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Being Different: Relational Demography and Organizational Attachment

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The authors thank Rod Kramer, Barbara Gutek, Barbara Lawrence, Laurie Morgan, Karlene Roberts, and Margarethe Wiersema for their constructive suggestions on earlier drafts. We also acknowledge the three anonymous reviewers, Bob Sutton, and Linda Pike, whose recommendations were important in focusing and refining the paper. We used self-categorization theory-which proposes that people may use social characteristics such as age, race. or organizational membership to define psychological groups and to promote a positive self-identity-to develop and test hypotheses about the effects of demographic diversity in organizations on an individual's psychological and behavioral attachment to the organization. Individual-level commitment, attendance behavior, and tenure intentions were examined as a function of the individual's degree of difference from others on such social categories as age, tenure, education, sex, and race. We expected that the effect of being different would have different effects for minorities (i.e., women and nonwhites) than for members of the majority (i.e., men and whites). Analyses of a sample of 151 groups comprising 1,705 respondents showed that increasing work-unit diversity was associated with lower levels of psychological attachment among group members. Nonsymmetrical effects were found for sex and race, with whites and men showing larger negative effects for increased unit heterogeneity than nonwhites and women. The results of the study call into question the fundamental assumption that underlies much of race and gender research in organizations-that the effect of heterogeneity is always felt by the minority.

A careful reading of several distinct bodies of research dealing with social groups and diversity reveals a puzzling omission and a serious contradiction. First, both scholars and the popular press have noted the dramatic increase of women and minorities in the U.S. labor force (e.g., Ahlburg and Kimmel, 1986; Johnston and Packer, 1987; Offerman and Gowing, 1990). Managing a diverse workforce is an oft-repeated challenge confronting managers in the 1990s. A clear implication of this increasing workforce heterogeneity is that more and more individuals are likely to work with people who are demographically different from them in terms of age, gender, race, and ethnicity. Increasing diversity and global competition appear to be the management topics of the next decade (e.g., Thomas, 1990), but relatively little work on organizations has explored the full impact of this diversity. Most work has analyzed the impact of minorities in work groups. Kanter (1977b) has theorized that unbalanced subgroup membership may highlight distinctions among members and focus attention on those in the minority. Minority individuals may experience social isolation and hostility (O'Farrell and Harlan, 1982). While the effects of being a minority group member have been explored in some depth (e.g., Konrad and Gutek, 1987), and despite a large body of literature in sociology that discusses the reaction of the majority toward the entrance into and continued presence of minority members in a social setting (e.g., Pettigrew, 1980), a curious omission in the organizational literature is that far less attention has been paid to the impact of increasing diversity on the majority. A notable exception is the study by Wharton and Baron (1987), who investigated the effect of occupational gender desegregation on men. They found that men in mixed work settings reported significantly lower job-related satisfaction and

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self-esteem and more job-related depression than men in either male- or female-dominated work settings. This evidence indicates the need for in-depth study of the full effects of diversity in the workplace.

Second, although there is evidence that diverse work groups are beneficial for tasks requiring creativity and judgment (Jackson, 1991), there is also substantial evidence that people routinely classify themselves and others based on social categories such as age, gender, race, and status and evince strong preferences for groups based on these social categories (Tajfel and Turner, 1986). Research consistently has shown that individuals choose to interact more often with members of their own social group than with members of other groups (e.g., Stephan, 1978). Furthermore, homogeneous groups are more likely than heterogeneous groups to be socially integrated and experience higher satisfaction and lower turnover (e.g., O'Reilly, Caldwell, and Barnett, 1989). Homogeneous groups also sometimes outperform heterogeneous groups (e.g., Fenelon and Megargee, 1971; Clement and Schiereck, 1973; Jackson, 1991). Given this tension between the individual's tendency to prefer homogeneity and the structural change in workforce demography toward greater heterogeneity. understanding the effects of demographic differences on individual and group outcomes in organizational settings is of both theoretical and practical importance (Pfeffer, 1983; Thomas, 1990).

CONCEPTUAL BACKGROUND

Analyzing the relationship between demographic variables and workers' behaviors and attitudes has a long tradition in industrial and organizational psychology (e.g., Schreiber, 1979). Demographic characteristics such as age, tenure. education, race, and sex have been related to outcomes such as performance (Waldman and Avolio, 1986), hiring and promotion decisions (McIntire, Moberg, and Posner, 1980), and turnover (Mobley, Horner, and Hollingsworth, 1978). More recent studies of organizational demography have moved beyond examining simple demographic effects to begin examining the distributional or compositional effects of demography on social units (e.g., Pfeffer, 1983; Jackson et al., 1991). These studies have found heterogeneity in age to be related to turnover in top-management teams (Wagner, Pfeffer, and O'Reilly, 1984) and heterogeneity in tenure to affect turnover in academic units (McCain, O'Reilly, and Pfeffer, 1983) and the turnover of nurses in hospitals (Pfeffer and O'Reilly, 1987). These studies treated demography as a compositional property of the group or unit, by measuring the variance in demography within the unit, and related this unit property to unit outcomes.

Recently, researchers have proposed that, in addition to a unit- or group-level effect, demographic variation also should be analyzed at the individual level. Tsui and O'Reilly (1989) used the term relational demography, in contrast to compositional or distributional demography, to refer to this individual-level difference. They found differences in education, sex, and race between members of superior-subordinate dyads to be associated with

subordinates' heightened role ambiguity, unfavorable performance evaluations, and a lower level of attraction by the superiors to these subordinates. Zenger and Lawrence (1989) reported that engineers who were different from others in a project team on age and tenure engaged in less frequent technical communication with other project team members. O'Reilly, Caldwell, and Barnett (1989) found that, in addition to a unit-level effect of demography on turnover, individuals most distant from others on demographic attributes were the least socially integrated into the group and the most likely to exit. Jackson and her colleagues (1991) reported similar findings.

The conceptual foundation for almost all the research on organizational demography has been the similarity-attraction paradigm (Byrne, 1971). The similarity-attraction hypothesis maintains that similarity in attitudes is a major source of attraction between individuals. A variety of physical, social, and status traits can be used as the basis for inferring' similarity in attitudes, beliefs, or personality. For example, interpersonal attraction has been associated with similarity in socioeconomic background (Byrne, Clore, and Worchel, 1966), competence (Baskett, 1973), and even leisure activities (Werner and Parmelee, 1979). Consequences of high interpersonal attraction may include frequent communication, high social integration, and a desire to maintain group affiliation, which may result in low turnover.

The similarity-attraction hypothesis assumes interaction among individuals. Although interpersonal interaction is thus a necessary condition for social integration to occur. individuals can express preferences for a group even without social interaction. For instance, some employees may adopt the values of an organization or develop loyalty to it without extensive interaction with other employees (e.g., Chatman, 1991). This suggests that the similarity-attraction paradigm may not account for all the reported demographic effects, especially when actual interaction among the participants is unlikely (e.g., Pfeffer and O'Reilly, 1987). In a large social unit such as an organization, it is unlikely that a single individual will interact with all other individuals in it. What processes, other than interpersonal interaction and attraction, may account for demographic effects observed in organizational settings? Social identity theory (Taifel, 1972) and, more specifically, self-categorization theory (Turner, 1982, 1985), both of which propose that an individual's self-evaluation is partly a function of his or her group membership, can offer insight into situations in which demographic effects may occur even without individuals engaging in interpersonal interactions.

Self-Categorization Theory and Relational Demography

Individuals are assumed to have a desire to maintain a high level of self-esteem (e.g., Brockner, 1988) and a positive self-identity (Tajfel and Turner, 1986). In order for individuals to know how to feel about others, they must first define themselves. They do this through a process of self-categorization (Turner, 1987) in which they classify themselves and others into social categories using characteristics such as organizational membership, age, race, status, or religion. These categories permit an individual to define him- or herself in terms of a social identity (Taifel and Turner, 1986; Ashforth and Mael, 1989). Insofar as the self-categorization process permits the individual to assume a positive self-identity, he or she may then seek to maximize intergroup distinctiveness and to perceive out-group members as less attractive (Kramer, 1991). Brewer (1979) has shown that categorizing people into groups, even on the basis of arbitrary criteria, can lead group members to perceive out-group members as less trustworthy, honest, and cooperative than members of their own (arbitrary) group. In a review. Taifel (1982) reported over 30 studies that used minimal or near minimal categorizations, all of which showed in-group bias. Thus, in organizations, the definition of others and the self is likely to be largely "relational and comparative" (Tajfel and Turner, 1986: 16), such that an individual's self-image is based on group membership and the differentiation between one's own group and others. Groups that contain the self are likely to be considered special and regarded positively. This process of self-categorization is fundamental to the formation of in-groups and the widely documented tendency of individuals to prefer homogeneous groups of similar others (e.g., Schneider, 1987; Messick and Mackie, 1989). Thus, as Stephan and Stephan (1985: 163) noted, "people who regard themselves as superior experience anxiety concerning interaction with others who are regarded as inferior." This anxiety may threaten self-esteem and lead people to avoid contact with the out-group and to increase stereotyping and assumed dissimilarity of out-group members. This propensity may be in direct conflict with the increasing diversity of the workforce and may have detrimental effects on group process and performance.

