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Relations among Marginalized Groups

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Abstract

Psychological research on intergroup relations has historically focused on the dynamics between members of dominant and marginalized groups. Recent research has examined the psychology underlying relations among members of different marginalized groups—or, marginalized group relations. While much of this work has focused on how members of different marginalized groups respond to discrimination, there are many ways in which discrimination could be described. A review of the extant work in this area reveals that people may be more sensitive to the notion that discrimination affecting an outgroup might also threaten them than they are to consider that discrimination affecting their ingroup might also pose a threat to other marginalized groups. Research on the potency of signals that marginalized groups are valued, by contrast, reveals that feelings of identity safety may require more explicit cues of group-based fairness than the extent of group-based unfairness that is required to elicit feelings of identity threat. These differential patterns of perceiving identity threat and identity safety may pose challenges to efforts toward equity. Overall, understanding how marginalized group members think about different forms of group-based fairness or unfairness is essential to understand the potential effectiveness of different forms of initiatives meant to support diversity, equity, and inclusion.

Keywords: discrimination, identity safety cues, intergroup relations, marginalized groups, stigma-based solidarity

Relations among Marginalized Groups

The world is increasingly interconnected. Global migration is at a record high as more people live outside of their birth country today than ever before (McAuliffe & Triandafyllidou, 2021). In high-income countries such as the United States (U.S.), migration is currently and expected to remain the primary driver of population growth for decades to come (UN DESA, 2022). Indeed, U.S. media outlets frequently report on the steadily increasing national racial and ethnic diversity (Schneider, 2023).

Of course, increased diversity and potential exposure to members of marginalized social groups is not limited to ethnic or racial lines. Within the U.S., the proportion of the adult population who identify as part of the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer community (LGBTQ) is also at a record high of 7.1% (Jones, 2022). This number is heavily skewed by age, such that roughly 21% of Gen-Z (those born between 1997 and 2003) identify as LGBTQ, whereas only 3% of those born before 1964 (Baby boomers or the Silent Generation/Traditionalists) identify similarly (Jones, 2022). These demographic patterns suggest that increasing contact with members of the LGBTQ community is likely to continue to dramatically increase. Given these trends toward greater social diversity on these dimensions and others, understanding how people from different marginalized groups relate to one another—or, marginalized group relations—is essential for understanding the present and future of how we relate to one another in diverse contexts more broadly.

While the psychological processes reviewed in this chapter may be relevant to a broad set of social identities and contexts, it is important to contextualize that most of the research discussed within the present chapter describes relations among marginalized groups within the U.S. We focus on this context for both practical and theoretical reasons. First, much of the

research conducted on the topic of marginalized group relations has been conducted within the U.S. setting, so to review the relevant literature we necessarily include this work. Furthermore, multiple racial groups are well-represented in the U.S. racial landscape, providing a useful context to assess how relations among groups that are marginalized along the same dimension of identity (e.g., along race, such as Asian and Black Americans) compare with relations among groups that are marginalized along different dimensions of identity (e.g., along race and sexuality, such as straight Black Americans and gay Americans who are not Black).

The organization of this chapter is centered around the different ways that people might think about discrimination—as affecting oneself personally or one’s ingroup, an outgroup, or shared experiences—and how each of these perceptions can impact how members of marginalized groups relate to one another. We begin by outlining how exposure to and the salience of discrimination affecting one’s own group influences people’s relations with other marginalized groups. We then detail how considering discrimination targeting a group to which one does not belong—an outgroup—affects relations among marginalized groups. We next discuss how multiple identification poses important conceptual complexities for understanding intergroup support and highlight important directions for further research, including how people perceive relations among multiple groups and when cues to group-based fairness can affect feelings of identity safety. Finally, we end with open questions and considerations for how the processes reviewed in this chapter may relate to diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI).

