
AFFIRMATIVE ACTION AND THE CONTINUING AGENDA:
ANTI-RACISM & ANTI-SEXISM EFFORTS IN ORGANIZATIONS

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Introduction

In this paper we address the need for innovative efforts to alter institutional racism and sexism in organizations. Affirmative action programs that concentrate on problems of access, even equal access, seldom address the need for changes that effect the quality of life throughout heterogeneous organizations. Even affirmative action efforts that concentrate on heterogeneity, or pluralism in the workforce, seldom address the need for vertical as well as horizontal access. Thus, the racial and sexual bases of power in organizations typically are left untouched. If those with power make decisions, and if the decisions they make affect the quality of life for organizational members, then minority and female participation in the control of organizations is a vital component of a lasting concern for heterogeneity. Power and pluralism are the twin keys to successful affirmative action efforts and to the reform of organizational racism and sexism.

We begin by examining some problems experienced in trying to implement more effective affirmative action programs. The clarification of our recent national experience in another arena - school desegregation; and an examination of some of the assumptions guiding current affirmative action policies, are intended to spur our thinking and planning. We then explore what lies beyond affirmative action, per se. What is the nature of a continuing agenda of anti-racism and anti-sexism work in organizations? Why do some people and organizations undertake to achieve it, to risk changes in the interest of a more just workplace and workforce? Why do other persons and organizations frustrate that agenda, consciously or nonconsciously acting in ways that maintain subtle forms of racial and sexual privilege and advantage? Finally, we discuss some strategies and tactics that might be of use to groups attempting to broaden the affirmative action agenda, trying to create sexual and racial justice in American organizations.

I. Laying the Groundwork: Comparing Efforts Toward
Desegregating the School and the Workplace

The history of recent efforts to alter institutional racism and sexism in American organizations does not bode well for our future. Segregation and marked inequality in access to and receipt of public and private services and resources is pervasive. Affirmative action efforts in industrial and/or governmental employment has to date failed to stem the tide of racism and sexism.¹ Where we do see progress, its future appears dim: it is unlikely to be sustained in the face of economic pressures for workforce retrenchment, layoffs, hiring freezes, and the like. Under seniority systems, women and minorities who were among the most recently hired, probably will be among those first to be released (USCCR, 1976). Even when hired and retained, these groups are least likely to be represented in higher levels of organizational status and power.

As we consider ways to increase the efficacy of affirmative action efforts to desegregate the workplace, it may be fruitful to consider our 25 year history of school desegregation efforts. There are some basic parallels in these social movements, and in the technical and political problems they have encountered...or will encounter.

¹While statistics often are not available for individual employing organizations, there is some aggregate level data which supports this statement. Rozen (1979) notes that in 1973, about 75% of the employed women were in occupations which were at least 60% female; further, women in blue collar occupations were disproportionately found in labor intensive industries. The U.S. Commission on Civil Rights report (1978) cites statistics which indicate that occupational segregation by race and sex has actually increased since 1970. Within a single organization, Kanter (1977) found that males and females consistently occupied different positions; she also argued that this is a broad societal phenomenon. Schrank and Wesely (1977) likewise found in their study of a large bureaucracy of 15,000 non-sales employees, that although women made up 2/3 of the total employee population, there were generally "female" jobs and "male" jobs, and "obviously, 'women's place' within the organization was not (found to be) equivalent to 'men's place'" (p. 24).

School desegregation has by no means been an unqualified success. Some of our urban schools are no more physically desegregated now than they were 25 years ago.² Even where the racial composition of schools has changed, we have made only minimal progress toward racial equality and justice in the outcomes and internal processes of schooling. These two realities provide a beginning for the parallel analysis between desegregating schools and work organizations. We suggest that both affirmative action and desegregation have been designed and implemented on the basis of some naive or questionable assumptions.

Desegregation, like affirmative action, initially was undertaken from a legal commitment/requirement to provide equal access to public services. Reliance upon the courts, often the only social agency supporting any form of racial change in education, proved to be a limiting factor. The federal judiciary announced and pursued the constitutionally framed issue of equal access to public facilities and opportunities, but not what it would take to alter unequal opportunities and outcomes. Remedies of equal access did not necessarily guarantee equal opportunity; and equal opportunity may have little meaning unless new organizational situations and experiences permit people to translate new opportunities into more equal outcomes. As a result, we now know that desegregation is only the first step toward quality integrated education. In a similar vein, we now realize that workplace desegregation is only the first step toward equal opportunity in the organization, and only the beginning of a more equal (just) distribution of economic rights and benefits.

² Although there are now no de jure one-race school districts, many dual-race districts still have de facto one-race or predominantly one-race schools. Full desegregation of schools has proceeded more rapidly in the South than in the North (Weinberg, 1977), with many Northern urban districts now being composed of 75% or more minority students.

Desegregation, like affirmative action, initially was undertaken on the assumption that placing people of different cultural (racial) groups in sustained contact with one another would lead to the improvement of minorities' performances and life chances. It became clear, over time, that interracial contacts did not necessarily alter the attitudes and orientations of white and black and brown youth. In fact, they often crystallized and reinforced old stereotypes and hostilities. Early efforts paid scant attention to the creation of organizational conditions (school-wide, playground, cafeteria, classroom, curriculum) that might promote better cross-group relations and improved academic outcomes. In a similar vein, we now realize that factories and social agencies will need to redesign work tasks and roles in order to create positive, interdependent and mutually respectful work relations and social interactions among workers of various races and sexes.

