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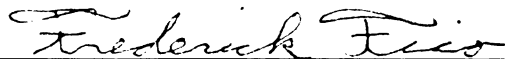
**MEDIA FRAMES, INTERRACIAL ATTITUDES AND  
SUPPORT FOR AFFIRMATIVE ACTION**

presented by

John D. Richardson

has been accepted towards fulfillment  
of the requirements for the

Ph.D. degree in Mass Media



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MEDIA FRAMES, INTERRACIAL ATTITUDES AND SUPPORT FOR  
AFFIRMATIVE ACTION

By

John D. Richardson

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## ABSTRACT

### MEDIA FRAMES, INTERRACIAL ATTITUDES AND SUPPORT FOR AFFIRMATIVE ACTION

By

John D. Richardson

An experiment investigated how media frames can alter the cognitive processes by which people evaluate political issues. In particular, the joint effects of media frames and interracial attitudes were examined in the context of *Grutter v. Bollinger* (2003), a U.S. Supreme Court decision upholding an affirmative action policy used to admit students to law school at The University of Michigan.

Editorials were presented in one of four randomly assigned versions, all containing the same description of the *Grutter* ruling, but altering which frame(s) the editorial presented to endorse it. The Remedial Action editorial emphasized affirmative action is necessary to redress past and present discrimination, as well as inequality in schools in minority communities. The Diversity editorial emphasized that affirmative action is good for all students—they learn to work and get along with people different from themselves toward the goal of becoming leaders in an increasing global marketplace. Control (neither frame) and Combined (both frames) editorials were also tested.

Neither editorial frame significantly altered support for affirmative action. However, results indicated editorials presenting the Diversity frame moderated the influence of interracial attitudes on support for affirmative action. Interracial attitudes strongly predicted support for affirmative action among white participants reading Control or Remedial Action editorials. However, among those reading the Diversity

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editorial, the relation between interracial attitudes and support for affirmative action fell sharply to an insignificant level.

Results further demonstrated the editorial frame inductions directly impacted interracial affect. Remedial Action editorials induced white participants to score lower on Katz and Hass' (1988) Pro-Black Affect Scale, compared to the other three experimental conditions, and higher on Katz and Hass' Anti-Black Affect Scale, compared to the control condition.

This study extends prior research demonstrating that media frames and individual predispositions can interact, altering the cognitive processes by which citizens decide political issues. Specifically, frames can deactivate the linkage between interracial attitudes and political evaluations, even for an issue directly involving race. Media frames can also alter interracial affect. An unintended consequence of the Remedial Action frame, which traditionally has dominated much of the discourse in favor of affirmative action, could be to induce whites to view blacks less favorably.

Dedicated to the memory of my brother

Jeff

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## CHAPTER 1

### Introduction

To traverse the world men must have maps of the world.

-- Lippmann, 1922, p. 16

Media frames present preferred meanings and points of view the reader is invited to accept—sometimes the invitation is accepted, other times not (Gamson et al., 1992). Predicting and explaining when media frames will exert influence, and when not, is the framing researcher's quest. The obvious place to begin this investigation is to systematically manipulate media frames and observe whether and to what extent they directly induce attitudinal change. A rich body of research has followed this approach.

Prior research also suggests that media frames can interact with individual predispositions, altering the strength or direction of their influence on ultimate attitudes (See e.g., Domke et al., 1999; Kinder & Sanders, 1990; Nelson et al., 1997). Discovering the cognitive processes by which media frames and individual predispositions jointly influence evaluations of attitudinal objects holds promise toward expanded theoretical understanding. Borrowing from Lippmann's (1922) metaphor, different media frames (maps) could induce audience members to follow very different routes, even if leading to the same ultimate destination.

This study simultaneously examined the direct effects of media frames on audience member attitudes and their moderating influence on individual predispositions.

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The context of the study was a controversial and important social issue: affirmative action.