Research on Intergroup Relations among Marginalized Groups

While psychological research on intergroup relations often focuses on dynamics between two groups—frequently the dynamics between members of the majority and a marginalized group—in diverse contexts, multiple marginalized groups may be present. To understand how

diverse spaces can be equitable and inclusive, it is vital to understand how marginalized groups relate to one another and when they exhibit solidarity, or advocacy on behalf of others perceived to share common cause, similar experiences, or broader inclusive group membership (Craig et al., 2020).

Recent research on intergroup relations among marginalized groups has examined primarily how members of various marginalized groups respond to discrimination and what contexts elicit solidarity with other marginalized groups. Importantly, there are many ways in which discrimination could be described: focusing on discrimination affecting groups to which participants belong (ingroups), discrimination faced by groups to which participants do not belong (outgroups), or considering shared discrimination experiences. These distinctions in focus may have implications for people's perception of similarity or connection with marginalized outgroups and interest in supporting another group's pursuit of equity. We begin by covering the extant research examining how considering discrimination affecting one's ingroup influences relations among marginalized groups.

Relations Among Marginalized Groups When Discrimination Against the Ingroup is Salient

Some of the earliest work on understanding relations among marginalized groups focused on the question of whether the experience of facing discrimination due to one's own group membership might elicit sympathy or antipathy with members of other discriminated against groups (e.g., Allport & Kramer, 1946; Gordon, 1943). On the one hand, facing discrimination is an experience that could be viewed as something held in common with people from other marginalized groups, thus eliciting positivity and sympathetic intergroup attitudes (e.g., Starzyk et al., 2019; Vollhardt, 2015). At the same time, perceiving discrimination against a group to which one belongs threatens the value of that social identity, which often leads people to

derogate outgroups in order to reestablish a positive ingroup image (e.g., Branscombe et al., 1999).

Early correlational research on this question found support for derogatory effects. For example, in surveys, the greater the discrimination that Catholics and Jewish Americans perceived against their respective religious ingroups, the more they expressed negative attitudes towards a marginalized racial group, Black Americans (Allport & Kramer, 1946; Gordon, 1943). Later experimental research corroborated that people experience social identity threat from discrimination affecting their group and that this can elicit derogation of other marginalized groups (e.g., Craig et al., 2012; Craig & Richeson, 2014a). For example, White women expressed more racial bias after exposure to information about pervasive sexism, compared with a neutrally-valenced control condition (Craig et al., 2012). Likewise, straight racial minority group members expressed more negative attitudes and less support for political issues that would benefit gay Americans after reading about racial discrimination (vs. a control condition; Craig & Richeson, 2014a).

One insight of the stigma-based solidarity framework (see Craig & Richeson, 2016; Richeson & Craig, 2011) is that whether groups are marginalized along the same dimension of social identity is an important factor for predicting whether ingroup discrimination experiences will facilitate derogatory or coalitional tendencies among marginalized groups. To illustrate, in the U.S., Black Americans and Hispanic Americans each face marginalization due to their racial/ethnic identity—that is, they face marginalization along the same dimension of social identity of race. By contrast, straight Black Americans and gay Americans who are not Black face marginalization along different dimensions of identity (race and sexuality, respectively). In the research detailed above, members of one marginalized group considered discrimination

affecting their own group and were asked about their views of people marginalized along another dimension of social identity (e.g., religion and race, gender and race, race and sexuality). One takeaway from this set of findings is that salient discrimination against the ingroup can elicit derogatory responses toward outgroups facing marginalization based on a different dimension of social identity.

For groups marginalized within the same social identity dimension (e.g., within race: Black, Hispanic, and Asian Americans), however, a different pattern emerged. A series of laboratory experiments with Hispanic American and Asian American participants revealed that making discrimination towards one's own racial ingroup salient (anti-Hispanic and anti-Asian discrimination, respectively) led to both increased perceptions of similarity and the expression of more positive attitudes toward Black Americans (Craig & Richeson, 2012). This pattern replicates with Asian Americans' personal experiences with discrimination in the workplace (Jun et al., 2023), suggesting that prior lab-based findings may generalize to real-world settings. Overall, this research suggests that reminders of ingroup discrimination can elicit positivity and solidarity with members of marginalized groups who face discrimination along the same dimension of identity.