In the early days of desegregation, it was assumed that educational managers would provide good will and high skill in support of the desegregation agenda. Instead, we have seen professional incompetence and resistance in many attempts to create racial change in schools. Many white educational experts and leaders were bound more firmly to the defense of their own privileges and traditions than to a goal of equal education for all. Even with good will or ideological commitment, many did not know how to design, implement and sustain high quality integrated education. In a similar vein, we now realize that many affirmative action programs have been designed incompetently; many managers lack the skill and/or the will to alter racial and sexual inequality and injustice in the workplace (Pati and Reilly, 1978).

In the early days of desegregation, it was assumed that racial minorities would assimilate easily into predominantly white school systems and cultures. Heterogeneity often meant it might take some time, but that blacks, Hispanics and others eventually would become "like-white." Gradually, it became clear

that other people might not want to be assimilated into the white cultural and educational system. Blacks and Hispanics demanded programs supportive of their own ethnic and cultural identities and aspirations: the creation of a pluralistic educational system turned out to be very different challenge. In a similar vein, we now know that effective affirmative action efforts require cultural pluralism in the workplace, and not just tolerance of darker skinned "whites", Spanish-speaking "Anglos", or differently shaped "men".

School desegregation remedies generally involved racial mixing programs that placed the greatest burden of adjustment, transportation and change upon minority group members. That seemed appropriate, because the entire process of desegregation appeared to be "for" minorities. Thus, they were expected to do most of the adapting, relearning, and changing. In a similar vein, it often appears that affirmative action policies are established only for the benefit of minorities and women. Neither education nor economic justice will be achieved if it is conceived solely as another form of charity or noblesse oblige.

School desegregation remedies generally were designed in ways that placed the next greatest burden of new interaction patterns on educationally and economically vulnerable whites of working class status. Those schools most rapidly desegregated were located in working class white neighborhoods. In a similar vein, the occupational ranks most rapidly opened by affirmative action efforts are those populated predominantly by working class whites. In both cases, white elites have been protected from the impact of reform.

School desegregation generally progressed as though equal educational opportunities could be attained in school without altering racism in the community's economic, political and social institutions. Later it became clear that revision of school governance and financing, alternative municipal policies (re: taxes and housing), and new relations between schools and colleges or the job market were required. In a similar vein, we now know that affirmative action in the

workplace will not be successful over time unless we also alter racism and sexism in the community and throughout the society.

In general, school desegregation was engineered without very systematic theories about the roots of racism and segregation, and without sophisticated theories about how school and other organizations actually operate and change. In a similar vein, affirmative action programs have been undertaken without good and thoughtful theory. Better theories of organizational functioning are necessary in order to understand the omnipresent workings of power and control in the workplace. Better theories of race and sex oppression are necessary in order to understand the stubborn maintenance of inequality in American society. In addition, we need more sophisticated and daring theories of how patterns of institutional racism and sexism can be changed.

The continuing agenda is to undertake affirmative action efforts in ways that avoid these mistakes and false starts.

II. Why Bother with this Continuing Agenda?

Efforts at organizational reform, of whatever character, invariably are guided by some sense of mission, some more or less articulate purpose or set of goals. In considering the agenda of anti-racism and anti-sexism in a multi-interest group society, many different interests and values must be taken into account. Whites and blacks and browns, men and women, owners or managers and workers or the unemployed, industrial representatives and governmental monitors, all may have divergent interests in, and therefore different goals served by, an anti-racist anti-sexist agenda. Identifying competing goals or interests may enable us to understand why so many affirmative action efforts fail. Articulating the different interests and goals served by this common program also may lay the ground-work for coalitions of groups in support of anti-racism and anti-sexism work.

For some, the organizational interest served by affirmative action programs is productivity and profit: it often is assumed that greater productivity will flow from a more heterogeneous workforce. But as we suggested earlier, mere desegregation of the workforce may accomplish little except place people who are unaccustomed to being together into contact with one another: it may effect productivity either positively or negatively (Amir, 1976; Katz and Benjamin, 1960; Katz, Goldston and Benjamin, 1958).

Related to concerns about productivity, it often is argued that heterogeneity is good because it leads to innovation. For instance, in the university setting, many affirmative action advocates suggest that more innovative teaching and research take place when the faculty is more diverse (Chertos, forthcoming). The presence of diversity in other types of organizations may also encourage imaginative approaches to problems, and thus innovation (Kanter, 1977).

A second interest served by an affirmative action agenda is compliance with the law. Executive orders, judicial decrees and legislation for equal opportunity and affirmative action require a more heterogeneous workforce, not only in terms of race and sex, but also in age, physical ability and disability, and military-veteran status. In a law-abiding society, compliance with at least the letter of the law is a potent factor. But by itself, this explanation is incomplete: it leads to questions of why we have these laws and what interests they serve. One answer suggests these laws are an expression of our democratic cultural norms, and a reflection of our national commitment to equality. An alternative answer is that such laws represent attempts to reduce the threat of disruption of the societal status quo by disadvantaged classes. Bernice Sandler (1974) entitled a paper on affirmative action for women, "The Hand that Rocked the Cradle has Learned to Rock the Boat!", recognizing that women and minorities have the potential to disrupt organizations and communities in pressing their demands for equal access and opportunity. Organizational responses to legal

mandates for affirmative action may be symbolic attempts to head off threats of disruption or to calm potential rebellion.

A third interest, consistent with interests in productivity, legal compliance, and organization peace may be a monetary one. Organizational participation in this agenda might permit retention of government contracts and a reduced vulnerability to costly law suits.