There is an obvious tension between individual proclivities toward homogeneous groups at work and the desire to promote diversity. Many studies have documented the tendency for work to remain segregated by gender, for instance, consistent with the desire to maintain homogeneity (e.g., Schreiber, 1979; Baron and Bielby, 1985; Konrad and Gutek, 1987). Baron and Bielby (1985) estimated that 60 to 70 percent of men (or women) would have to change occupational categories in order to equalize the occupational distribution by sex in the U.S. Pfeffer and Davis-Blake (1987) found that as the proportion of women in a job classification goes up, the salary level for both men and women in that classification declines, even after controlling for the characteristics of the position, incumbent, and organization. These studies suggest that white males, traditionally enjoving higher-status occupations, may have a strong incentive to differentiate themselves through job classifications into groups that help them maintain a favorable self-identity.

Perhaps one of the major contributions of self-categorization theory for understanding the effect of groups on individuals is the notion of the psychological group. Turner (1984: 530) defined the psychological group as "a collection of people who share the same social identification or define themselves in terms of the same social category

membership." An important characteristic of a psychological group is that individuals can identify with it and derive self-identity without necessarily engaging in interpersonal interaction with all or any members of that group. Based on this definition of a psychological group, a variety of social categories in the work context, including organizational and demographic attributes, may be used for self-categorization. A manager's self-identity may be based, in part, on membership in the management group, in contrast to groups of nonmanagement employees. Employees tend to categorize themselves into various occupational groups. Engineers may be more likely to identify with other engineers than with accountants or lawyers. On an even broader level, employees may use the organization as a social category for self-categorization (e.g., "I am an IBM employee"). In these cases, an individual may derive positive self-identity from the group without needing to have personal knowledge of or interaction with all other members in that category. Further, as long as the social identity derived from membership in these psychological groups is positive, individuals will desire to maintain their membership and to protect their group from others perceived to be less attractive.

The idea of the psychological group is congruent with the notion of relational demography. Both concepts focus on the attitudes of individuals as influenced by perceptions of the similarity or dissimilarity of others, indexed by demographic attributes. The self-categorization process thus may define groups whose attractiveness and importance are not based on intergroup interaction but on the demographic characteristics of its members. These demographic attributes may include age, education, tenure, race, and sex, as well as occupational and functional categories. As Baron and Pfeffer (1990: 14) observed, "Organizations are certainly very much in the business of creating categories ... [thus] it is guite likely that these categories, organizationally defined and institutionalized, order the social world, determine the contours of social comparison and interaction, and shape the pattern of reward allocations observed.'

Sex is one obvious example that can be used to illustrate how self-categorization may increase or decrease the attractiveness of a group to an individual (Hoffman and Hurst, 1990). If an individual uses sex as a category for self-identification, satisfaction with the organization as a psychological group will be the highest when the organization comprises members of the particular sex category chosen. Given that homogeneity is preferred over heterogeneity, an individual's satisfaction with the group will be reduced when the actual sex composition of the group departs from homogeneity. Similarly, if an individual categorizes him- or herself by age, satisfaction with membership in a group will be highest if that group is made up of members falling within the boundary of a specific age category. The cohort effects observed in organizations (e.g., Ryder, 1965; McCain, O'Reilly, and Pfeffer, 1983) could be interpreted as an outcome of self-categorization based on date of entry or tenure.

In general, then, these demographic attributes may be relevant categories that individuals use to derive their self-identity in the context of a given organization. The organization or unit can be an attractive psychological group to an individual to the extent that it comprises others whose demographic profile is consistent with the categories that the individual has chosen to categorize him- or herself. The essential identity question for the individual may be "Is this my kind of organization?" If reality is not consistent with the homogeneity required to make the category attractive, the individual may ask, "Do I belong here?" This identity assessment may lead dissimilar individuals to be less attached to the group.

While self-categorization theory offers a potential explanation for demographic effects in noninteractive groups, any empirical observation of demographic effects does not preclude the possibility that interaction and, thus, similarity-attraction may also play a role. The two theories should be treated as complementary. In general, for the individual who is different from others on the salient and relevant demographic attributes, lower organizational attachment may be a consequence of two possible processes: (1) social isolation and lower interpersonal attraction due to attitudinal differences associated with demographic dissimilarity, and (2) incongruence stemming from one's self-categorization of the group and its actual demographic composition.

Organizational Attachment as an Outcome of Being Different

Organizational attachment is defined as an individual's psychological and behavioral involvement in a social group or unit of which he or she is a member. Lowered organizational attachment is one of many possible outcomes of demographic heterogeneity. As Turner (1987: 30) observed. "When social identity in terms of group membership is unsatisfactory, members will attempt to leave that group (psychologically or in reality)." Turnover is one of the outcomes most frequently studied in recent organizational demography research. Although leaving is one way of demonstrating low organizational attachment (Whithey and Cooper, 1989), it may not be an option for everyone. Perceived or actual availability of job alternatives, external labor market conditions, or personal constraints may all affect an individual's ability to leave the organization (Mobley, Horner, and Hollingsworth, 1978; Carsten and Spector, 1987). When leaving is not a feasible alternative, individuals may engage in other forms of decreased attachment, such as psychologically withdrawing from the organization. Behaviors such as absence (Rhodes and Steers, 1990), attitudes such as reduced psychological commitment (Mowday, Porter, and Steers, 1982), and cognitions or thoughts of leaving the social unit (Rusbult et al., 1988) may be behavioral and psychological responses to the reduced attractiveness of a particular social category as a psychological group.

Absences. Past research provides extensive evidence linking demographic attributes such as gender, race, education,

tenure, and family size to absenteeism (e.g., Hackett, 1989; Rhodes and Steers, 1990). Increased absenteeism has been found for workers who are younger (Farrell and Stamm. 1988), less tenured (Chadwick-Jones, Nicholson, and Brown, 1982), female (Johns, 1978), married (Garrison and Muchinsky, 1977), less educated (Taylor, 1979), and nonwhite (Flanagan, Strauss, and Ulman, 1974). The results of these studies suggest that lower attachment, in the form of absenteeism, may be the result of a number of simple demographic attributes, and such effects may be due to a variety of personal and situational constraints. For example, higher absences by women may be due to child care demands. Based on self-categorization theory, we argue that in addition to simple demographic effects, absences may also be predicted by observing the extent to which an individual differs from others in a work unit on characteristics such as age, education, sex, race, or tenure.

Psychological commitment. As with studies of absenteeism, studies of commitment have focused on the effects of simple demographic variables. Age and tenure with the organization have been found to be positively related to commitment, for example, while increased education has shown a negative effect (Morris and Sherman, 1981). Results of studies of the relationship between gender and commitment, however, are mixed. A recent meta-analysis (Cohen, Lowenberg, and Rosenstein, 1988) reported a very small average negative correlation (r =-.04) between gender and organizational commitment, and two other studies (Hrebiniak and Alutto, 1972; Aranya, Kushnir, and Valency, 1986) had seemingly conflicting results. The relevance of relational demography to commitment may be illustrated by examining the conflicting results in the latter two studies. Hrebiniak and Alutto's (1972) study showed that women are more committed than men, while Aranya, Kushnir, and Valency (1986) reported the opposite finding. Interestingly, the sample in the first study was predominantly female, while the sample in the second study was predominantly male. Assuming that sex is a relevant and meaningful social category that individuals may use to categorize themselves and thus derive their social identity, the first sample (a predominantly female sample) appeared to represent a more satisfying psychological group to women than the second sample (a predominantly male sample). Conversely, the first sample appeared to represent a less satisfying psychological group to men than the second sample. Being different from a few rather than many members of a social unit seems to have direct implications for the degree of psychological commitment to that social unit. Extending the logic derived from self-categorization theory, we propose that, beyond the effect of simple demographics, psychological commitment may be influenced further by the extent to which an individual is different from others in a social unit on demographic attributes.