When Do Groups Marginalized Across Social Identity Dimensions Express

Solidarity? One takeaway from this body of work is that positive attitudes and solidarity may be relatively more difficult to spontaneously achieve from primes about ingroup discrimination among groups marginalized in different dimensions of identity (e.g., across gender and race). However, such solidarity clearly occurs and much of the recent work on intergroup relations among marginalized groups has considered the conditions that facilitate solidarity across dimensions of identity (e.g., Cortland et al., 2017; Warner et al., 2014). Deriving meaning, or

making sense of one's experience of discrimination, serves as one bridge to solidarity across identity dimensions. For example, when people consider what they can learn from their group's experiences with historical discrimination, they tend to report more moral obligations to support marginalized others (Warner et al., 2014). However, this effect backfires if a marginalized outgroup is perceived to be antagonistic towards one's own group (Warner et al., 2014), highlighting an important boundary condition.

Perceived similarity is also a potent connector. Considering ingroup discrimination experiences that are framed as similar to the experiences of another marginalized group can elicit positivity and solidarity across dimensions. For example, straight Asian Americans who read about historical legislation that criminalized interracial marriage using arguments about the alleged abhorrence and immorality of interracial unions expressed more positive attitudes toward gay men and lesbians and more support for gay rights issues such as same-sex marriage, compared with Asian Americans who read negatively-valenced group-relevant information unrelated to racism (Cortland et al., 2017). This pattern emerged regardless of whether the similarity information was blatantly or subtly presented. Other work (Burson & Godfrey, 2018) finds similar patterns, such that primes referencing either explicit similarities of racial discrimination or similarities in culture led racial minority group members to express more positive attitudes toward LGBTQ people compared with only a reminder of racial discrimination experiences alone. Overall, this suggests that information that frames ingroup experiences (in terms of discrimination or cultural values) as similar to the experiences of an outgroup marginalized across a different dimension of identity can facilitate solidarity and support for policies that benefit the other marginalized group.

When Do Groups Marginalized Within the Same Social Identity Dimension Express Derogation? While people marginalized in the same dimension of identity may perceive commonality and express positivity towards one another (Craig & Richeson, 2016; see also, Hindriks, Verkuyten, & Coenders, 2014), this is not a foregone conclusion. For example, in one study, Black men who were told their evaluations of a Native American job candidate would be made public to an unfamiliar group of White men upon whom they were situationally dependent (i.e., a situational induction of power) expressed greater prejudice, relative to Black men who were told their responses would remain private (Shapiro et al., 2008). This suggests that strong situational norms and power dynamics can obstruct solidarity among racially marginalized groups.

Perceptions of group-based threat can also play an important role. For example, an experimental manipulation inducing Hispanic Americans to perceive that their group's position in society is declining (e.g., losing status in education, politics, and private industry) and suggesting that they are similar to Black Americans was linked to greater anti-Black prejudice (vs. a control condition where participants did not read an article; Pérez, Robertson, & Vicuña, 2023). This is consistent with prior work (Gay, 2006) finding that Black Americans were more likely to stereotype and express negative attitudes toward Hispanic Americans to the extent that Hispanic Americans were more present in their local neighborhoods, but this was only the case in contexts where Black Americans perceived their ingroup to be economically disadvantaged relative to Hispanics. These findings are consistent with group threat theory (Blumer, 1958) and reveal that perceptions of one's group position in society as threatened can lead people to express bias toward members of groups marginalized in the same dimension of identity as oneself.