A fourth interest served by this agenda may be one of comfort and identification with one's peers: everyone else may be involved in it. Affirmative action programs such as training women for non-traditional jobs in the skilled trades, recruiting Hispanics and blacks for managerial positions, or putting women and/or minorities on executive search committees are not only socially acceptable, but in some cases socially expected organizational efforts (Bryant and Crowfoot, n.d.). Private opinions may continue to be prejudicial; but in some circles it may no longer be publicly acceptable to be overtly racist and/or sexist.

There are other possible interests served by this agenda. Women and/or minorities may be working in their own self interest, directly engaged in improving their individual and collective situations. Consultants may make substantial fees by assisting organizations to develop programs to reduce institutional discrimination. And some white males engaged in these efforts may be rewarded by their organizations or by their minority colleagues/comrades for their efforts.

Finally, participation in an anti-racist anti-sexist agenda may satisfy a commitment to social justice. Some argue that white males who advocate an anti-racist anti-sexist agenda are acting counter to their objective group interests. In the short run this may be accurate, but in the long run our common survival may depend on advances toward equality and justice. Moreover, the subjective interest in such action may lie in core values of social justice

or community actualization. White males with such internalized values are to some extent serving their own interests by participating in this agenda. It may allow them to fulfill their own expectations and raise their personal and social esteem (Terry, 1980).

III. Efforts to Frustrate the Continuing Agenda: Why and How?

We have suggested it is important to examine the goals of those advocating an affirmative action agenda. It appears that different interest groups may have different goals. Hopefully all of these interest groups and their goals are supportive of anti-racism anti-sexism work. Obviously this is not true.

Although various scholars disagree on the concrete details, most agree that a decade of affirmative action efforts have not had a great deal of impact on racial and sexual opportunity and privilege in American life (USCCR, 1978). As Farley concludes his extensive review of the data, "reductions in equality are small when compared to the remaining racial differences on many indicators (1977, p. 206)." How can we explain the continuing problem?

Why is the continuing agenda frustrated?

Some of the reasons for the slow pace of change may lie in the earlier parallels we drew: poor thinking and planning, perhaps on the basis of faulty assumptions, may have disabled even well-intentioned programs (Pati & Reilly, 1978). Resistance and sabotage also may have played a role in frustrating attempts to alter racial and sexual inequality and injustice in the workplace. In this section we speculate on the reasons for this frustration: not all the explanations are equally valid, and different ones will appeal to readers in different measure.

- a. Racism and sexism express some of the dominant values in American culture.

Representing dominant values, racism and sexism influence our thinking

and our action as a people. To be sure, these are not the only core values in our society: many observers suggest that equality and a sense of justice are also potent aspects of our ideological and cultural tradition (Myrdal, 1944). At the very least, this cultural schizophrenia makes it difficult to act clearly and forthrightly on an anti-injustice agenda (Livingston, 1979). Competition between these two dominant value frames (equality and justice vs. racism and sexism) often forces racist and sexist values underground; as such, they may continue to have unacknowledged potency.

- b. Racism and sexism are basic structural characteristics of the American society and its political/economic organization.

Historic patterns of racism and sexism long have deprived minorities and women of equal access to economic and political opportunities in this society (Thomas, 1980). Moreover, second order effects of racism and sexism now are utilized to further exclude and justify excluding minorities and women from gaining new access to opportunities. Unequal educational services, inadequate health care, straightjacketed socialization experiences orienting women and minorities away from advancement opportunities, discriminatory family assistance and support policies, segregated housing opportunities, insurance and mortgage redlining for female and minority-headed families, all make their own direct contribution to oppression and deprivation (Feagin and Feagin, 1978). Moreover, the effects of these policies often are not seen as evidence of discrimination, but as characteristics of minorities and females (e.g. poor education and health, female-headed families, poverty, inappropriate socialization and cultural support for advancement, etc.). As a result of such indirect as well as direct discrimination, affirmative action efforts have to deal with more than the current and obvious organizational barriers to equal opportunity.

- c. As a result of the cultural value frame and the political/economic structures of the American society, racism and sexism are functional to the effective operation of most American organizations.

Some argue that racism and sexism are dysfunctional attributes of a rational economic organization (Reskin and Hodges, 1979). This view of economic rationality assumes a cultural priority of equality and justice, suggested above. In this view, racism and sexism are seen as dysfunctional to our way of life. Others argue that racism and sexism are our cultural priorities, and are deeply embedded in the American system. Since most organizations must adapt to that reality in order to make a profit or provide services efficiently, racism and sexism may be functional to organizational success. Moreover, a secondary or "latent" purpose of most organizations is to maintain stability and predictability in enterprise and in all walks of life (Perrow, 1970). Thus, they generally reproduce the society's status system in their internal organization; affluent and protestant white males are at the top of internal status hierarchies as well as in the society at large. If such parallels between the internal and external environments of organizations did not prevail, top echelons of deviant organizations would not adapt, fit or integrate well with top echelons of the traditional society.

- d. Challenging racism and sexism often is tantamount to challenging the power of white males.

Given the status hierarchy of the society in general, and its reproduction within major social institutions, those who are in positions of power in most institutions - the economy, the polity, the cultural systems--are primarily white and male. Efforts to alter these status and power hierarchies are not met lightly: white males whose institutional power is threatened by change efforts can be expected to resist the flight back (Thomas, 1980).