Intent to stay. A third way of measuring organizational attachment is through the idea that if an individual finds membership in a social unit to be satisfactory, he or she will most likely desire to maintain this membership. Intent to stay is considered to be one form of behavioral commitment

(Mottaz, 1989). As a measure of organizational attachment, it has been found to be a strong predictor of actual turnover behavior (Kraut, 1975; O'Reilly, Chatman, and Caldwell, 1991). Existing research has also shown it to have a direct relationship with a number of demographic variables. Mobley, Horner, and Hollingsworth (1978) found both age and tenure to be negatively related to an intention to guit. Hrebiniak and Alutto (1972) found intent to stay (measured by a low interest in changing the employing institution) to be lower among males, younger workers, and single employees. These results suggest a main effect on intent to stay by the personal characteristics of the individual. independent of his or her relationship to others. Using the logic of self-categorization theory, we expect intent to stay to be lower among individuals who are more rather than less demographically different from others in a social unit so that, for example, a well-educated employee may find an organization with relatively uneducated workers to be less attractive than one in which other workers are equally well educated. We expect this relational effect to be observed even after controlling for the simple or direct demographic effects. This logic suggests the following general hypothesis:

Hypothesis 1 (H1): The greater the demographic difference between an individual and others in an organizational unit, the lower will be the individual's attachment to the organization, as reflected in more frequent absences, lower psychological commitment, and less intent to stay with the organization.

Relevant Variables for Assessing Demographic Effects

The recent empirical research on organizational demography focuses primarily on age and tenure as the primary variables in assessing demographic effects (e.g., McCain, O'Reilly, and Pfeffer, 1983; Wagner, Pfeffer, and O'Reilly, 1984; Zenger and Lawrence, 1989). Pfeffer (1983) suggested, however, that one can describe an organization in terms of a number of demographic distributions, including sex and race composition, age or tenure distribution, or educational levels of the workforce. Tsui and O'Reilly (1989) argued that the focus on age and tenure may have limited potential in assessing the full impact of demography. They found significant results for five of six demographic variables used to assess relational effects. Stangor et al. (1992: 215), in a recent experimental study of self-categorization theory, reported that results from five experiments were all "supportive of the hypotheses that perceivers spontaneously categorize people on the basis of their immediately apparent physical features. These features included the social categories of race and sex. . . . " Turner (1987) observed that individuals often have multiple (and sometimes conflicting) identities within the organization. For example, a young male employee in a work unit with predominantly older male workers may find the unit to be both attractive (resulting from self-categorization based on sex) and unattractive (resulting from self-categorization based on age) as a psychological group. Analysis based on either variable alone would lead to an incomplete understanding of the full impact of demography. Consistent with Tsui and O'Reilly (1989), we argue for the importance of assessing the effect of a

demographic profile rather than one or two demographic attributes. We propose that the relevant demographic variables for assessing effects on attachment are age, company tenure, education, sex, and race. As argued earlier, these five demographic attributes are potentially relevant for self-categorization. The prediction (hypothesis 1) is that individuals who are more different from others in the social unit on any of these attributes may express (attitudinally or behaviorally) lower levels of attachment to the social unit.

While all these demographic attributes are potentially relevant, some may be more salient than others for self-categorization. Salience refers to the "conditions under which some specific aroup membership becomes coanitively prepotent in self-perception to act as the immediate influence on perception and behavior" (Turner, 1987: 54). This is a function of both accessibility of the category and the fit between the stimulus input and the category specification. Age, sex, and race, because they are easily observable, are more accessible characteristics than education and tenure. The more readily accessible the social category, the more easily that category may be used for self-categorization. The lack of "fit" will also be most easily determined for those categories that are easily accessible. These ideas were supported in the results of the experiments by Stangor et al. (1992), who found strong evidence for both sex and race as independent categories. for social categorization. Thus, based on accessibility and fit criteria, the following hypothesis is proposed:

Hypothesis 2 (H2): Being different in age, sex, and race will be more likely to have an effect on an individual's organizational attachment than being different on education and tenure.

Each of the five demographic attributes may be differentially important for individuals. For some individuals, education may be an important social category for self-identification. For others, it may be age or ethnic origin. Is age as a social category more important for older or for younger individuals? Is sex a stronger source of self-identity for men or for women? There is no a priori basis on which to determine whether older individuals in a group of predominantly younger individuals would feel more psychologically detached than younger individuals in a group of predominantly older people. Existing empirical evidence suggests that the effect should be similar for both groups; Wagner, Pfeffer, and O'Reilly (1984) found the effect of differences in age on turnover to be the same for both older and younger individuals. There is also no obvious basis for expecting that long-tenured employees in a group of newcomers would feel more isolated than new employees in a group of old timers. In general, we expect the effect of being different on age, tenure, and education to be linear and symmetrical-similar for individuals at any level of the distribution-because much of the demography research assumes a simple linear effect of being different. This assumption may be appropriate given the focus of this research on age and tenure. Less attention has been given to education, sex, and race, however, and research on sex and race relations suggests that the effects of these two variables on group attachment may be potentially

nonsymmetrical or nonlinear (e.g., Wharton and Baron, 1987).

Nonsymmetrical Effects of Gender and Race

Most of the gender and race research focuses on the reactions of minorities (e.g., women and nonwhites) in the presence of the numerical majority (e.g., men and whites).¹ There is evidence to suggest that the reactions of the numerical majority may not be equivalent to that of the minority, however, when members traditionally in the majority are in the minority position (e.g., Schreiber, 1979; O'Farrell and Harlan, 1982; Fairhurst and Snavely, 1983; Wharton and Baron, 1987, 1989). O'Farrell and Harlan (1982) reported that women in predominantly male jobs were treated with hostility by male coworkers, while Schreiber (1979) reported that men in predominantly female jobs experienced almost no hostility from female coworkers. Kanter (1977b) found token women (in a predominantly male organization) to be isolated, while Fairhurst and Snavely (1983) found token men to be socially well integrated into the female work group. An empirical test of Kanter's token-member hypothesis (Spangler, Gordon, and Pipkin, 1978) found direct support for the nonsymmetrical effect. In law schools with a small proportion of women (20 percent), more women than men reported having thought seriously about withdrawing from school. There was no difference in the proportion of men and women having such thoughts in law schools with a larger proportion of women (33 percent female). These results suggest that being a minority group member, especially if one appears to be token, has a greater negative impact on women than on men.

Recent studies of occupational segregation shed further light on the different experiences of men and women in balanced settings, when neither men nor women are the numerical minority. In one study, men in mixed or balanced work settings reported lower job-related satisfaction and self-esteem and more job-related depression than men in either male-dominated or female-dominated settings (Wharton and Baron, 1987). In another study (Wharton and Baron, 1989), women in balanced settings were more satisfied than women in female-dominated settings, though the most satisfied were women in predominantly male work settings. These two studies together found women in balanced settings to be less unhappy than men in similar settings: "All else being equal, men in balanced settings and in settings containing a small proportion of women are significantly less satisfied than women in these settings" (Wharton and Baron, 1989: 21).

What might account for this nonsymmetrical effect? While Wharton and Baron (1989) suggested that it may be that gender mix means different things for women and men, they did not elaborate on what meanings each sex may attach to different degrees of gender mix. Social categorization theory may offer some insight into this phenomenon. Gender may be an important social category for self-categorization for men and, as such, a major attribute in the symbolic representation of certain occupations or of the organizational context. Many high-status occupations

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The term nonwhite is used throughout to refer to African-Americans, Asians, and Hispanics, who traditionally have represented numerical minorities in organizations. This categorization of a number of different racial groups into one subcategory is intended as a linguistic vehicle for conveying the fact that in the organizations in this sample white individuals were the dominant racial category, and it reflects what we perceive as the absence of a more appropriate way to express this reality. The relational demography variable measuring difference in race did not group all nonwhite individuals together but, rather, treated each race category as unique. We share many of Nkomo's (1992) concerns about the way in which race has been studied in organizations and hope that our work enhances dialogue rather than reifies existing silences and omissions.

have been occupied, traditionally, almost exclusively by men. Similarly, many organizations were dominated by men, especially in positions of power. The presence of women in these traditionally male-dominated settings may weaken their attractiveness as a psychological group for men. Thus, Stephan and Stephan (1985: 164) observed that when self-categorization is used, "deviations from equal status among the participants tend to increase anxiety." This, in turn, may threaten one's self-esteem and increase the likelihood of withdrawal. For women, the schematic representation of the organization may consist of both men and women; thus, their attachment to the organization may be independent of its gender composition. It is also possible that being in male-dominated occupations or work units may be associated with increased occupational and social status for women. This may account for the positive reactions by women in male-dominated settings (e.g., Wharton and Baron, 1989).

