3.80 ( $<0.01$ )
3. All faculty members in my department must meet the same criteria in regard to the acquisition of tenure	3.07	2.80	2.92	2.58	3.00	2.84	3.11	2.15	5.20 ( $<0.02$ )
4. All faculty members must meet the same criteria for promotion	3.00	2.80	2.69	2.52	3.00	2.76	2.94	2.07	3.64 ( $<0.05$ )
5. All faculty members must meet the same criteria for increased salary	3.07	2.70	2.89	2.43	2.92	2.76	2.70	2.07	3.64 ( $<0.05$ )
6. Colleges and universities should insure the inclusion of blacks in faculty and administrative positions not specifically responsible for minority affairs	3.69	3.45	3.92	3.17	3.60	3.25	3.88	3.25	19.5 ( $<0.01$ )
7. Affirmative action is unfair to white males	1.53	2.80	1.58	2.20	1.37	2.07	1.41	2.30	26.1 ( $<0.01$ )
8. Affirmative action, despite its underlying concern for equality, is detrimental to the viability of my department and university	1.46	1.85	1.46	1.94	1.33	1.73	1.23	1.69	14.80 ( $<0.01$ )
9. Only members of a minority group have the personal knowledge that is essential for teaching that group	1.84	1.65	1.61	1.73	1.94	1.80	1.82	1.61	

NOTE: 4 = Strongly agree; 3 = agree; 2 = disagree; 1 = strongly disagree

racial positions, then the lack of differences for items 1 and 2 and the high degree of agreement with them would not be expected. It needs to be recognized, however, that agreeing that universalistic standards exist is not equivalent to their endorsement.

In sum, while there are exceptions and differences, both black and white professors endorse universalistic criteria for the academic career.

### *Discussion and Implications*

The principal assumption of this research effort was that there would be appreciable differences between white and black faculty. It was believed that because of the racial differences in America, one would expect many black faculty to level charges of racism, discrimination, and neglect at their employing, predominantly white, institutions as well as at their white colleagues.

However, the evidence does not support this assumption. What did become apparent is that white and black faculty have similar views regarding work effort, scholarly productivity, racial climate, and reward systems.

From a white, male, "liberal" perspective, the overall findings are on the heartwarming side of the ledger. Some black faculty have "succeeded" in a respected career in high-status institutions. Furthermore, these minority members are happy and satisfied.<sup>4</sup> In brief, as professors, black and white faculty are more alike than they are different.

Obviously, Kanter's work regarding tokens has limitations. In the main, her generalizations do not apply to black professors in predominantly white research universities. The blacks in this study agreed with the statement that "I need contact with other black faculty and black students to make my job environment more satisfying" (68 percent) but, simultaneously, disagreed with the statement that "I am working and striving more than the average to make my skills and abilities known throughout my department because of my minority status" (over 60 percent disagreed).

It is important to keep in mind that these highly performing and generally satisfied black academics may be paying some expensive psychic costs. While saying that they have felt no need to overachieve for success, they simultaneously report (about two-thirds) that "there are service

<sup>4</sup>See Elmore [14] for data on career satisfaction, the critical role of the department chairperson, the function of the undergraduate black college, and other findings associated with black faculty in white institutions. For example, degree of satisfaction is associated with degree of success, that is, tenured faculty view their careers more positively than do nontenured assistant professors, both black and white.

performance pressures brought on me by being a black faculty member in a predominantly white environment.” White faculty may experience similar demands, but they can more easily say “no.”

The authors believe the findings can be generalized to faculty other than those in the Midwest. Because of the more liberal leanings in the East and the Far West, it is assumed that black and white faculty from those areas would respond similarly to those in the Midwest.<sup>5</sup> However, this is not meant to suggest that other sections of the country are free of racial prejudice.

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<sup>5</sup>However, in the South, the data may not be generalizable to faculty in research universities.

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