One of the ways a relatively small group of white males can maintain institutional power in a very large organization or society is to enlist the support of other white and male groups who, for a share of core resources, support the powerful and help administer the subordinate position of minorities

and women. These managers can take advantage of the national residue of racial and sexual prejudice to keep white and black and brown (or male and female) elements of the workforce divided and working against one another. As a result, workers fail to unite across race and sex lines to challenge the economic dominance of a small elite. (Reich (1980) and others have shown that in cities where unions are the weakest (i.e. where managers are strongest in their ability to dominate working classes), black-white wage differentials are the highest. Thus, the exploitation of racial and sexual divisions in the workforce is one element of the larger exploitation of working people in general. This argument also presents racism and sexism as functional to the larger American society; in this case functional to the interests of (white and male) affluent ruling groups. It is not that elites "invent" racism and sexism, but that they are able to take advantage of it.

To suggest a further caveat: our national political/economic leadership is at best ambivalent or ambiguous about challenges to racism and sexism. While they may present a rhetoric of equality and justice, they resist challenges to core cultural values and their own political/economic power bases (items a and b). As a result, the change programs they generate and support often fail to lead us forthrightly. Without unambiguous leadership, wavering managers and subordinates may be less willing to take local initiatives.

- e. Individuals are often relatively unaware of their role in the maintenance and enhancement of racial and sexual injustice.

Those of us who are white and/or male, and who see our current roles and status as being accorded on the basis of merit alone, often deny the considerable role that race and sex have played in providing us with our privileged background and support systems. Few Americans have analyzed racism and sexism well enough to understand their own contributions to social injustice, nor the ways they benefit from their demographic status. Thus, few whites and males are prepared to acknowledge

their own involvement in the perpetuation of injustice (Kirkham, 1977). Without such acknowledgment, why should they feel committed to an agenda of reform? Moreover, failing a coherent historic analysis of discrimination, and of the ways white and/or male power perseveres in the face of most efforts to alter discrimination, many see affirmative action as "discrimination in reverse" (see Hook, 1977).

- f. There are few organizational rewards or incentives for working on an anti-racist anti-sexist agenda.

The dominant operating motives of American industry, and most governmental and human service systems as well, is self-interest. If there are no visible self-interest gains for working on an anti-racist and anti-sexist agenda, it is not likely to be actively pursued. Thus, it is difficult to see why middle level managers, who respond to internal incentive systems would expend time and energy creating a more just workplace without substantial reward. If higher management subtly supports racism and sexism (perhaps by not supporting its challenge and destruction), and if peers support white and male norms and interaction styles, it may well be against middle level managers' immediate self-interest to resist these peer and supervisory standards.

There also may be disincentives, or perceived disincentives, for creating new forms of power and pluralism in the workplace. For instance, a homogeneous workforce is likely to be characterized by relatively common values and interaction styles, and thus minimal overt conflict and competition; this may lead to the perception that a heterogeneous workforce would be more difficult to manage. Moreover, some managers simply do not have the skills to work with a heterogeneous workforce, regardless of the ease or difficulty of the basic task. Teachers may not be used to teaching many different kinds of students at once; supervisors and personnel officers may find they need to understand more than one language dialect; office managers may be unaccustomed to recognizing and dealing with legitimate

racial and sexual differences. Managers' ignorance, or their internalization of racial and sexual stereotypes, may amplify common fears of workgroup incompatibility and the detrimental effects of diversity.

How is the continuing agenda frustrated?

No doubt each reader can add other reasons why the agenda of anti-racism and anti-sexism work is frustrated. Perhaps each reader will want to lay special emphasis on some of the foregoing reasons rather than others. Our next question is more operational: how is the agenda frustrated? What is it that people and groups do to frustrate efforts to gain racial and sexual equality in the workplace? What are the tactics, conscious or not, that inhibit the accomplishment of this agenda? Each of us no doubt has been witness to some of these tactics: here we present a series of common acts seen and heard in organizations.

1. The need for "qualified" minority or female employees is stressed in recruitment efforts.

All organizations hire (or admit) new people on the basis of some more or less formal set of qualifications. However, a vigorous stress on the adjective "qualified", only when seeking to add minority or female employees, communicates that one would not normally expect minority or female executives, workers, or students to be qualified, and that one is looking for that special breed of a generally inferior category.

2. Minorities and women are hired and channelled into specially labelled jobs and roles.

This tactic reinforces the notion that some kinds of jobs are "women's work" and some kinds of jobs are "nigger's work." The availability of only certain kinds of positions for certain kinds of people helps locate minorities in community relations and personnel functions in large organizations, rather than in finance offices or higher power centers (Bowser, 1979; Milward and Swanson, 1979). It locates even "qualified" women in staff rather than line positions

(Howe, 1979; Schrank and Wesely, 1977). In addition, some of these specially labelled jobs are dead-ends, without mobility in the power structure of the organization.

3. Minorities and women are hired into isolated roles.

It is common to hire minorities and women into roles that isolate them from their same sex/same race peers (Kanter, 1970; 1977). In this way, the organization prevents development of support groups and cadres that might soften the bittersweet experience of being a token or a pioneer. It also inhibits the formation of constituencies or organized interest groups that might provide the base for organizational change efforts.

4. "Representative" minorities and women are hired and/or promoted without dealing with their "representation" roles.

Alvarez (1979) has drawn a useful distinction between the practice of hiring/promoting some people from a minority demographic grouping (representatives) and including/advancing people who advocate the political interests of an oppressed constituency (representation). The few blacks and Hispanics in a mostly white organization, or females in a mostly male organization, often are co-opted into a non-representation role, or into being the agents of higher level white and male power. Only if these people are in some sense accountable to their own political and demographic groups can they "represent" their collective concerns and help confront underlying themes of racism and sexism in the organization.