Given that men are still in the majority in the U.S. labor force (Johnston and Packer, 1987), most organizational settings may still be dominated by men. Specifically, it is likely that there are more homogeneous male work units than homogeneous female work units, though this may vary by industry and occupation. Insofar as men still constitute the numerical majority in most organizations, it is likely that increasing workforce diversity will result in more and more men being in balanced settings. Thus, we hypothesize:

Hypothesis 3 (H3): The effect on organizational attachment of being different in gender will be greater for men than for women.

The literature on race relations in organizations (e.g., Konrad and Gutek, 1987; Cox and Blake, 1991) focuses primarily, if not exclusively, on the experience and reactions of the minority members. Some researchers, implicitly if not explicitly, posit that the effect on the nonwhite as a minority is similar to that on a woman as a minority (e.g., Blalock, 1957; Blau, 1977; Kanter, 1977a). Both Blau (1977) and Kanter (1977a) have hypothesized that race relations will improve as the proportion of minorities increases. According to Kanter (1977a: 283), "Organizations with a better balance of people would be more tolerant of the differences among them." According to Blau, the guality of intergroup relationships will be higher in groups with greater, rather than with less heterogeneity. Presumably, increased contact by the majority with the minority should improve the majority's attitude toward the minority. Blalock (1957). however, argued that discrimination by the majority will increase as the proportion of the minority increases. Empirical research on race relations in organizational settings is limited. The evidence from the few existing studies is more consistent with Blalock's than with Kanter's or Blau's arguments. Focusing on race composition, Hoffman (1985) found a tendency toward decreased frequency in interpersonal communication among members of the supervisory cadre as minority composition increased. Blalock's argument is consistent with a body of research in sociology on race relations that suggests that contact between unequal groups inevitably results in conflict, with increased numbers of minorities leading to stronger

reactions from the majority (Pettigrew, 1980; Messick and Mackie, 1989).

The reactions of the majority (i.e., whites) toward racial minorities (e.g., African-Americans, Asians, Hispanics) may be a result of individuals' needs to maintain and enhance the positively valued distinctiveness of their in-groups compared with out-groups in order to achieve a positive social identity (Taifel and Turner, 1986). Social identity theory maintains that "society is comprised of social categories which stand in power and status relation to one another" and that "some categories have greater power, prestige, status, and so on. than others" (Hogg and Abrams, 1988: 14). The need to maintain a positive social identity may be stronger for those in categories with higher power and status (e.g., whites and men) than with lower power and status (e.g., nonwhites and women). This need by members of the majority to protect their positive social identity and corresponding social status is consistent with the observation of many sociologists. Pettiarew (1980), for instance, has noted that the character and violence of race friction are influenced by one group's feeling of superiority over another and that there are fewer outward expressions if the minority race outwardly expresses inferiority.

This raises the possibility of what Messick and Mackie (1989) referred to as aversive racism, in which the majority may hold negative views of the minority, but these are tempered by other views that prejudice is bad and overt racist behaviors are shunned. Thus, there may be individual and organizational constraints on expressing hostility toward minorities in a majority-dominated setting. One possible reaction by the majority to a minority member in a social unit could be physical or psychological withdrawal. This leads to the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 4 (H4): The effect on organizational attachment of being different in race will be greater for whites than for nonwhites.

The four hypotheses were tested with data from work units in a state agency and two *Fortune* 100 companies.

METHODOLOGY

Sample

The study was conducted in 151 work units of three large organizations. These work units consisted of 44 manufacturing plants from organization Alpha, 31 hospitals from organization Beta, and 76 operating divisions from organization Delta. All groups sampled were the lowest-level operating units in which the actual production of goods or delivery of services to customers occurred. The lowest-level operating units were selected to ensure a degree of standardization of the organizational level for employees in all three organizations.

Alpha was a *Fortune* 100 manufacturer operating in industrial products, graphics, office supplies, and electronics. The size of the 44 manufacturing plants ranged from 125 to 2,527, with a median of 428 and a mean of 548. Beta was a state agency running 31 mental health hospitals. Size ranged from 145 to 3,000 employees, with a median of 840 and a mean

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It would have been ideal to have selected another random sample or to have used the entire employee population of each company to test statistically for representativeness. This would have required the company to provide a substantial amount of additional information. Because the sample size was already large, the companies were unwilling to comply with this additional request. We thus computed a correlation between the number of respondents and the number of individuals in the original sample for each of the 151 units. The correlation was .89 (p < .001), indicating that large samples came from the large units.

3

There are two different operationalizations of organizational commitment in the literature. The first approach involves an attitudinal measure focused on the psychological aspect of attachment, as in the commitment scale developed by Porter et al. (1974). It consists of 15 items, 10 of which assess two components of attitudinal commitment, extra effort and value similarity, and five items measuring intent to remain with the organization (Angle and Perry, 1981). The second approach to measuring organizational commitment is also through self-report but focuses on behavioral aspects. An example is the propensity-to-leave scale used by Hrebiniak and Alutto (1972). The intent-to-remain component of the psychological commitment measure by Porter et al. (1974) is conceptually similar to the intent-to-stay measure. Because we are treating intent to leave (or stay) as a separate attachment measure, we used only the 10-item version of the organizational commitment scale and excluded the five intent-to-remain items. Treating psychological commitment and intent to stay as separate constructs is consistent with the treatment of these two concepts in the literature (e.g., O'Reilly, Chatman, and Caldwell, 1991).

Being Different

of 961. Delta was also a *Fortune* 100 company, with businesses in computer and peripheral equipment manufacturing, data services, and financial industries. The number of employees in the divisions ranged from 51 to 3,864, with a median of 450 and a mean of 789. The average size across the 151 work units was 834 employees (s.d. = 730).

Because our research funds were limited and we wanted to minimize the burden on the participating organizations in terms of employee time in completing our surveys, our sampling plan was to obtain a minimum of 20 employees from each work unit. We chose a random 5 percent sample (or a minimum of eight for each work unit) of the supervisory personnel and a random 2 percent sample (or a minimum of 12 for each work unit) of the nonsupervisory personnel. The supervisory level was oversampled to ensure enough subjects in both the supervisory and nonsupervisory levels. This sampling plan produced 5,033 subjects (about 33 per work unit). Of these, 1,705 individuals actually participated in the study (about 12 per work unit), a response rate of 34 percent.

The average age of respondents was 40 years (s.d. = 10), and the average tenure was 11 years (s.d. = 9). The average education was 15 years (s.d. = 3). Of the total sample, 33 percent were women and 10 percent were minority group members. The representativeness of the sample was determined by comparing sample demographic characteristics, as described above, with those of the employee population in each company. While the representativeness of the sample cannot be verified empirically, company representatives confirmed that the demographic profile of the study sample was highly similar to the overall profile of employees in their respective companies.²

Procedure

We mailed each individual in the initial sample a survey requesting information on demographic variables, measures of organizational attachment, and several control variables. The survey was coded so that responses from individuals in the same work unit could be identified. Confidentiality of the individual's responses was assured. The survey was mailed from and returned to a university address, using a self-addressed reply envelope.

Dependent Variables

Organizational attachment. Three dependent variables were measured. These were psychological commitment, absences, and intention to stay with the firm. Psychological commitment was assessed on a scale of one to five, using the 10-item value commitment index (Angle and Perry, 1981) of the 15-item organizational commitment scale (Porter et al., 1974). This index includes all the items measuring an individual's psychological attachment to the organization.³ The scale score was the average of the ten items (alpha = .88). Specific items for this scale are listed in the appendix.

Absence was measured using a self-reported frequency of absence during the preceding 12 months. Researchers (e.g.,

Chadwick-Jones, Nicholson, and Brown, 1982; Scott and Taylor, 1985) have suggested that frequency of absence is superior to duration or other measures. Self-reported absences were used because most organizations do not keep absence data on managers and professionals, and the absence records for lower-level employees often are incomplete or are not comparable across companies. Although self-reports of absences could be affected by social desirability bias, if desirability operates for everyone, this tendency will lower the mean of the measure and possibly affect the range of the variable, making it more narrow. The former should not influence the relationship between the absence measure and the independent variables. The latter may lower the correlation between this measure and the independent variables. The net result is an underestimation of the relationship. Social desirability, if present, would attenuate rather than exaggerate the results. While we were not able to use company records to check actual absences. company representatives did not feel that these data were unrealistic.