The individual predispositions selected for investigation were interracial attitudes. Race is certainly a topic about which people hold a variety of attitudes. Race is also a topic where mass media content can be particularly influential: “The media are not only a powerful source of ideas about race. They are also one place where these ideas are articulated, worked on, transformed, and elaborated” (Hall, 2003, pp. 90-91). Johnson and colleagues (1971) observed that while blacks must traverse back and forth between the world of whites and the world of blacks, most whites have few meaningful contacts with blacks. Accordingly, these scholars reasoned, whites’ thoughts and feelings about blacks could be particularly susceptible to mass media influences.

Media frames examined in this study were drawn from Richardson and Lancendorfer’s (2004) content analysis of newspaper editorial responses to *Grutter v. Bollinger* (2003), a U.S. Supreme Court ruling on affirmative action. Richardson and Lancendorfer identified two alternate frames that editorial writers used to support the *Grutter* decision: (1) the Diversity frame, emphasizing that including people from many racial and ethnic backgrounds strengthens organizations and society, and (2) the Remedial Action frame, emphasizing that discrimination has unfairly disadvantaged members of certain racial/ethnic groups. Drawing on Social Identity Theory and Procedural Justice Theory, it was predicted these frames would have differential effects on white participants’ attitudes and cognitive processes.

## CHAPTER 2

### Literature Review

This chapter reviews: frame analysis; the moderating influence of frames on individual predispositions; framing of affirmative action in media discourse; the emergence of the Diversity frame; the effects of affirmative action frames; Social Identity Theory; Procedural Justice Theory; and interracial attitudes and affect.

#### *Framing*

Entman (1993) defined framing as a process by which a communicator engages to: "...select some aspects of perceived reality and make them more salient in a communicating text, in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and/or treatment recommendation for the problem described" (p. 52). Kinder (1998) offered a similar definition: "Frames seek to capture the essence of an issue. They define what the problem is and how to think about it; often they suggest what, if anything, should be done to remedy it" (p. 172).

Goffman (1974) introduced the terms, *strip* and *frame*, to describe the process by which people interpret complex events. A strip refers to the underlying reality, i.e., the "raw batch" of issues and occurrences under scrutiny. However, because most situations involve many things going on simultaneously, strips often give rise to the fundamental question: "What is going on here?" A frame is a definition of a situation (strip), built up in accordance with principles of organization. Hence, frames are devices fabricated to lend meaning to ambiguous factual realities.

Although the term framing is attributable to Goffman (1974), it was Lippmann (1922) who introduced the underlying concept: "For the most part we do not first see, and

then define, we define first and then see” (p. 81). Lippmann argued that a news story is not a “mirror of social conditions,” but merely a “stylized account” of certain aspects of those conditions journalists regard as interpretive:

A report is the joint product of the knower and the known, in which the role of observer is always selective and usually creative. The facts we see depend on where we are placed, and the habits of our eyes (p. 80).

In the context of mass media, framing is concerned with which elements receive the most attention within a particular media artifact. Framing research presumes that: (1) issues, events and people are multi-faceted entities capable of being described and packaged in a variety of ways, and (2) these descriptions and packages can affect audience members’ perceptions (Price et al., 1997). The persuasiveness of frames is influenced by many factors, including source and message attributes (Tewksbury et al., 2000).

Some scholars argue that frames often emerge fortuitously (Entman, 1993; Kahnemann & Tversky, 1984). Chyi and McCombs (2004) contended media outlets intentionally change frames over time to make their coverage of ongoing stories appear fresh and in-depth. Others emphasize that media workers and/ or outside sources often craft frames with specific intent to influence public opinion: “Journalists themselves may concoct their own frames, while powerful communication agents, including elected officials, interest groups and lobbyists, create and promote frames with hopes of planting them in mass-media outlets” (Nelson & Oxley, 1999, p. 1041). But whether frames are created by media workers or borrowed from outside sources, Enzenberger (1970/2003) observed that all media content is inherently manipulated (i.e., framed, slanted, distorted):

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Thus every use of the media presupposes manipulation. The most elementary processes in media production, from the choice of medium itself to shooting, cutting, synchronization, dubbing, right up through distribution, are all operations carried out on the raw material. There is no such thing as unmanipulated writing, filming, or broadcasting. The question is therefore not whether the media are manipulated, but who manipulates them (p. 265).