5. The denial that there is a need for such programs in this organization.

Some managers respond to the affirmative action request/demand by arguing that this organization has not been a party to discrimination, and thus need not adopt such a remedy. Even if workforce data suggest a conspicuous lack of minorities and women in certain roles, the response may be to demand proof that it is the result of "intentional discrimination", rather than normal employment

market dynamics. This approach is especially common in an agency or firm facing a court battle, where it might be costly for any admission of discrimination to be made. Another form of denial focusses on the remedy itself: affirmative action programs often are not seen as a means to end discrimination; rather they are attacked as a form of "reverse discrimination" (Pottinger, 1977).

When denial begins to fail, delay may accomplish the same frustration. Recognizable tactics may include: cancelled meetings, endless arguments about the "scientific" meaning of racism and sexism, unavailability of records, proof required for every assertion, hearings scheduled far into the future, etc.

6. Minorities and women are subtly harassed and pressured.

Sexual harassment has varied forms, and male managers are only now beginning to be made aware of the extent to which women experience sexual (sexuality-based and sex-role based) harassment on the job (Farley, 1978; Mackinnon, 1979). Often, men are simply not aware of the extent to which their behavior is offensive, controlling, punishing or compromising to female employees. But even unintentional harassment is harassment. Racial harassment can be just as subtle and elusive... or just as crass and oppressive.

7. Minorities and women are excluded from the informal peer system.

A workplace is more than a workplace; it is an arena of social interaction and exchange. If white and male norms pervade and dominate social interactions in the workplace, minorities and women may be excluded from these peer relations. Or, they may be permitted entry only on a stereotypic basis (women asked to get coffee and being subjected to backroom humor, minorities jokingly asked why they're not sticking together, etc.). The prevalence of the "old boy" network is an example of an informal peer system that excludes others from information about expected behaviors, advancement opportunities, and ways of getting ahead.

8. Minorities and women are publicly blamed for race and sex problems and for "their" failures.

The maintenance of a stable social order is facilitated when the people who are oppressed and deprived by what is felt to be a fair democratic system are seen as the creators of their own failure and oppression. Then they internalize "blame" (or it is laid to them), rather than identifying systemic forces creating these problems (Ryan, 1976). Women are often blamed for their experiences of sexual harassment..."she asked for it." And when minorities fail to gain peer support in the workplace, become lonely and leave, they are seen as failing in the workplace, rather than the workplace failing (or excluding) them (Pati and Reilly, 1978).

9. White male norms of leadership are applied to all people.

Most cultural definitions of a good leader are based on white male norms. However, these normative standards for leadership are so embedded in our experience we hardly see them as race and sex based at all; or we think of them as universal, or at least universal to Western society. Consider, however, what happens when women or minorities deviate from these expectations. The "strong and forceful" woman boss is labelled a "tough bitch" or a "ball buster", while a male doing the same things is seen as true to his sex and his organizational role, even if his behavior is objectionable. The woman is rendered untrue to her sex if true to her organizational role...or vice versa (Boverman, et.al., 1972). When minority executives or supervisors direct others in ways consistent with their own cultural traditions, they, too, may be seen as practicing inappropriate leader behaviors. If they adopt white traditions of leadership they may be seen as departing from minority status; "he's as good as a white man", "you'd hardly know he was a Puerto Rican." Undoubtedly such conflicting role definitions create a no-win situation for minorities and women.

10. Minimalist actions are taken in working on affirmative action agendas.

Affirmative action efforts are replete with special workshops that teach managers how to meet federal guidelines with as little effort and change as possible. One of the well-known and legally acceptable "tricks of the trade" is to count minority women employees as filling two affirmative action criteria at once, thus easing the pressure to hire more minorities or women. Job groups can be redefined broadly, such that relatively low status positions, disproportionately filled with females and/or minorities, are combined with higher level positions, disproportionately white and male. The combined data create an appearance of a more heterogeneous job group than in fact exists.

11. Top management fails to provide support for affirmative action efforts.

There are many ways to change organizations, and proceeding from the top down is only one of them. However, to the extent that top management provides visible and vigorous support to a change agenda, it appears as a more legitimate effort to those at middle and lower management levels. The failure of top management to desegregate its own ranks, to symbolically lead the affirmative action effort, to reward innovators, or to promote anti-racism anti-sexism activities, strips the agenda of much of its support within an organization. Sometimes top management provides open and public support, but sabotages affirmative action operations with back-room talk, private conversations, rumors and innuendoes, and the failure to provide incentives and rewards.

12. Control of the affirmative action agenda/office is retained in the hands of the white males.

A troublesome advocacy unit within the organization can lead white male management to try to "capture" the affirmative action office itself. This approach can render impotent the major organizational symbol and instrument of female and minority advocacy and advance. Common examples of such control

include: (1) making a female or minority head of the office accountable to a white male vice president; (2) requiring dual loyalties of affirmative action officers - to organization elites as well as to female and minority constituencies; (3) selecting a "representative" minority or female officer rather than insuring they "represent" their constituencies (see 4 in this section); (4) administering the budget of the office from above; and (5) "setting up" divisive competition between women and minority groups for scarce jobs, resources or office prestige. These tactics often appear as natural organizational control functions; perhaps all resistance to alter racism and sexism are natural control functions.