Intent to stay was measured with two items, on scales of one to five, which are listed in the appendix. The mean of the two items (r = .71) was used as an index of intent to stay.

Independent Variables

Relational demography. Five relational demographic measures were computed based on the simple demographic variables of the sample for each work unit. These measures were differences in age, company tenure, education, sex, and race. The relational demography score is the difference between an individual and all other individuals in the work unit (i.e., the sample) on a specific demographic attribute, using a formula similar to that used by O'Reilly, Caldwell, and Barnett (1989) and by Tsui and O'Reilly (1989). It is the square root of the summed squared differences between an individual S_i 's value on a specific demographic variable and the value on the same variable for every other individual S_j in the sample for the work unit, divided by the total number of respondents in the unit (*n*). The following formula was used for this calculation:

 $\left[\frac{1}{n}\sum_{j=1}^{n}(S_{j}-S_{j})^{2}\right]^{1/2}.$

A relational measure was derived for each demographic variable. Differences in age, company tenure, and education were measured in years. Differences in gender and race were measured by a score ranging from zero to approaching but never reaching 1.00. For example, a man in a work unit of two men and three women would have a relational score of .77 on gender, 0 for being the same as the other man and 3 for being different from each of the three women. We would then divide the score of 3 by 5 and take the square root of the result. Each of the two women, in turn, would have a relational score of .63. A score of .999 could be obtained by someone who is the sole minority member (on either gender or race) in an extremely large group.⁴

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The n used in this formula is the total number of individuals in the unit, including the person *i* whose difference score is being calculated. Using n rather than n-1 allows us to derive a metric that captures both the size and the compositional effects. For example, one woman in a group with nine men would have a difference score of .95 (square root of 9/10). One woman in a group with 99 men would have a difference score of .99 (square root of 99/100). In both cases the denominator is n. If n-1 were used. the difference score for the individual woman in both cases would be 1.00 (square root of 9/9 in the first case and 99/99 in the second case). We wanted a metric that would show that the woman in the second case is more different from others (99 men) than the woman in the first case (9 men). Their respective difference scores (.99 versus .95), using n as the denominator, reflect the relative degree of difference.

The relational score on race was computed by considering the differences among all the racial groups in the work unit. In a work unit with one African-American, one Asian, and two whites, the relational score for the African-American and the Asian, respectively, would be 3 (1 for being different from each other and 2 for being different from each of the two whites), 2 for each of the two whites (1 for being different from the African-American, 1 for being different from the Asian, and 0 for being different from each other).

All the relational measures were scaled in such a way that a large value always connotes a large difference. The individual with a large score on a relational measure differs more, in terms of that specific demographic attribute, from other individuals in the work unit (i.e., the sample) than another individual with a small score. The actual scores observed on the relational age and tenure measures ranged from zero to 30 and on the relational education measure ranged from zero to 15. The actual scores ranged from zero to .99 for both the relational gender and race measures.

Control Variables

Three sets of control variables were used. The first set included the five simple demography measures that were used to derive the relational scores. These controls are necessary to ensure that the relational effect is obtained even when the effect of the simple demographic attribute is considered. Previous studies, discussed earlier, found many of these simple demographic attributes to be related to one or more of the three attachment variables. Age, company tenure, and education were measured in years. Gender and race were measured by a dichotomous variable, with 1 designating male or white and 2 designating female or nonwhite, respectively.

The second set includes those variables the literature suggests are the most common causes of correlates of the three attachment measures. These include job satisfaction, hierarchical level of the individual, and the size of the organizational unit. Recent meta-analytic studies (e.g., Scott and Taylor, 1985; Hackett, 1989) show that there is a consistent negative relationship between job satisfaction and absenteeism. Satisfaction has been found to be positively related to both intent to stay and organizational commitment (Mowday, Porter, and Steers, 1982), and Mathieu's (1991) nonrecursive test of the causal ordering of job satisfaction and organizational commitment supports the earlier work of Williams and Hazer (1986), who found that a variety of antecedents of organizational commitment had only indirect effects, mediated by their impact on job satisfaction. Other studies (e.g., Hrebiniak and Roteman, 1973) have reported that employees at higher levels in the organization are less likely to be absent than those in lower-level positions. Porter and Steers (1973) reported a negative relationship between organizational size and absenteeism. Hodson and Sullivan (1985) observed higher levels of commitment among workers in small than in large organizations. These variables were thus included as controls to ensure that the hypothesized effect of relational demography remains after inclusion of the most common correlates of attachment.

Job satisfaction was measured by a six-item index (Schriesheim and Tsui, 1980), with an alpha of .73. The appendix contains the specific items that form this measure. Job level was measured by a dichotomous variable, with 1 designating supervisory and 2 designating nonsupervisory status. This information was provided by the respondent on the survey. Organizational size was measured by the actual number of employees in the work unit (unit size). This information was obtained from the personnel department of the work unit.

A final control variable was a firm dummy for the companies included in the sample. This is important because the three organizations not only differed on several structural dimensions (e.g., operated in different industries and had different ownership structures) but also differed in management style and organizational culture. Again, these controls were included to ensure that the effect of relational demography could be observed after any effects on attachment of the company's structure and culture were considered. Although we did not measure structure or culture directly, the firm dummy captures these effects on employees' attachment to the firm.

Data Analysis

Regression analysis was the primary statistical method used to test the hypotheses. Separate regressions were run for the three dependent variables. Stepwise hierarchical blocked regressions were run with the five relational demography measures as the first block of variables to be entered (model 1). The five simple demographic measures were entered in the second step (model 2). The third step included the three correlates of the attachment measures (model 3). The fourth and final step included the two company dummy codes (model 4). Based on the first hypothesis, we expected the association between the relational demography measures and each of the dependent variables to remain significant after the control variables were added to the regression. This regression procedure is different from other approaches (e.g., Tsui and O'Reilly, 1989) in which the control variables were entered before the independent variables. In this study, we entered the independent variables first, then added each set of control variables. We were interested in the stability of the regression coefficients on the relational measures as each set of controls was added to the regression model. H1 was tested directly by examining the coefficients for the relational demography variables. The expected relationship between being different on any of the demographic variables and the outcome variables is as follows. Negative beta coefficients for psychological commitment and intent to stay with the organization indicate that the more different an individual is from others in the unit, the lower the level of psychological commitment and intent to stay. Positive beta coefficients for frequency of absences indicate that the more different an individual is from others in the work unit, the higher the frequency of absences for that particular individual. This hypothesis is supported if the significance of the coefficients on the relational measures is unaltered with the addition of the control variables.

H2 postulates that being different in age, sex, and race will be more likely to have an effect on attachment (commitment, absence, and intent to stay) than being different in education and company tenure. One test of this hypothesis is to compute the statistical significance of the difference in the simple correlations between attachment and age, sex, and race and those of attachment with education and tenure. Using these six sets of correlational differences for each of three attachment variables results in 18 pairs of correlations to be analyzed. Fisher's *r*-to-*z* transformation procedure (Ferguson, 1966: 188–189) was used to compute the significance of the differences in the 18 pairs of correlations. We also expected the regression coefficients for age, sex, and race to be significantly larger than the coefficients for education and tenure.

H3 and H4 were tested using the same procedure. Based on the hypotheses, the coefficient for relational differences for sex was expected to be statistically larger for men than 'for women (H3); and on race, larger for whites than for nonwhites (H4). Subgroup analysis was used because the correlation between the interaction term (of the simple demographic measure and its corresponding relational score) and either of the two component measures was too high (*r* ranged from .84 to .93) to warrant the use of computed interaction terms in a moderated regression.

For H3, regressions were first performed separately for the male and the female subsamples and then for the pooled group. The difference between the regression coefficients on the relational score on sex for the two subsamples was tested using the F^* test (Neter and Wesserman, 1974), which computes the significance of the difference in the residual variance (SS error) of the full model (addition of the SS errors in the male and female subsamples) and the restricted model (the two subsamples pooled), adjusting for sample sizes. The same procedure was used for H4.

RESULTS

Table 1 shows the means, standard deviations, and correlations among the dependent, independent, and control variables (excluding the two company dummy codes). The correlations among the independent and the control variables do not indicate a multicollinearity problem. The median correlation was r = .03, with only one correlation exceeding .70 (r = .74 between the relational score on race and the simple race variable).