Similarly, Bennett (1993) observed that even in the context of scientific surveys, no standard or objective format exists for phrasing questions. Every survey question (like every media artifact) is “loaded,” i.e., framed. In sum, because all media use symbols (words and/or images) to represent issues, events and/or people, framing in media content is ubiquitous.

### *Three approaches to frame analysis*

D’Angelo (2002) identified three major paradigms that have shaped scholarly analysis of framing: cognitive, constructionist, and critical. According to D’Angelo, the cognitive paradigm is characterized by a process in which journalists negotiate alternate interpretations of an issue, in line with the norm of balanced presentation.

Constructionists focus more on the role of journalists as creators of interpretative packages that reflect and add to the public discourse about a topic. Critical scholars interpret framing primarily as the product of hegemonic ideology (i.e., the world-view of elite and powerful social actors).

Kahnemann and Tversky’s (1984) work exploring the concept of invariance has greatly influenced the *cognitive approach* to framing scholarship. Intuitively, the

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preferability of two alternatives (e.g., issue positions) should depend on objective advantages and disadvantages, without regard to the manner in which they are described. However, a number of impressive experiments demonstrate that frame invariance does not hold: participants' confidence in a particular choice can change dramatically depending on the frame employed. Frames emphasizing the risk of loss create a bias for retention of the status quo; frames emphasizing potential gain induce more willingness to change.

Price and colleagues (1997) used the metaphor of switching trains to explain the cognitive approach to frame analysis. Under this viewpoint, frames increase the relative salience of certain aspects of an issue or event. Framing devices used to accomplish this include message organization, content selection and the use of thematic structure. Story attributes with increased salience activate pre-existing ideas within the person, priming the receiver to regard these attributes as applicable to the cognitive task at hand: "By prompting the activation of certain constructs at the expense of others, frames can directly influence what enters the mind of audience members" (p. 504). In other words, frames can serve to direct a train of thought into the recipient's head, albeit they do not control it.

Several scholars (See, e.g., Domke et al., 1999; Entman, 1993; Gamson, 1992; Gamson & Modigliani, 1989; Kinder & Sanders, 1990; Nelson & Kinder, 1996) suggest that media frames are analogous to cognitive schemata—both act as central organizing principles to give coherence and meaning to an array of inputs. Some framing theorists suggest that frames exert influence by increasing the salience (accessibility) of some considerations relative to others (See, e.g., deVreese, 2004; Domke, 2001; Domke et al.;

Druckman, 2001a; Iyengar, 1990; Kinder, 1998; Shen, 2004). Nelson and colleagues (Nelson & Oxley, 1999; Nelson et al., 1997) offered an alternative conceptualization, suggesting that framing effects are more accurately viewed as altering the relative weight (importance) that receivers assign to competing considerations.

Shen (2004) offered another way to view the influence of frames. When message recipients encounter frames, they do not bring a blank slate. Instead, the receiver possesses schemata acquired through experience, some of which are chronically accessible. Under this view, the persuasive impact of a frame depends largely on the extent to which it is congruent with pre-existing beliefs—audience members are unlikely to accept frames incongruent with their pre-existing beliefs.

The *constructionist approach* to framing draws on Carey's (1975) ritual view of communication, which posits that media serve primarily to represent reality in accordance with culturally shared beliefs:

We create, express, and convey our knowledge of and attitudes toward reality through the construction of a variety of symbol systems: art, science, journalism, religion, common sense, mythology.... communication is not some pure phenomenon we can discover; there is no such thing as communication to be revealed in nature through some objective method free from the corruption of culture (p. 17).