13. Leaders of protest groups are counter-attacked.

Especially if a protest cannot be captured (see 12) or co-opted (see 4), some managers respond to affirmative action advocacy by acting against key advocates or protest leaders. Such action may include labelling people as "bra burners", "uppity", and "troublemakers". More vigorous action might include threatening challengers with disciplinary actions, moving them to another organizational unit or role, or even terminating them. Some observers suggest this approach is an example of harassment (see 6) raised to an official level. Then it is even more clearly a "political" phenomenon, rather than individual prejudice or discomfort with deviant women or minorities.

14. Control of the organization is retained in the hands of the white males.

One way to frustrate the long-term effects of affirmative action policies is to make some minimal progress at lower organizational levels, while keeping most power and control in the hands of a ruling white male elite. Minorities and women can be denied access to the reins of organizational power, while being offered economic opportunity and even influential participation. Sometimes, as women enter higher management ranks the center of organizational decision-making

moves from the boardroom to the bathroom. As minorities move into these ranks, the decisional apparatus may move again, from the bathroom to the clubroom (See Terry's discussion of the "White Male Club", 1974).

15. Ownership is retained in the hands of white males.

After all is said and done, the reins of power in the American society are in the hands of those who manage major organizations and those who "own" them. Ownership in the private sector is readily apparent; in the public sector "ownership" is more political in nature, and refers to extra-organizational control of policy and program by senior professional or political elites. Even if minorities and women are permitted access to higher executive offices, if they as groups do not have access to ownership ranks, they eventually will be without ruling power. Even when women have ownership, they often have it as surrogates of men. As long as ownership remains in white male hands, the last bastion of racist and sexist power lies untouched, and the power to change racism and sexism is rendered inadequate (Squires, 1980).

IV. Change strategies: What are some guidelines for bringing about about effective implementation of the continuing agenda to alter racism and sexism in organizations?

There has been little systematic research on the effective implementation of affirmative action policies, either on the broad societal level or on the more limited organizational level. Perhaps this is because little implementation has occurred, but even what has occurred has not been well documented or studied. While there is a growing body of research demonstrating the existence of racial and sexual discrimination (e.g. Alvarez and Lutterman, 1979), little research has demonstrated how we can alter racism and sexism in organizations. We offer some places and ways to begin. This discussion of change strategies cannot be based on sound and systematic research, but it can organize a series of possibilities culled from various arenas.

Change strategies for altering racism and sexism within work organizations can be divided into three categories: administrative changes, organizational development programs, and community mobilizing efforts. Each of these strategies counters different bases ("whys") and mechanisms ("hows") for frustrating the affirmative action agenda.

Administrative change strategies are aimed at altering the ways in which organizational activities are coordinated and controlled by managers and other officials. Employees at all levels are accustomed to looking for direction and leadership from supervisors and more senior personnel. If the administrative hierarchy of an organization does not appear committed to affirmative action policies, and to the procedures and mechanisms that carry them out, other employees will "get the message" and resist actively or passively. Thus, administrative leadership, through regular channels, is a critical change strategy in affirmative action efforts.

Administrative activities supportive of anti-racism anti-sexism efforts must start with the establishment and articulation of clear goals and policies. Several scholars of organizational change stress that new policy must be clear and vigorous if lower-level implementation is to occur (Sabatier & Mazmanian, 1979; Van Horn & Van Meter, 1977). Moreover, when the policy is as controversial as affirmative action, we can expect some managers to misperceive or distort a policy requiring substantial change; thus the need for clarity is even greater (Nakamura and Smallwood, 1980). Phrases like "equal opportunity" and "organizational commitment" are very abstract. Concrete policy statements, spelling out specific problems and change targets, articulating how these goals relate to traditional goals such as productivity and profit, may go a long way in reducing confusion and resistance.

Other administrative activities supportive of this change effort can include

record keeping, normative and task leadership, and daily managerial supervision of new policies. Program planning and budgeting procedures also can permit greater coordination of unit and sub-unit operations. For instance, a well-run research department that monitors recruitment and hiring practices, as well as the organizational conditions for minority and female success, can be of great aid in implementing affirmative action.

The coordination of human resources relevant to affirmative action can be improved by the development of better internal communication systems. Without effective communication systems, there is little likelihood new policies and programs even will be known throughout the organization, let alone implemented effectively. Since women and minorities are less likely to have access to informal communication channels than do white males, it could be helpful to make public routine information on budgets, salaries, organizational opportunities, imminent problems and long range plans for change. Career ladders or lattices also could be better documented and publicized, especially in those units substantially populated by minority and/or female employees. When administrative leaders act on these data, they can serve notice that evasion of new policies, or harassment and other unfair practices, will not be ignored or tolerated. Several scholars stress the importance of challenging non-compliance with new policy directives, and of sanctioning behaviors that frustrate the change agenda.³

Coordination of policy and program also can be improved by developing reward structures that encourage adherence to policies of anti-racism anti-sexism activity. For instance, rewarding managers for contributing to the organizational goal of a heterogeneous workforce, just as rewarding managers for their contribution toward other organizational goals, would be a clear demonstration of senior management's commitment. Rewards can be either personal or departmental

³See, especially with regard to judicial policies, Baum, 1978 and Johnson, 1967.

in nature: they can include personal "merit" increases or increased departmental budget lines, awards for individuals or special recognition for an entire unit. Making the practice of affirmative action part of all managers' job descriptions, and holding them accountable for that practice, is an important tactic in attempting to alter norms throughout the organization.