Interestingly, inducing Hispanic Americans to feel that their group's position was *improving* (e.g., making gains in education, politics, and private industry) was also linked to greater anti-Black prejudice and, subsequently, less support for policies benefitting Black Americans (Pérez, Robertson, & Vicuña, 2023). This effect was particularly pronounced among politically liberal Hispanic Americans. This raises intriguing questions and may suggest that any sense of hierarchy instability—either beneficial or detrimental to one's ingroup—could elicit intergroup bias. However, given that this has only been examined in this one study, more work is needed to investigate this possibility.

Other research has induced a sense of group position threat more indirectly through information about demographic trends (see also Blalock, 1967). Several experiments (Craig & Richeson, 2018) examined how Black Americans and Asian Americans responded to veridical information that the Hispanic American population is expected to nearly double in size by 2060. That is, consistent with prior findings with White Americans (Craig & Richeson 2014b), making these population changes salient elicited a shift towards support for more exclusionary policy positions among non-Hispanic racial minorities. This suggests that threat reactions to demographic change, while previously-observed among White Americans, may not be restricted to members of the majority group. Instead, making salient the population growth of an outgroup more generally may elicit concerns for one's own group among a broad set of the population.

Overall, this body of work suggests that information about discrimination faced by the ingroup can elicit positivity toward other marginalized groups, but that this is most likely when there is not salient threat or strong situational norms and there is some bridge to facilitate the perception of marginalized groups as similar (Burson & Godfrey, 2018; Craig & Richeson, 2016, 2018; Pérez, Robertson, & Vicuña, 2023).

Relations Among Marginalized Groups When Discrimination Against an Outgroup is Salient

Research examining intergroup relations among marginalized groups has also assessed how people respond to information about other groups' discrimination experiences. In one study, Asian American participants were given information about a company that was accused of environmental misconduct (the control condition) or of perpetrating prejudice against a Hispanic American employee either due to stereotypes of foreignness or low competence (prejudice conditions; Study 3, Sanchez et al., 2018). Regardless of which stereotype was mentioned, participants in the prejudice conditions reported greater expectations that managers at that company would treat Asian Americans unfairly, compared with participants in the control condition. This suggests that exposure to an outgroup's discrimination experiences activates concerns that one's own group might be discriminated against, even if the stereotype content differs across groups.

While the above research focused on relations among racially marginalized groups (i.e., marginalized within the same identity dimension of race), when people are marginalized in different dimensions of identity, outgroup discrimination often implicates the ingroup in a perpetrating or privileged role. For example, for lower-class White Americans, racial discrimination reflects outgroup marginalization experiences in which one's (racial) *ingroup* is societally dominant. In a series of experiments examining this kind of social context (Brown & Craig, 2020), people who read information about a social inequality in which they are part of the societally-dominant group (vs. a type of inequality not relevant to them or neutral information unrelated to inequality) reported that there was more discrimination affecting their social groups. For example, lower-class White Americans and upper-class people of color exposed to information about racial or class inequality, respectively, reported greater class-based or race-

based discrimination (among other self-relevant forms of discrimination). This is consistent with other research finding that information about racial or class-based inequity elicits greater hardship claims among White Americans and upper-class Americans, respectively (Phillips & Lowery, 2015, 2020). This pattern of results wherein self-relevant forms of hardship or discrimination are made salient in response to an outgroup's marginalization could conceivably spark solidarity (via perceived shared experiences). Conversely, it could also drive a wedge between members of different marginalized groups, if accompanied by a competitive mindset and competitive victimhood—efforts to establish one's group as *more* marginalized than an adversarial group (e.g., Noor et al., 2012).

In the work described above, only the outgroup was mentioned in the experimental materials about discrimination. Other recent research has assessed responses to information that focuses on outgroup discrimination but makes explicit connection with discrimination against participants' ingroup. For example, Asian and Hispanic American participants who read about shared marginalization experiences expressed more solidarity with people of color and were more supportive of policies regarding immigration that would stereotypically benefit the outgroup (support for unauthorized immigrants and the high-skill immigrants, respectively; Pérez, Vicuña, Ramos, Phan, Solano, & Tillett, 2023; see also Pérez, Vicuña, & Ramos, 2023).