Hypothesis 1: General Effect of Relational Demography

The regression results for hypothesis 1 are summarized in Table 2. Three of the five relational scores (tenure, sex, and race) are systematically associated with all three dependent variables (model 1). Differences in sex and race are associated with the attachment variables in the hypothesized direction: the larger the difference, the lower the individual's psychological commitment and intent to stay with the organization and the higher the frequency of absence. The relationship between being different in tenure and attachment, however, is contrary to that hypothesized. The

Table 1

Means, Standard Deviations, and Intercorrelations among Variables*

Variable	\overline{x}	S.D.	<i>Y</i> 1	y ₂	y ₃	<i>x</i> ₁	X 2
Dependent variables							
y ₁ Psychological commitment	3.51	.74					
y_2 Frequency of absences	3.00	3.69	22				
y_3 Intent to stay	3.79	1.22	.63	13			
Independent variables							
x_1 Difference in age	12.02	4.12	.06	00	.02		
x_2 Difference in tenure	9.15	4.02	.11	07	.09	.34	
x_3 Difference in education	3.13	1.31	.00	.06	.02	.04	.08
x_4 Difference in sex	.57	.21	18	.18	14	.06	.02
x_5 Difference in race	.26	.28	09	.17	10	.01	— .01
Control variables							
z_1 Simple age	39.83	9.74	.23	09	.30	.19	.24
z_2 Simple company tenure	10.96	7.87	.19	09	.29	.06	.41
z_3 Simple education	15.10	2.61	10	10	19	14	04
z_4 Simple gender	1.33	.47	10	.21	07	[`] .04	07
z_5 Simple race	1.10	.50	.01	.14	02	01	04
z_6 Job satisfaction	3.51	.69	.56	13	.43	.04	.08
z ₇ Job level	1.51	.50	10	.13	07	.08	04
z ₈ Unit size	833.53	730.17	03	.05	.01	.04	.20

Table 2

The Effects on Organizational Attachment of Being Different

	Psychological commitment Model							
Variable	1	2	3	4				
Independent variables Difference in age Difference in tenure Difference in education Difference in sex Difference in race	.04 .09*** .03 18*** 09***	.01 .05• .03 17••• 21•••	.00 .03 .00 - 13*** - 15***	02 .02 .02 04 09				
Control variables Simple age Simple tenure Simple education Simple sex Simple race		.17*** .02 17*** .02 .17***	.11*** .02 09*** 00 .17***	.13** .01 06** .01 .14**				
Job satisfaction Job level Organizational size			.53*** 01 02	.50 ^{••} 02 .02				
Organization A Organization B				.20** 11**				
Overall model <i>F</i> Adjusted <i>R</i> ² (<i>R</i> ² change) Standard error Degrees of freedom	17.59*** .05 .72 5,1553	18.74*** .10 (.05***) .70 10,1548	72.52*** .37 (.27***) .58 13,1545	76.67*** .42 (.05***) .56 15,1543				

• p < .05; •• p < .01; ••• p < .001.

Table 1 (continued)									
X ₄	x ₅	<i>Z</i> ₁	Z ₂	<i>z</i> ₃	Z4	Z 5	Z ₆	Z ₇	
.08									
13 21 08 .56 .05 06 .16 .07	02 09 .03 .06 .74 10 .02 06	.58 11 17 03 .13 21 .06	16 23 10 .09 26 .07	21 05 .02 17 04	.07 03 .22 .03	08 .08 04	14 02	05	
	.08 13 21 08 .56 .05 06 .16 .07	.08 1302 2109 08 .03 .56 .06 .05 .74 0610 .16 .02 .0706	$\begin{array}{c ccccccccccccccccccccccccccccccccccc$	$\begin{array}{c ccccccccccccccccccccccccccccccccccc$	$\begin{array}{c cccc} \hline \hline \\ $	$\begin{array}{c ccccccccccccccccccccccccccccccccccc$	$\begin{array}{c ccccccccccccccccccccccccccccccccccc$	$\begin{array}{c ccccccccccccccccccccccccccccccccccc$	

Table 2 (continued)

	Frequency	of absences		Intent to stay						
·	Мо	odel		Model						
1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4			
.01 07** .01 .17*** .15***	.00 06• .03 .09•• .14••	.00 07• .03 .08•• .14•••	.03 05• .00 .00 .07•	.00 .09** .06* 14*** 10***	04 .00 .06 11*** 16***	05• 03 .04 08••• 11•••	05• 04 .01 .00 08••			
	06° .02 09*** .12*** .01	05 .04 07** .11*** .01	07• .05 09••• .10••• .03		.19*** .14*** 16*** .02 .10**	.15** .15*** 16** .00 .10**	.16*** .14*** 14*** 01 .08**			
		09*** .06* .05*	06** .08** .02			.40*** .04 .02	.39 *** .03 .04			
			15 ^{●●●} .16 ^{●●●}				.21*** .06**			
19.85 *** .06	13.86*** .08 (.02***)	12.76*** .09 (.01***)	17.02 *** .14 (.05 ***)	12.36 *** .04	27.93*** .15 (.11***)	52.80*** .30 (.15***)	53.47*** .34 (.03***)			
3.58 5,1531	3.54 10,1526	3.52 13,1523	3.43 15,1521	1.20 5,1553	1.13 10,1548	1.02 13,1545	1.00 15,1543			

larger the difference on this demographic variable, the more psychologically committed is the individual, the less frequent are the individual's absences, and the higher is his or her intent to stay with the firm. In addition, being different in education is associated with intent to stay, and again the direction of the relationship is contrary to that hypothesized. The greater the individual's difference in educational level compared with other individuals in the unit, the more likely the individual is to indicate an intent to stay with the organization. These results support the proposed effects for gender and race but not for the other three relational measures.

The association between these relational measures and attachment remains essentially unchanged when the simple demographic variables are introduced (model 2). The same three relational measures are significant for psychological commitment and absences, but the relational score on tenure becomes nonsignificant for intent to stay. Introduction of the three common correlates of attachment also does not change the effect of being different on sex and race (model 3), though the relational score on tenure becomes nonsignificant for the psychological commitment variable. Being different in age is significantly associated with intent to stay after the addition of the simple demographic attributes and the three attachment correlates, while it was not before. It remains significant after the two company dummy codes are added to the regression model (model 4). Introduction of the company dummy codes changes the effect of being different in gender. This variable is no longer significantly associated with the three attachment measures. The effect of being different in race remained significant for all three attachment variables. In addition, being different on tenure continues to be significantly associated with frequency of absences.

The overall results suggest that the effect of being different in race is consistently associated with organizational attachment. This effect was unchanged after all control variables were considered. The sign of the coefficient indicates that the greater the difference in race between an individual and all other individuals in a work unit, the lower the individual's attachment to the organization. This finding is supportive of H1. Being different in gender is also associated with attachment even after considering the effect of the simple demography and the three common correlates of attachment, but not after controlling for company effects. Finally, after considering the effect of all the controls, there is a tendency for those individuals who are most different from others in age to be least likely to have a desire to maintain membership in the organization. This finding is also consistent with H1.

Hypothesis 2: Differential Effects of Relational Demographic Variables

For H2, we first examined the zero-order correlations between the five relational scores and each attachment variable. As shown in Table 1, above, the correlations of the relational score on sex with attachment are the largest. The next largest correlations are the relational scores on race

with attachment. These correlations are in the hypothesized direction. The correlations of the differences of the other three relational measures (age, education, and tenure) with attachment are either not significant or are correlated in a direction contrary to the hypotheses. Results from the test using Fisher's r-to-z transformation procedure showed that the differences in the correlations of the race and gender variables with attachment are significantly larger than the correlations of education and tenure with attachment. These results support H2 for race and gender, though not for age. The regression results in Table 2 provide further support for this hypothesis. The coefficients for gender and race are not only larger than the regression coefficients for tenure and education, they are also significant in the hypothesized direction, while the other two coefficients either are not significant or are in a direction opposite to that hypothesized. In addition, the relational score on age is also significant in the direction hypothesized when the control variables are included in the regression (models 3 and 4).