These tactics can reduce the isolation and exclusion from information and peer interaction that minority and female employees often face (frustration mechanisms #3, 6, 7). They also can help reduce white male insensitivity to racist and sexist assumptions (frustration mechanisms #1, 6). Moreover, vigorous leadership support by top administrators can demonstrate the need for change, and reduce minimalism and victim-blaming (frustration mechanisms #5, 8, 10, 11). On occasion, it may also reduce the potential counter-attack against affirmative action advocates, at least in its most gross and visible forms (frustration mechanism #13).

Organizational development strategies are designed to increase worker motivation and satisfaction, as well as to improve the individual-organizational fit. Specific programs attend to the management of human resources in ways that utilize informal associations and networks among workers as positive forces for organizational goals of productivity and profit, rather than as impediments and obstructions. The improvement and broadening of racial and sexual patterns in interpersonal communication systems, friendship networks, perceptions and attitudes of various groups, and access to influence and participation in organizational decisions are all relevant to implementing an affirmative action agenda.

Rearranging job requirements so individuals can express and satisfy their own work-related needs, especially those tied to different cultural styles and traditions, is critical in this approach. Thus, flextime is one appropriate

option: it suggests that not everyone has the same set of outside responsibilities and priorities as the stereotypic white male. It allows fuller participation from those groups who are excluded or who have had more difficulty meeting organizational schedules and job descriptions in the past.

Job rotation also could increase the participation rates of organizational members from diverse backgrounds, by increasing the number of workers who can experience and demonstrate competence in a wide variety of organizational roles. Such reorganization of work could be accomplished much like the "rotating chair" in many university departments. The creation of intermediate mobility steps also can be utilized whenever the hierarchial gap between jobs is so great that there is little movement between them (Kanter, 1977).⁴

Other organizational development efforts are aimed particularly at racial and sexual attitudes and interaction patterns among workers or between managers and workers. Reducing negative stereotypes and allaying fears of intergroup contact often is attempted through mechanisms such as T-groups, and through special training sessions focussing on the creation of an integrated workforce. Related efforts can include employees' participation in survey-feedback programs to diagnose common organizational problems. Typically, such programs involve members in problem-solving teams that generate solutions to racial/sexual problems in the organization (Alderfer, et al., 1980).

The establishment of heterogeneous problem-solving teams, and the creation of positive climates in interracial workgroups, can lead to new patterns of racial interaction in the workplace. This is most likely to have positive results when intergroup contact is combined with an interdependent task that requires everyone's resources and commitments (Nishi, 1980). Such efforts could be facilitated by special training in the skills required to contribute to a

⁴Kanter has further argued that unless organizations open the system up to disadvantaged groups already there, those employees will exhibit low aspirations, lack of commitment, and hostility toward the system. If new jobs are open to internal groups previously barred from mobility, the organization not only taps previously wasted talent, but enhances loyalty and commitment as well.

collective endeavor, to provide resources that are needed, and to generate respect from others (Cohen et al., 1976).

Organizational development efforts often seek to increase worker involvement and participation in workplace decisions. This approach seems especially important in the attempt to deal with racism and sexism, since it counters minority and female groups' exclusion from influence patterns and job-related decision-making. Such efforts cover a broad range, from offering advice and input on local matters, to worker participation on unit decision-making committees and boards, to substantial worker influence in the entire organization. Arguing for greater participation in general, Kanter (1977) urges managers to be seen as "planners and professionals" rather than as watchdogs. If power is shared, managers may need to be less concerned with controlling others, and can concentrate more directly on production issues. Pluralizing power centers by including more women and minority members may help insure decisions that "represent" all groups' needs.

Debureaucratizing the organization is another strategy for altering local power relationships. Edwards (1979) suggests that bureaucracy, as a formal mechanism creating impersonal and "universal" patterns of organizational control, developed in order to help manage an increasingly heterogeneous workforce. When workers did (do) not share the background, culture, and/or values of the manager, more intimate and personal forms of control failed. Although bureaucratization seeks apparently universal norms and procedures, modern organizational operations still reflect the particularism of their controlling groups - whites and males (Perrow, 1972). An alternative to replacing this dominant group with another group is to flatten and debureaucratize the organization itself. Flattening the hierarchy of the bureaucracy also can create "more room at the top": little room

has been an impediment to the mobility potential of minority and female employees (Kanter, 1977).⁵ By itself debureaucratization doesn't necessarily lead to greater minority access; it must be tied to the development of pluralistic norms of leadership.

These tactics can reduce the tracking and channelling of minorities and women into ill-fitting, stereotyped or isolated roles (frustration mechanisms #2, 3). Development of more sustained patterns of interracial contact also can counter patterns of informal exclusion and lack of access to information and normative expectations (frustration mechanism #7). Greater minority and female involvement in local decision-making roles may reduce the effects of non-representation, of white and male norms for participation and leadership, and perhaps the locus of organizational control itself (frustration mechanisms #4, 9, 14).

Community mobilizing strategies of change seek to organize relevant constituencies to create pressure and constraints on the organization. The key to this change strategy is the development of new bases of power with which to challenge and alter institutional authority. Some of these bases can be created inside the organization, via the development of strong loyalties among minorities and women and other low-power groups (perhaps in coalition with some authorities). Other bases can be created outside the organization, via efforts to organize consumers, clients and neighborhood constituencies to challenge racially and sexually discriminatory policies and programs, and to support internal advocates.

Such efforts can include the establishment of female and minority group networks or caucuses across various levels of the organizational hierarchy.

⁵A classic example of decentralization and flattening the bureaucracy can be found in Downing's account of the General Electric Company's efforts in the late 1960's (1979). While the intent of this effort was unrelated to affirmative action concerns, one effect was to create a larger number of openings at lower and middle-management levels.