Scholars applying the constructionist paradigm emphasize that because communication is a symbolic process, the person selecting these symbols has wide latitude to present any number of representations of reality: "Far from being stable, the social world is a chameleon, or, to suggest a better metaphor, a kaleidoscope of potential

realities, any of which can be readily evoked by altering the ways in which observations are framed and categorized” (Edelman, 1993, p. 232). The constructionist paradigm emphasizes framers’ capacity to produce accounts which are seemingly factual, but are nonetheless instilled with value-laden undertones: “This means news stories are not so much fact as artifact; that is, they represent the active construction of the social world by newswriters and newsmakers. This process of news creation is a major site of ideological production” (Gray, 1987, p. 385).

Like the constructionist approach, the *critical approach* to frame analysis assumes that historical events cannot be communicated in the “raw.” Instead, media workers must transform them into artifacts consisting of symbols (words and/or images). However, while the constructionist approach contends that media workers have wide latitude in this process, critical theorists assert media workers are constrained by the dominant, hegemonic ideology: “Any society/culture tends, with varying degrees of closure, to impose its classifications of the social and cultural and political world. These constitute a *dominant cultural order*, though it is neither univocal nor uncontested” (Hall, 1980, p. 134, emphasis original). Recognizing that the professional norms of journalism proscribe balance and objectivity, critical theorists argue these ideals are subsumed by wider socio-cultural and political ideological assumptions which journalists, like most everyone else, take for granted as objective truths.

From the critical perspective, media discourse is viewed primarily as a reflection of the values of the powerful and the elite. In line with this reasoning, Schudson (2002) observed that: (1) the day-to-day business of journalism involves the interaction of reporters with government officials (with the latter group wielding much greater

influence), and (2) the media are a more important forum for communication among elites than with ordinary citizens. Schudson further indicated that: “All of this work recognizes that news is a form of literature and that among the resources journalists work with are the traditions of story telling, picture making, and sentence construction they inherit from their own cultures, with *vital assumptions about the world built in*” (p. 262, emphasis supplied).

### *Frame disputes*

Framing can be particularly important when public opinion about an issue is divided. Goffman (1974) coined the term *frame dispute* to describe a situation in which: “...parties with opposing versions of events may openly dispute with each other over how to define what has been or is happening ” (p. 322). Frame disputes are characterized by fundamental disagreement as to the nature, causes, implications, and preferable courses of action surrounding an issue (Entman, 1993).

Swidler’s (1986) discussion of cultural change is enlightening in this regard. According to Swidler, culture can be viewed as a toolkit of symbols and worldviews useful toward solving problems, organizing experience, and evaluating reality. This toolkit includes beliefs, ritual practices, art forms, ceremonies, language, stories, gossip, and the rituals of daily life. When problems arise, members of the culture attempt to resolve them by implementing one or more devices from the toolkit. However, in periods of social transformation, or *unsettled lives*, dissatisfaction with accepted ways induces social actors to create new strategies of action. To gain acceptance, these new strategies of action must compete with the existing toolkit and be perceived to outperform it.

Frames can be viewed as devices included within the cultural toolkit (Entman, 1993; Gamson et al., 1992; Gamson & Modigliani, 1989; Price et al., 1997). When issue conflicts create dissatisfaction, frame disputes will occur. Frames will ebb and flow in prominence and be revised and updated to accommodate change (Gamson & Modigliani). The media are a prime site for this contest:

The mass media are a system in which active agents with specific purposes are constantly engaged in a process of supplying meaning.

Rather than thinking of them as a set of stimuli to which individuals respond, we should think of them as the site of a complex symbolic contest over which interpretation will prevail (Gamson, 1992, p. xi).

Edelman (1993) argued that frame disputes are characterized by newsmakers exploiting the media for their own purposes: "...while in theory the media can inform and educate, regimes and interest groups have learned that in practice they can use the media to place mass audiences in invented worlds that justify the outcomes of any policies at all" (p. 242).