Hypotheses 3 and 4: Nonsymmetrical Effects of Being Different in Gender and Race

For H3, regressions were performed separately for the male and female subsamples and for the pooled sample for each of the three dependent variables, with the relational score on gender as the independent variable. The same analytic procedure was used to test H4. The regression coefficients for the relational scores for each of the samples and for each of the dependent variables are summarized in Table 3. As shown in Table 3, the F^* values for the differences in the regression coefficients for all the subsample comparisons are significant. These results support both H3 and H4. Being different in gender has a more negative effect on attachment for men than for women, and being different in race has a more negative effect for whites than for nonwhites.⁵

For men, the results in Table 3 show that increased differences in the gender composition of the group are associated with lower levels of psychological attachment, increased absence, and a lower intent to stay. For women, increasing difference in sex from others in the unit is associated with higher levels of organizational attachment. Similarly, for whites, increasing difference from others in the work unit is related to lower attachment, while for nonwhites, being different in race has no effect on attachment to the organization.

Results for the Control Variables

Most of the findings for the simple demographic attributes were consistent with and extend the findings of past research. For example, older employees tend to show higher levels of attachment to the organization. Employees with long company tenure express a higher level of intention to stay with the employer than employees with short tenure. Employees with a high level of education are less psychologically committed and less likely to want to stay with the firm, although they report fewer absences than employees with a lower educational level. Women report more absences than men. Nonwhite employees are more

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The subgroup analyses for differences in sex and race were also performed by including all the other relational measures and the control variables. Not including the company dummy codes, the difference in the magnitudes and directions of the coefficients for relational score on sex or race for the two respective subsamples remained similar to that reported in the text. Including the company dummy codes, the difference in the coefficients for the relational score on sex diminished for the male and the female subsamples. The differences in the values of the regression coefficient for the relational score on race for whites and nonwhites remained after including the company dummy codes as well as all the other control variables.

	Psychological commitment			Frequency of absences			Intent to stay		
	Beta	SS*	N	Beta	SS	N	Beta	SS	N
Difference in sex Male subsample Female subsample	25*** .13**	551.86 276.49	1086 520	.13*** 05	10642.40 9949.01	1068 516	19*** .07	1465.17 838.64	1083 525
Pooled sample	18 ***	849.29	1608	.18 ***	20893.72	1590	14 ***	2354.48	1610
F*	20.50			12.02***			17.64 ***		
Difference in race White subsample Nonwhite subsample	– .16 ^{•••} – .01	768.38 88.38	1457 151	.12 *** 04	15448.10 5667.81	1443 146	13*** 11	2116.61 232.24	1462 150
Pooled sample	— .09 ^{•••}	870.64	1609	.17 ***	21009.38	1590	10 ^{•••}	2381.98	1613
F*	12.99 ***		3.99 °			11.34 ***			
• p < .05; ••p < .01; • * SS = Residual sum o	•• $p < .001$.								

Nonsymmetrical Effects for the Minority and the Majority of Being Different on Sex and Race

committed psychologically and have a stronger intent to stay with the organization, though their absences are not different from that of white employees.

The results for job satisfaction also replicate the findings of previous research. Satisfaction is positively associated with psychological commitment and with intent to stay and negatively associated with frequency of absences. Nonsupervisory employees reported more absences than supervisory personnel, though the two groups do not differ on the other two attachment measures. The overall size of the work unit in terms of number of employees is basically unrelated to any attachment variable. The only exception is the association between unit size and absences in model 3.

The two company dummy codes are significant for all three attachment variables. Additional analyses of the differences of the means for each attachment measure across the three companies suggest that employees in Alpha had higher psychological commitment and intent to stay and lower frequency of absences than employees in either Beta or Delta. While employees in Beta were lower in psychological commitment and higher in frequency of absences than employees in either Alpha or Delta, they reported a higher level of intent to stay than employees in Delta. Among the three organizations, employees in Delta expressed the lowest level of psychological commitment and intent to stay, though absences among these employees were lower than those of employees in Beta. In general, it is clear that organizational attachment was the strongest among employees in Alpha.

DISCUSSION

Nonsymmetrical Effects

The most interesting findings of this study pertain to the relational scores for the gender and race variables. This effect was unchanged after controlling for the effects of

simple demography and three common correlates of attachment. The relational gender effect disappeared, however, after the introduction of company dummy variables in the regression model. Further analysis to understand the specific nature of this company effect revealed three interesting facts about the sample companies. First, employees in Alpha were most satisfied ($\overline{X} = 3.65$ for Alpha, $\overline{X} = 3.38$ for Beta, and $\overline{X} = 3.48$ for Delta, F =14.80, p < .001) and committed ($\overline{X} = 3.92$, $\overline{X} = 3.17$, and \overline{X} = 3.42, F = 112.84, p < .001). They also reported the lowest frequency of absences (\overline{X} = 1.55, \overline{X} = 5.03, \overline{X} = 3.11, $\underline{F} = 73.86, p < .001$) and the highest level of intent to stay ($\overline{X} = 4.40$, $\overline{X} = 3.71$, $\overline{X} = 3.55$, $\overline{F} = 78.88$, p < .001). Second, women made up a smaller proportion of the employee population in Alpha (17 percent) than in Beta (48 percent) or Delta (36 percent). Third, 16 percent of the men in Alpha were in homogeneous male units, while only 2 percent of the men in Delta and no men in Beta worked in units with no women. This means that the three organizations were either male-dominated or balanced settings. The negative relationship between being different in gender and commitment for men and the positive relationship between being different in gender and commitment for women in these male-dominated or balanced settings is consistent with the observations by Wharton and Baron (1987, 1989), who found lower satisfaction levels among men and higher satisfaction levels among women. The most interesting observation is that men in homogeneous units (almost all of them were in Alpha) reported the highest commitment level among all groups.

While the difference in gender composition of the three companies may partially account for different attachment levels, it is equally plausible that the high attachment level reported by employees in Alpha may be due to a positive corporate culture. Alpha has a reputation of being a well-managed company (e.g., Peters and Waterman, 1982). The very high commitment scores by the employees in Alpha may have accentuated the relationship between the relational score on gender and commitment, negatively for men and positively for women. Thus, both gender composition and corporate culture or other firm-specific characteristics may contribute to the attractiveness of Alpha as a psychological group. Further study would be needed to separate out these two potential effects.

The effect of being different in race, like that of being different in gender, remained after accounting for the effects of simple demography and the three correlates of attachment. Unlike the relational score on gender, however, the effect of the relational score on race remained even after the introduction of the company controls. Being different in race is consistently associated with lower attachment for whites but not for nonwhites (Table 3). The resilience of this race effect could be due to the small proportions of nonwhites in the sample. Only 7 percent, 22 percent, and 8 percent of the total employees are nonwhites in Alpha, Beta, and Delta, respectively. Further, as many as 62 percent of the employees in Alpha and 40 percent of the employees in

Beta (and 18 percent in Delta) work in units with a homogeneous white workforce. The race relations literature (Pettigrew, 1980) suggests that minorities are more likely to be tolerated by the majority when they represent only a small, rather than a large fraction of the group. The results of the current study, however, indicate that the majority may begin to show psychological discomfort, as expressed in lower attachment, even when the minority proportion is very small. A linear function was observed here, with white individuals in the (white) homogeneous units expressing the highest degree of attachment and a systematic decline in the attachment of majority members as the proportion of minorities increased. Furthermore, the reactions of the majority toward the presence of minority members do not seem to be affected by firm-specific characteristics. Controlling for company effects did not change the impact of the relational race variable on attachment scores. It appears that for whites, the effect of being different in race on their perception of the attractiveness of the work unit as a psychological group may be independent of other job attitudes.

In general, the lower attachment levels for men and whites in balanced, rather than male-dominated or all-male settings, does not support the hypotheses by either Kanter (1977a) or Blau (1977). Both Kanter and Blau argued that intergroup relationships will be better in groups that are more heterogeneous. This argument, referred to as the contact hypothesis, proposes that direct interpersonal contact between members of antagonistic groups will reduce negative attitudes (Allport, 1954), but the evidence for the validity of this hypothesis is, at best, mixed (Messick and Mackie, 1989). Hewstone and Brown (1986), in contrast, noted that homogenization may be impossible, because the activation of primitive categories like race or gender may be automatic.

In order for the contact hypothesis to operate to reduce group tension, certain facilitating conditions are essential (Kramer, 1991). These conditions may be captured by those social and structural factors descriptive of the ''jigsaw classroom'' (Aronson et al., 1978). A number of experiments were conducted in integrated schools in which the learning experience was structured in such a way that students had to cooperate and treat each other as resources in order to be successful. Kramer (1991) proposed a similar set of structural interventions, such as superordinate goals, job rotation, and symbolic management, designed to reduce self-categorization effects.