Other work reveals that explicitly framing another group's political issues as similar to one's own group's political issues can also facilitate solidarity. For example, Black Americans' support for same-sex marriage rose if the issue was framed as a civil rights issue, rather than as a gay rights issue (Cortland et al., 2017). Overall, solidarity effects have been found with experimental primes that fairly subtly or more explicitly connect outgroup discrimination to one's own group's experiences.

While the salience of discrimination affecting an outgroup has been found to foster solidarity among marginalized groups, the extant work on this topic often explicitly frames the discrimination experiences as similar in the experimental materials (e.g., Pérez et al., 2023) or finds that stigma-based solidarity is more likely to occur to the extent that people feel their ingroup will also benefit (Chaney & Forbes, 2023). Thus, it's less clear if (and which) information about discrimination faced by an outgroup alone would elicit support for the outgroup. Recent experimental evidence finds that Americans broadly are more supportive of actions and policies intended to address racial health disparities, compared with economic racial disparities (Brown et al., 2023). Similarly, focusing on discrimination affecting a marginalized group can heighten perceptions of injustice and support for reparative action, compared with focusing on unearned advantages of a societally-dominant group (Dietze & Craig, 2021; Phillips & Jun, 2022). While more research is needed to fully understand which forms of discrimination elicit the greatest concern, the extant literature reveals that which aspects of inequality are highlighted is an important consideration for predicting support for equity-pursuing initiatives.

While the previously-described research focuses on information about pervasive discrimination against marginalized outgroups (group-level), other work has focused on how people interpret evidence that another person holds biased attitudes toward an outgroup (individual-level). For example, research has tested whether someone who holds negative attitudes about one group is similarly assumed to harbor prejudice against other marginalized groups (e.g., Chaney et al., 2021; Sanchez et al., 2017, 2018). For example, Asian American participants exposed to a White male evaluator expressing negative attitudes toward Hispanic Americans or Black Americans were similarly more likely to report that the evaluator would also

be biased against Asian Americans (their racial ingroup), compared with responses to an unbiased evaluator (Sanchez et al., 2018).

A similar pattern of results emerged in studies examining relations among groups marginalized across different identity dimensions. In several studies, White women and men of color were exposed to an alleged White male interaction partner expressing explicitly racist or sexist attitudes, respectively, or a partner whose social attitudes were unknown (Sanchez et al., 2017). Those exposed to a partner biased against an outgroup were more likely to believe that he also harbored biases against one's own group (sexist or racist views, respectively; Sanchez et al., 2017). Overall, bias expressed toward one group can have cascading effects in which not only do members of a group explicitly targeted by bias perceive a non-inclusive environment, but it also affects other marginalized groups' feelings of exclusion.

Generally, this body of work finds that people are often somewhat self-protective in interpreting evidence about discrimination targeting another group. Taken together with how people respond to information about ingroup discrimination, these findings suggest that people may be more sensitive to the notion that threats affecting an outgroup might also threaten them than they are to consider that threats to their ingroup might also pose a threat to other marginalized groups. This asymmetric awareness of potential shared experiences may pose challenges to efforts toward equity.

Solidarity and Allyship as Distinct Processes

Social psychology is increasingly engaging with the conceptual complexities that multiple identification poses to understanding intergroup processes within marginalized groups (e.g., Craig et al., 2020; Nair & Vollhardt, 2020; Pauker et al., 2018; Pham et al., 2023). Given that outgroup discrimination can facilitate the salience of facing discrimination along alternate

identity dimensions (Brown & Craig, 2020), understanding which “us” and which “them” guides relations among marginalized groups is particularly relevant. Because people belong to so many different social groups, the same person may support equity initiatives due to multiple potential identification-based pathways. For example, a straight Asian American man could support efforts to reduce discrimination against gay people because he views his experiences with racial discrimination as similar to the experiences of gay people (solidarity) or because he perceives unearned benefits due to his sexual orientation (allyship). Whereas solidarity reflects advocacy on behalf of others perceived to share common cause or experiences, allyship refers to advocacy by societally dominant group members intended to reduce the inequity that advantages their own group (Craig et al., 2020).