### *The Moderating Influence of Frames*

A moderator is a variable affecting the direction and/or strength of the relation between an independent or predictor variable and a dependent or criterion variable (Baron & Kenney, 1986). Within a correlational analysis framework, a moderator is a third variable that affects the correlation between two other variables. In analysis of variance terms, a moderator effect occurs when there is an interaction between a focal independent variable and a factor that specifies the conditions for its operation.

Media framing experiments typically examine whether manipulating the content of a media message can affect audience members' attitudes toward the subject matter. Such experiments are, in essence, attempts to understand how external situational changes affect people's attitudes. However, external situational determinants such as frames are only part of the equation. Internal predispositions of the individual message recipient also influence attitudes. Attitudes can be influenced by how the object is framed, the individual predispositions of the person, or both. One-size-fits-all approaches that ignore the effects of individual differences are inherently incomplete.

This problem is neither new nor unique to media framing research. Cautioning that applied psychology was becoming a discipline "divided against itself," Cronbach (1957) argued for an approach integrating the influence of both the person and the situation on behavior:

We are not on the right track when we conceive of adjustment or adaptive capacity in the abstract. It is always a capacity to respond to a particular treatment. The organism which adapts well under one condition would not survive under another. If for each environment there is a best organism, for every organism there is a best environment (p. 679).

More recently, Fiske (2000) observed that generations of researchers examining inter-group attitudes have alternated between individual and contextual levels of analysis—using *either* measures of individual difference *or* experimentally manipulated situations as the independent variables.

A mere handful of media framing studies represent the exception to this rule, simultaneously examining the effects of both participants' individual differences and



random assignment to experimentally manipulated frame conditions (See, e.g., Domke et al., 1999; Kinder & Sanders, 1990; Nelson et al., 1997). An advantage of this latter approach is that it promises to better elucidate our understanding of the interplay between frames and participants' pre-existing values and beliefs. Given the complexity and often emotionally-charged nature of attitudes toward affirmative action, this two-pronged approach seems particularly appropriate: "In short, progress in understanding white opposition to racial change will require taking up more than one theory at a time" (Kinder, 1986, p. 168).

Media frames can interact with individual differences, making it possible for frames to have different effects on people with different predispositions (Domke, 2001; Domke et al., 1999; Price et al., 1997; Shen, 2004; Tewksbury et al., 2000). One arena in which media frames and individual predispositions might interact is the interface of politics and race. Domke (2001; Domke et al., 1999) theorized a process in which media frames could activate pre-existing racial stereotypes and influence whether message recipients apply them in a politically meaningful way. Alternatively, Domke envisioned the possibility that other frames could "weaken—or least temporarily hinder, or impede" linkages between racial stereotypes and cognitions about the underlying issue.

### *Affirmative Action Frames*

Affirmative action presents a classic frame dispute—attempts to define it inevitably lead to controversy (Crosby & Cordova, 1996). Indeed, the term *affirmative action* itself is not a neutral label—it is a frame suggesting the desirability of corrective measures (Gamson, 1992). As an abstract principle, affirmative action can be viewed as an umbrella term for a number of related policies: "Affirmative action is a catchall phrase

referring to laws, customs, and social policies intended to alleviate the types of discrimination that limit opportunities for a variety of demographic groups in various social institutions” (American Psychological Association, 1995). Accordingly, affirmative action means different things in different contexts and care should be taken to focus on specific affirmative action policies.

The earliest affirmative action policies were initiated to redress the effects of racial discrimination, particularly against African-Americans:

You do not wipe away the scars of centuries by saying: ‘now you are free to go where you want, do as you desire, and choose the leaders you please.’ You do not take a man who for years has been hobbled by chains, liberate him, bring him to the starting of a race, saying ‘you are free to compete with the others,’ and still justly believe you have been completely fair (President Johnson’s address at Howard University, June 4, 1965.

Quoted in: “The Slow and Tortured Death of Affirmative Action,” 2003).