Special orientation sessions for incoming female or minority workers could be conducted in addition to any regular company orientations; these orientations could be planned and executed by the designated group (female/minority), requiring only company sponsorship in providing work time and space. Female or minority workers, who otherwise might be quite isolated in a predominantly white male environment, would have the opportunity to establish contact and loyalties with others having similar ascribed characteristics and needs.

Taking this approach one step further, the organization could provide work time specifically set aside for "caucuses" to meet.⁶ Here women and/or minority group members could discuss or act on whatever issues seem relevant to them, based on their shared demography, status or identity. The functions of these groups could include: offering personal support to fellow members, developing a broader informal network, providing a mechanism for gathering information relevant to members as a group, or organizing for change. Such caucuses also could be an important source of support for minority/female advocates throughout the organization, especially those charged with affirmative action program responsibilities. All these efforts heighten the possibilities for "representation" of female or minority concerns (Alvarez, 1979).

Strong union efforts to advocate anti-racism and anti-sexism policies also could be relevant as part of this strategy. Although the union movement generally has been an ally of minority concerns and interests (Foner, 1974), local unions have not often taken the lead in affirmative action issues for women and minorities. Their positive action would be a good example of an internal organizing strategy:

⁶For examples of such groups, see Alderfer's (1980), discussion of the Black Manager's Association, and Bryant and Crowfoot's (n.d.) description of minority and female caucuses with representation on decision-making boards.

their lack of action deprives minority and female workers of a key collective resource.

Finally, some strategies are aimed at developing external support and pressure for the alteration of racism and sexism within the organization. For example, an external group could be established to monitor the organization and hold it publicly accountable for racism and sexism within its operation.⁷ Monitoring results can be shared through news releases, or in a series of meetings with constituents, managerial authorities or other groups. In some communities, attempts to control organizational access to resources such as labor and capital have generated substantial power in support of affirmative action efforts. Other communities have generated minority and female boycotts of organization products in order to force adoption of new policies and programs.

These tactics can reduce some of the social and political isolation of minority and female workers, and increase the representation of their collective interests (frustration mechanisms #3, 4, 7). In addition, the mobilization of female and minority pressure groups can solicit or force new responses by organizational authorities, and reduce the dominance of white and male organizational elites (frustration mechanisms #11, 12, 13, 14).

Checking assumptions about altering racism and sexism

The variety of approaches presented to altering racism and sexism in organizations have different utility in focussing on goals and policies, social relationships and networks, specific tasks or roles, and their support in established patterns of power and privilege. Selection of any one approach, within any specific organization, is based on several factors:

⁷⁷This approach has been tried with various public agencies, particularly those operating under a court order or consent decree to alter institutional discrimination (Cunninham & Carol, 1978; Science, 1980).

First, what do we believe about organizations? Are they solely places of profit-production and service-delivery, or are they places where racial and sexual justice should be matters of high concern? Does the public or private nature of the organization make any difference?

Second, what do we believe about race and sex relations? Is the situation of minorities and women the result of their not taking advantage of systemic opportunities, or is it the result of systemic oppression? If oppression, is it peripheral and "dysfunctional" to this society and organization, or is a deeply embedded and "functional" component of all social processes?

Third, what do we believe about affirmative action? Is it a useful program that can lead to gains in the continuing agenda of racial and sexual equality and justice? Or is it a necessary and short-term evil, best kept unconnected to any larger agenda? Or is it an illegitimate and dangerous effort?

Fourth, what do we believe about organization change? Do we see it primarily as an administrative and technical process of clarifying goals, innovating programs and upgrading skill? Or do we see it primarily as an interpersonal process of using human resources in new ways? Or do we see it primarily as a political process of mobilizing resources and challenging traditional ways of doing business? If all, with what specific mix?

Fifth, what do we believe is the reality in our local organization? What is the evidence of racial and sexual injustice in this organization? What are the barriers to realization of progress on the continuing agenda of change? What are the resources that can be mobilized?

Dealing with these questions explicitly should assist organizational decision-makers, and advocates at all levels, to make better use of tactics to implement affirmative action programs, and to make progress on the continuing agenda of anti-racism anti-sexism programs in the workplace.

V. Conclusion

In this paper we have attempted to broaden the common view of affirmative action programs in organizations. We have tried to set an agenda that demonstrates the need to move beyond heterogeneity in recruiting and hiring, to a more general concern with the reduction and elimination of all vestiges of racism and sexism in organizations. Only with such an agenda, and its related goals, can affirmative action efforts be sustained over time.

There are many impediments to realizing this agenda. First, it has no grounding in the law, the dominant force utilized to alter discriminatory policies and programs in major institutions. Second, it has only periodic and uncertain grounding in the value commitments of American managers and workers, service providers and consumers. Racism and sexism are deeply rooted aspects of the American society, even when they are paralleled by commitments to social equality and justice and modest changes. Third, the normal workings of most organizations include racially and sexually discriminatory programs, despite the best efforts of committed advocates of all races and sexes. Thus, change on these dimensions will be hard work! And fourth, our theory and research on anti-racist anti-sexist work in organizations is relatively unsystematic and unprogramatic. It barely tells us what to look for, and sheds even less light on how best to proceed.

We noted several organizational mechanisms that operate in ways that frustrate affirmative action efforts, and careful attention to their existence might provide clearer directions for change. We also suggested a series of change strategies that might be employed to counter prevailing patterns of organizational racism and sexism. Where possible, we have drawn attention to theoretical and practical considerations in their use, and have tried to provide specific examples of tactics that are consistent with each strategy.

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