A recently-developed framework to understand support for equity takes this approach (Craig et al., 2020), positing that solidarity and allyship stem from distinct underlying psychological processes, rather than based on simply belonging to certain identities. For example, work in racial allyship, at times, implicitly treats any actions taken by a White person in support of advancing racial minority group causes as driven by processes related to their racial identity (e.g., guilt, privilege acknowledgment, personal needs; Brown & Ostrove, 2013; Radke et al., 2020). Much of this work recruits White samples that include people belonging to marginalized groups along other identity dimensions, such as White women, lower-class White people, or disabled White people (or any number of other additional social identities). Indeed, many studies on racial allyship include samples that include more White women than White men (e.g., Birnbaum et al., 2024). This sampling is understandable as humans are complex and possess a multitude of identities outside the one or two of interest to researchers. But without measuring the processes underlying support for action it makes it unclear whether a White

woman, for example, supports racial equity due to perceived shared experiences with discrimination or due to acknowledgment of racial privilege.

While many studies on solidarity assess processes such as the perceived connection between discrimination experiences, studies on allyship less often ask similar kinds of process questions that ascertain whether people are supportive of reparative action because their dominant identity is active and they view privileges associated with it as unjust. This leaves open an alternative possibility that considering the discrimination facing another group activates the notion that oneself and one's ingroups face discrimination, which elicits support via this perceived shared experience (see Brown & Craig, 2020). Thus, it is important for future work to measure the underlying processes of equity pursuits to disentangle whether reparative action better reflects allyship and/or solidarity. Without a clear understanding of the processes underlying support for action, it will be unclear which kinds of equity efforts may be preferred—those intended to dismantle privilege or to diminish discrimination (see Lowery et al., 2012).

Importantly, the complexity of social identity and the sheer number of identities people possess creates a conceptual challenge for understanding intergroup relations more generally, not only for understanding relations among marginalized groups. In recent studies with online convenience samples, 96% of participants identified at least one identity dimension on which they face discrimination (Brown & Craig, 2020). While these samples were not representative, this highlights that most people can identify at least one identity that they belong to that is societally devalued. As a result, the conceptual distinction between relations among marginalized groups (vs. among dominant groups or mixed-status majority-minority groups) is murky.

As noted in earlier sections of this chapter, much of the experimental work within social psychology examining relations among marginalized groups uses experimental manipulations

that make specific forms of discrimination salient, hence focusing participants on a particular form of discrimination and identity. While this has the benefit of clarifying which lens participants are most likely using to respond to questions (see Petsko & Bodenhausen, 2020), allowing for greater experimental control, this artificially narrows participants' focus to one or two identities when they have dozens to choose from.

Indeed, qualitative work examining activists' motives and identification strategies reveals that activism is often motivated by considering the intersections of multiple identities, including both advantaged and marginalized identities (e.g., Curtin et al., 2016; Nair & Vollhardt, 2020). That is, many people rely on their experiences of marginalization along one identity dimension to grasp structural inequalities in other dimensions—including those in which they are part of the societally-dominant group—and the connections made among these forms of marginalization strengthens their commitment to activism (Curtin et al., 2016). Further, people who have multiple marginalized identities are more likely to support coalitions among marginalized groups, compared with those with fewer marginalized identities (e.g., Pham et al. 2023). Overall, while still burgeoning, this body of work suggests that people integrate multiple aspects and identities within themselves and that this consideration can spur support for equity, both through solidarity and allyship.

