Incorporating Race
into
Gender Equity Initiatives

24th Annual Winter Roundtable on Cultural Psychology and Education
February, 2007
University of Rhode Island
Ashima Singh, M.A. asingh@mail.uri.edu
Barbara Silver, Ph.D. silver@uri.edu
Kathryn Quina, Ph.D. kquina@uri.edu
www.uri.edu/advance
Supported in part by National Science Foundation Institutional Transformation Award SBE-0245039

Overview

1. Equity programming in the sciences
   – Why is it needed?
   – Why is it focused on gender?
2. Implications
   – What do we know based on gender research?
   – What could we know with disaggregated data?

Why are we still here?

• Joyce Ladner, 1971:
  – Social science is inherently biased and practices neo-colonialism: the oppressors are unable to understand the reality of the oppressed
• Bonnie Thornton Dill, 1979:
  – Challenges essentialism of feminism, and the tendency of white women to generalize from that of white, Western women to all women
• Patricia Hill Collins, 1992 and others
  – Intersection of identities (race, class, gender, etc.) combine to form a “matrix of domination”
  – Standpoint theory – all knowledge is situated and is relative to a person’s particular standpoint

The State of the (Science) Nation

* Most recent National-Level data available for stated variables.
Current Strategies for Addressing Inequities in Science

1. Infuse underrepresented groups into the sciences at all levels, faculty & students. (Used widely by many, including NSF)
2. Reconstruct the social sphere of science (Keller, 1985; Harding, 1998)
3. The process of doing one could potentially lead to the other, but such effects are yet unknown (e.g. Bratton, 2002; Turner, 2003).

Possible Sources of Inequity

- A 3-level approach [based on Mederer's (in progress) framing of Risman (1998)]
  - Individual (bottom-up efforts)
    - Personal acknowledgment of the importance of diversity, individual endorsements of diversity policies, mentoring, support groups, workshops
  - Institutional (top-down efforts)
    - Meaningful support for a true diversity agenda (Chang, 2002), institutional policies, official recruitment & retention plans, etc.
  - Interactional
    - Subtle interpersonal dynamics → Tokenism, Fundamental attribution error, exclusion, Discrimination & Harassment, "neo-colonialism" effects, etc.

“Gender”-reductionism… Why?

- Small numbers diminish importance
- Assumption of additive effects
- Stereotype complexity (Deaux & Lewis, 1984; Devine & Baker, 1991; Fiske, 2004)
  - Easier to focus on what you know
  - Easier to focus on what you are aware of
  - Easier to focus on easier groups
Implications for Focus on Gender

Very successful with increasing gender diversity

![Graph showing trends in gender diversity](image)

* Intervention targets included some science, technology, engineering, and math departments

Less so with racial/ethnic diversity

![Graph showing trends in racial and ethnic diversity](image)

What did the applicant pools look like?

(Limited information available)

![Graph showing applicant pool trends](image)

Current State of URI

![Graph showing faculty composition as of Spring 2006](image)
URI “Climate Survey” of 2003-04

- Governed by a funding mandate from an NSF-ADVANCE IT grant
  - Goal to increase the representation and advancement of women in science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) academic careers.
- Administered across campus, including non-science, non-target departments
- To establish a campus climate “baseline”

Climate Survey Design & Results

- 12 pages long
- Designed with “gender” as the focus of inquiry (because of funding mandate)
- Results illustrated that institutional experiences amongst faculty are indeed gendered.
- But, what if both race & gender had been the focus of inquiry?
**Race × Gender: Sexism**

*Climate Survey Report*
Respondents were asked to indicate job-related discrimination perceived or experienced in past 2-5 yrs.

♀ (66%) = 3.4 incidents*
♂ (31%) = 1.84 incidents
* Statistically significant

**Race × Gender Analyses**
Sexism was the only significant construct, but...

![Graph of Sexism: Race x Gender](image)

**Means of Sexism: Race × Gender**
- Female: White = 1.78 (n = 41)
- Female: Non-White = 1.71 (n = 7)
- Male: White = 0.20 (n = 15)
- Male: Non-White = 0.70 (n = 41)

**Race × Gender: Racism**

*Climate Survey Report*
Racism not analyzed

**Race × Gender Analyses**
Not significant, but...

![Graph of Racism: Race x Gender](image)

**Means of Racism: Race × Gender**
- Female: White = 0.37 (n = 41)
- Female: Non-White = 0.54 (n = 35)
- Male: White = 0.71 (n = 7)
- Male: Non-White = 0.50 (n = 6)