The reactions of women and minorities are generally unaffected by their demographic status in the work units. One possible reason is the interaction between occupation and social status. It may be that the lack of reaction by women and nonwhites to being different is conditioned by their changing social status. Women and minority employees in this sample may hold higher-status jobs that historically were dominated by men and whites. This increased occupational status may compensate for the relatively less desirable status of being a token. Conversely, the negative reaction of men and whites may reflect a perception of

diminished status with the entry of women and nonwhites into the occupations that traditionally were held by only whites or men (Stephan and Stephan, 1985). Thus, a movement by men and whites away from sex- or race-homogeneous work groups reflects a lowering of social status, whereas the opposite may be true for women and nonwhites.

In organizational units, changed perceptions of the unit as a psychological group may not be due solely to perceived status gains or losses. Perturbation of the dominant homogeneous culture may also be an explanation. The presence of women in a previously all-male group may require men to adjust their language and interaction styles. Trice and Beyer (1992: 347) reported that in many male-dominated occupations, sex-specific socialization rituals are common and that many of them "involve blatant and gross violations of body privacy." Similarly, the presence of nonwhites in a previously all-white group may require equivalent adjustments in language or behavior. With or without actual adjustment by the majority members, the reality remains that the "foreign element" (women or nonwhites) can change the norms of a previously homogeneous group.

There are three possible responses to the frustration created by the perturbation of increased heterogeneity: fight, flight, or psychological withdrawal (Hirschman, 1970; Messick and Mackie, 1989; Baron and Pfeffer, 1990). Structural and legal constraints to the fight response abound in contemporary organizations. Labor market conditions or other personal constraints may render the flight response difficult or impractical (Rusbult et al., 1988). The only viable option remaining, at least in the short term, may be psychological withdrawal, accompanied by limited behavioral withdrawal, such as absences.

Another possible explanation for the lack of relational demographic results for the minorities may be differential meanings associated with the notion of organizational attachment. It may be that organizational attachment means different things for different groups. This suggests that while the tendency to categorize oneself may be descriptive of all individuals, there are individual variations in both the salience of certain categories and in responses to perceptions of reduced attractiveness of a specific category as a psychological group. For instance, if an individual's primary identity is in nonwork-related groups (e.g., the family), self-categorization into homogeneous psychological groups at work may be less salient or important to one's social identity.

The effect of being different in age, though not as strong as that of being different in sex and race, is consistent with the general hypothesis and is associated with a lower intent to stay. Consistent with the findings of Wagner, Pfeffer, and O'Reilly (1984), further analysis for this finding showed the effect to be symmetrical for both older and younger employees, suggesting that the psychological effect of being different is similar for people in different age categories. Hypothesis 1 as it pertains to differences in educational level received no support in this study. This is not entirely surprising. We had postulated that education would be a less salient category for self-categorization than the other traits because it is less easily observed.

The unexpected positive effect of being different in company tenure on frequency of absences prompted us to explore this effect further. The largest difference scores on tenure belonged mostly to individuals with a short company tenure. These individuals also reported the lowest number of absences relative to all other individuals. It may be that these recently hired, short-tenured individuals, especially those in units with mostly long-tenured individuals, are engaging in new-employee good attendance behavior.

General Effects

Overall, the major results of the current study are consistent with self-categorization theory proposals that individuals (1) tend to categorize themselves into psychological groups. (2) are motivated to maintain a positive identity, and (3) seek to maximize intergroup distinctiveness to maintain a positive social identity (e.g., Messick and Mackie, 1989; Kramer, 1991). Within organizations, we argue, an individual's work unit, which may require task interdependence, common goals, proximity, and shared rewards, is a likely locus of identity (Ashforth and Mael, 1989). We also argue that the basis for this social identity need not be similarity-attraction, which presumes interaction. Instead, social identity may be based on self-categorization using salient demographic characteristics. Allen and Wilder (1975), for instance, studied directly the interaction between similarity-attraction of beliefs and memberships in in-groups and out-groups. They found that in-group bias generated from a minimal categorization procedure persisted even when in-group members shared no common basis for similarity-attraction effects.

A fundamental assumption for both theories and the findings reported here is that people prefer to be with similar others. Being unique thus may be less desirable than being one of the group. This assumption also underlies explanations of why individuals choose to conform to group norms (Shaw, 1981). This assumption, however, is not consistent with the uniqueness theory proposed by Fromkin (1973). Fromkin discussed a need for uniqueness and argued that individuals like to be different from others, and they seek this differentiation through attributes such as names, clothing, dates and mates, beliefs, or performance. Presumably, being different brings higher esteem and status. If uniqueness is a more prevalent preference than similarity for most individuals, we should get a positive relationship between being different, i.e., unique, and attachment. The negative relationship we found suggests that the desire to be similar may be a stronger motivation than the desire to be unique. Nonetheless, uniqueness could explain the favorable attitude of women in male-dominated settings. Women in these settings are unique in at least two social categories, sex and occupation. Uniqueness in occupation can bring high status for the individual. Membership in a social group dominated by the majority may both satisfy the need for uniqueness

and provide enjoyment of associated social rewards for the minority member. The social psychological dynamic resulting from the interaction of being the same on some dimensions and being unique on other dimensions may prove to be an interesting topic for future research.

CONCLUSIONS

Researchers who have studied gender and race effects in organizational settings have largely ignored the reaction of the majority to the presence of minorities in groups. Though Kanter (1977a: 242) noted that ''just a few O's can make the X-majority people uncomfortable," the major focus of her analyses and prescriptions, as with other researchers, were primarily on the reactions and adjustment of the minority rather than the majority. The negative reactions of the majority members in this study suggest, however, that majority reactions deserve greater research attention. Future research should expand its focus from analyzing how women and people of color "fit" the dominant culture to understanding the adjustment process of the dominant group to the reality of diversity and heterogeneity. Also, while these individual-level reactions are important, equally important are the interactions among individuals who are demographically different. This is the reality of everyday life in heterogeneous organizations. Further, we know little about the communication structure, conflict and influence styles, and decision approaches of heterogeneous versus homogeneous groups. Research on the process outcomes of demographic differences, as well as on how best to manage or reduce the negative effects of heterogeneous groups is essential if we are to meet the challenges of the next decade.

There is good evidence that heterogeneous groups have both benefits and costs (Jackson, 1991). They are beneficial for tasks requiring creativity and judgment, but they can also decrease cohesiveness and increase turnover. Thus, managers face a difficult balancing act, paying attention to the negative effects of diversity on individual attachment and turnover while simultaneously attempting to capture the benefits of heterogeneity.

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APPENDIX: Subjective Measures Used in the Study

Psychological Commitment

[Respondents replied using a scale from 1 ("strongly disagree") to 5 ("strongly agree").]

- I am willing to put in a great deal of effort beyond what is normally expected in order to help this organization to be successful.
- 2. I talk up this organization to my friends as a great place to work.
- 3. I find that my values and the organization's values are similar.
- 4. I am proud to tell others that I am part of this organization.
- 5. The organization really inspires the very best in me in the way of job performance.
- I am extremely glad that I chose this organization to work for over others I was considering at the time I joined.
- 7. Often, I find it difficult to agree with this organization's policies on important matters relating to its employees. [Reverse-coded]
- 8. I really care about the fate of this organization.
- 9. For me, this is the best of all possible organizations for which to work.
- Deciding to work for this organization was a definite mistake on my part. [Reverse-coded]

Absences

Within the past 12 months, how many times were you absent from work? (Count only unscheduled absences, e.g., sickness, child problem, car problem, funeral, etc.)__________ times

Intent to Stay

- 1. To what extent do you agree with this statement: "I desire and intend to remain at [company name]"?
 - [Respondents replied using a scale from 1 ("strongly disagree") to 5 ("strongly agree").]
- 2. How long do you intend to continue working at [company name]? [The scale for responses was as follows: 1 = 1 year or less; 2 = 5 years or less; 3 = 10 years or less; 4 = 11 or more years; and 5 = the rest of my career or until retirement.]

Job Satisfaction

[Respondents replied using a scale from 1 ("strongly disagree") to 5 ("strongly agree").]

- 1. How satisfied are you with the nature of the work you perform?
- 2. How satisfied are you with the person who supervises you [your organizational superior]?
- 3. How satisfied are you with your relations with others in the organization with whom you work [your co-workers or peers]?
- 4. How satisfied are you with the pay you receive for your job?
- 5. How satisfied are you with the opportunities which exist in this organization for advancement [promotion]?
- 6. Considering everything, how satisfied are you with your current job situation?