Future Directions and Considerations

While research seeking to understand intergroup relations among marginalized groups has flourished over the last decade, there are outstanding questions and limitations in need of further examination to provide a more complete understanding of these processes.

Coalitional Thinking in Diverse Contexts

The presence of multiple social groups within societies requires an understanding of how people consider intergroup relations among more than just two groups (see Dixon et al., 2020 for further elaboration on this point). While most intergroup relations research focuses on relations between two groups, a growing body of empirical work considers how people think about relations among multiple social groups simultaneously. Research conducted in the Netherlands assessed the attitudes among various religious and ethnic minority groups (Hindriks et al., 2014). This work revealed that members of different Muslim minority groups (e.g., people of Turkish or Moroccan descent) reported more positive attitudes toward one another compared with their attitudes toward non-Muslim minority outgroups (e.g., Surinamese or Antilleans; Hindriks et al., 2014). There is also recent work suggesting that different processes facilitate Asian Americans seeing commonality with Hispanic and Black Americans (Huang, 2021). Overall, this highlights potential limits to generalizability as the underlying mechanisms that govern marginalized group members' views of other marginalized groups may depend on the specific outgroup being considered in diverse spaces.

Research has also begun to seek to understand people's assumptions of which groups will coalesce, or support one another, in diverse contexts (e.g., Collingwood, 2020). People often expect that members of marginalized groups are committed to social justice and will sympathize with a variety of other marginalized groups (Saguy et al., 2020; Warner & Branscombe, 2012). Assumptions of shared interests appear key to expectations of who is likely to coalesce: among diverse sets of Americans, which racial groups were expected to work together on political issues could be reliably predicted based on racial stereotypes of group interests (Craig et al., 2022; Zou & Cheryan, 2017). Importantly, while expectations of coalitions among marginalized groups were more common (Craig et al., 2022), perceived shared interests can also underlie assumptions

of and support for marginalized group members' coalescing with the dominant group (see Craig & Lee, 2022; Orhan & Craig, 2024). Understanding perceptions of shared interests among various groups will only grow in importance for a diversifying workforce, as these beliefs are a strong predictor of who is seen as likely partners toward (or against) equity.

Looking Beyond Discrimination or Threat

Much of the experimental work examining how marginalized groups relate to one another uses discrimination primes and the work that does not still often uses threats to social identity or group status as manipulations (e.g., Craig & Richeson, 2018; Pérez, Robertson, & Vicuña, 2023). Some DEI trainings incorporate discussions of discrimination and societal inequality and the knowledge gained about how people respond to information about discrimination from this body of work will be vital for designing effective trainings and initiatives. For example, facilitators can use this research to guide how they focus discussions of discrimination for their audience—focused on participants' own experiences, those of another group, or shared experiences.

It is also imperative, however, to understand how people respond to situations in which identity threat is less active. Organizations can structure their environments to signal that marginalized social identities are valued (identity safety cues). Research in which organizational *fairness* toward an outgroup was made explicitly salient (via gender inclusive bathroom signs or diversity initiatives meant to support another marginalized group) finds that these explicit cues can enhance feelings of identity safety and favorable perceptions of organizational climate among other marginalized groups (Chaney & Sanchez, 2018; Chaney et al., 2016; however, see Johnson & Pietri, 2024). Additionally, employees from marginalized groups seen as facing similar adversity or endorsed as an ally can cue identity safety for people from other marginalized groups (see Johnson & Pietri, 2023; Pietri et al., 2018, 2019). This research reveals

that explicit cues of inclusiveness of an organization or of an ally can signal identity safety that transfers across marginalized groups.