**Race × Gender: Dept. is Non-Racist**

*Climate Survey Report*
Not analyzed

**Race × Gender Analyses**
Not significant, but...

![Graph of Dept. is Non-Racist: Race x Gender](image)

**Means of "Dept. is Non-Racist": Race × Gender**
- Female: White = 4.54 (n = 41)
- Female: Non-White = 4.00 (n = 7)
- Male: White = 3.85 (n = 35)
- Male: Non-White = 3.57 (n = 6)

**Race × Gender: “I would benefit from mentoring”**

*Climate Survey Report*
Not analyzed: Small sample size

**Race × Gender Analyses**
Not significant, but...

![Graph of "I would benefit from mentoring": Race x Gender](image)

**Means of "I would benefit from mentoring": Race × Gender**
- Female: White = 3.16 (n = 32)
- Female: Non-White = 2.94 (n = 44)
- Male: White = 3.56 (n = 9)
- Male: Non-White = 3.50 (n = 10)
Race x Gender: Satisfaction with Mentoring

**Climate Survey Report**

Not analyzed: Small sample size

**Race x Gender Analyses**

Not significant, but…

![Graph showing Mean of Satisfaction with Mentoring: Race x Gender](image)

- White Female: 13.98 (n = 41)
- White Male: 13.66 (n = 6.92)
- Non-White Female: 13.00 (n = 9)
- Non-White Male: 11.30 (n = 10)

Race x Gender: Productivity

Rate your productivity compared to researchers in your area & rank (ns)

**Race x Gender Analyses**

Not significant, but…

![Graph showing Mean of "Rate your productivity compared to researchers in your area & rank:" Race x Gender](image)

- White Female: 3.27 (n = 485)
- White Male: 3.10 (n = 421)
- Non-White Female: 3.36 (n = 115)
- Non-White Male: 3.54 (n = 24)

Race x Gender: Productivity

Rate your department’s view of your productivity compared to the department average (ns)

**Race x Gender Analyses**

Not significant, but…

![Graph showing Mean of "Your department’s view of your productivity compared to dept. average:" Race x Gender](image)

- White Female: 3.51 (n = 115)
- White Male: 3.54 (n = 24)
- Non-White Female: 3.41 (n = 85)
- Non-White Male: 3.24 (n = 21)

Data Implications

- Limited knowledge of how non-gender variables construct institutional experiences
  - Findings not statistically significant, but indicative of trends
  - Women of color may experience unique patterns of oppression
    - Corroborated by an independent group’s interviews with faculty of color
- Dilemma: How to “do it all” in research?
Solutions: Looking at Ourselves

- Remember *standpoint theory*: situated knowledge shapes action and focus of inquiry
  - Beware of "whitewashing" issues, assuming that what works for majority members, works for all
  - Take responsibility for promoting unseen agendas
- Critical self-inquiry
- Personal responsibility
  - Research
  - Interventions
  - Education
  - Hearing / Giving voice

Solutions: Changing Ourselves

- Engage in self-critical inquiry
  - Leadership, buy-in, and follow-up are essential (Jones-Hudson, 2003).
- Devote time & resources for examination through alternate lenses
- Celebrate successes and learn from unsuccessful efforts

Solutions: Gathering the Data

- Go beyond aggregate data
- Utilize multi-method research designs
  - Qualitative as well as quantitative data
  - Involve all stakeholders in design
  - Seek to discover missed agendas
  - Small sample sizes may lead to statistical non-significance, but does that imply practical insignificance?

Solutions: Changing the Culture

- Target change at the interactional level, by promoting:
  - knowledge and skills at the individual level
  - policies and procedures at the institutional level
  - Envision an excellent department
  - Agree on its characteristics through dialogue about exceptional career experiences
  - Recognize the commonality of vision
  - Recognize the needs of women, minorities, all underrepresented members, including junior faculty in general
  - Agree on action plan together
Solutions: Changing Institutions

• Recognize & reward efforts (not just successes)
• Take responsibility
  – Policy formation, support for Affirmative Action (Eberhardt & Fiske, 1998)
  – Leadership: delegate “diversity” work to non-minorities, course release, formal recognition of service contributions, etc.
• Translate success (external validity) to reach all demographic sectors (i.e., sexual minorities, persons with a disability, etc.)

Solutions: Changing Community

• Respond to concerns and challenges from community members
• Identify supportive groups and organizations in the community
• Participate in community change to create a better home environment for faculty women of color (and all)
• Promote the scholarly and economic benefits that multiple perspectives bring

Solutions: Keeping our I’s Open

References


With gratitude to the NSF-ADVANCE IT Award SBE-0245039 for supporting this work.