It is important to note, however, that studies in which identity safety was less explicitly salient showed a narrower range of who signaled identity safety. For example, White women perceived a Black male target as less likely than a White male target to hold negative stereotypes about women's intelligence, which mitigated identity threat effects, but this did not extend to an Asian male target who did not share similar stereotypes in the workplace (Chaney et al., 2018). Further, signals that outgroups are valued do not encourage feelings of safety among people whose identity structures predominantly focus on one dimension (Johnson & Pietri, 2024). Taken together with the previous work on responses to discrimination and consistent with loss aversion (Kahneman & Tversky, 1979), these results suggest that facilitating feelings of identity safety may require more explicit cues of group-based fairness than the extent of group-based unfairness that is required to elicit feelings of identity threat. However, the specific situational and person factors that facilitate success in cueing identity safety are not fully known, making translation to concrete suggestions for DEI initiatives challenging.

Considerations for DEI and DEI initiatives

This body of work has implications for organizational efforts to provide inclusive environments and programs aimed at raising awareness and reducing experiences of discrimination and inequity. Specifically, which groups are focused on and whether distinct groups' experiences are explicitly connected in these organizational contexts likely shape people's responses. For example, information about outgroup discrimination seems to more reliably activate concerns that oneself and one's own group will be discriminated against than information about ingroup discrimination activates concerns for other groups. As such, if people

only reflect on their own group's discrimination in DEI trainings, this may facilitate pursuit of equity for their own group, but not necessarily others.

Drawing from the stigma-based solidarity framework (Craig & Richeson, 2016), if people consider similarities among multiple forms of oppression in DEI trainings, this may facilitate marginalized group members' support of one another. Importantly, however, these perceived similarities can backfire in environments perceived as zero-sum or competitive (e.g., Gay, 2006; Noor et al., 2012), highlighting the importance of cultivating an inclusive environment.

Diversity initiatives can foster diverse and inclusive workforces; however effective implementation is fraught with potential pitfalls (see Dover et al., 2019). For example, while diversity statements that emphasize cultivating social group diversity can enhance feelings of inclusion among marginalized groups (Kirby et al., in press), similar statements can reduce dominant groups' feelings of inclusion (for a recent review see Iyer, 2022). Rather, the kinds of messages that are less effective in cultivating inclusion among marginalized groups, such as focusing on diversity in perspectives and skills or the instrumental gains to be had from diverse environments, are often preferred by dominant group members (Kirby et al., in press; Starck et al., 2021). Thus, if people are focused on their dominant identity, they may be more amenable to allyship than solidarity and highlighting the moral reasons to engage in reparative action may facilitate action (Brown et al., 2023; Radke et al., 2020).

Importantly, explicit signals of organizational fairness and inclusion, such as diversity initiatives that explicitly seek to support marginalized groups, are more effective in cultivating a sense of identity safety among marginalized groups than subtle cues, such as the mere presence of marginalized others. Thus, initiatives that are maximally inclusive to all may be difficult to

achieve and careful consideration of the goals of DEI initiatives before embarking is needed to effectively reach the intended audiences. Overall, tailoring the focus to the specific goals of a given context (e.g., which group(s) are underrepresented in an organization or of most concern) will be key to designing effective DEI initiatives.

Conclusions

The extant research conducted on how marginalized group members relate to one another has largely focused on how different discrimination experiences influence intergroup attitudes and solidarity. This work reveals that which aspects of discrimination are focused on and how they are framed influences whether people respond with support for equity (and for whom). A number of asymmetries emerged. For example, people more readily connect another group's discrimination experiences to themselves than connect their own discrimination experiences to another marginalized group. Further, while both explicit and subtle cues activate identity threat and exclusion, identity safety is better facilitated by explicit cues of inclusion. Understanding when marginalized groups feel included and when they support initiatives meant to foster equity (either through DEI initiatives or other forms of social change) and inclusivity is needed to effectively manage diverse workforces. Unravelling these complexities as well as those related to incorporating the reality of multiple intersecting identities are essential to understand the practicalities of living in a diverse and increasingly interconnected social world.

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