#### *Affirmative action in media discourse*

Prior research provides historical perspective on how the mass media have framed affirmative action (Clawson et al., 2003; Entman, 1997; Gamson & Modigliani, 1987; Richardson & Lancendorfer, 2004; Van Dijk, 1991). Different researchers have introduced a variety of terms to describe these frames. One parsimonious way to categorize this discourse conceptualizes one frame opposed to affirmative action, *No Preferential Treatment*, and two alternative frames that support affirmative action, *Remedial Action* and *Diversity*.

Gamson and Modigliani (1987) analyzed media discourse on affirmative action between 1969 and 1984, in four content genres: network television news, news magazines, political cartoons, and syndicated newspaper columns. Two frames eventually dominated the discourse: *Remedial Action* (RA) and *No Preferential Treatment* (NPT). In accord with President Johnson's remarks above, the RA frame asserts that race-conscious policies are necessary to redress continuing effects of discrimination. In sharp contrast, the NPT frame opposes affirmative action, asserting that regardless of the motive or mechanism, race-conscious policies are unjust.

Gamson and Modigliani (1987) also coined the term *package* to describe a particularized sub-theme emphasizing one aspect of a media frame. For instance, media discourse displaying the NPT frame in 1984 most often used the *reverse discrimination* package, which asserts that affirmative action violates the rights of individuals who are not members of the groups targeted for preference. Other packages they identified within the NPT frame were *unfair advantage* (arguing that affirmative action gives benefits without regard to individual merit), *unintended harm* (arguing that affirmative action could be detrimental for minorities), and *SES* (arguing that economic hardship, rather than race, should be the criterion for allocating affirmative action benefits).

Gamson and Modigliani (1987) showed that affirmative action framing varied across time and content genre. On network television news, the RA frame dominated the discourse in 1969, but by 1984 the NPT frame was used more often. In news magazines, the NPT frame dominated the discourse in 1969, was briefly surpassed by the RA frame in 1979, but the NPT frame again dominated discourse in this genre in 1984.

Interestingly, a somewhat different picture emerged in their analysis of openly

opinionated media content. Syndicated newspaper columns were equally likely to present the NPT and RA frames throughout the period studied. The researchers attributed this finding to a common practice among newspapers to carry an equal number of conservative and liberal syndicated columnists. Political cartoons were overwhelmingly more likely to use the RA frame in every year studied.

Van Dijk (1991) performed a qualitative textual analysis of affirmative action discourse in British newspapers in 1985-86. He observed that affirmative action received very little press coverage. When affirmative action was covered, the sources were almost always white and the slant was highly negative. Although sources and journalists paid lip service to the ideal of equal opportunity, the NPT frame dominated British media discourse on concrete affirmative action measures. Terms derogatory of affirmative action characterized the discourse: “massive blunder,” “race relations mumbo jumbo,” “reverse discrimination,” “burden,” “intrusive,” “degrading to blacks,” “radical philosophy,” and “controversial.”

Entman (1997) examined media discourse on affirmative action during the first half of 1995. He reported that national news magazine stories opposed affirmative action by a 3:1 margin; network television news reports were evenly split. The NPT frame completely dominated reports slanted against affirmative action. Also consistent with Gamson and Modigliani (1987), reverse discrimination was the NPT package displayed most often. Overall, Entman found that news coverage exaggerated whites’ opposition to affirmative action, distorted affirmative action into a black-white battleground, and ignored the fact that affirmative action policies directly benefit not just blacks, but also white women and other racial/ethnic groups.

Entman's (1997) findings in pro-affirmative action reports were particularly interesting. Only 21% asserted that "discrimination remains a problem"—i.e., about one-fifth specifically invoked the RA frame. Nineteen percent asserted affirmative action: "achieves its important objectives," and 9.6% asserted affirmative action: "helps the entire society, not just blacks, other minorities, or women." Entman did not describe these new "frames" in great detail. Richardson & Lancendorfer (2004) observed these "frames" might have foreshadowed what they eventually identified as the Diversity frame.

Clawson and colleagues (2003) examined newspaper stories covering *Adarand v. Peña* (1995), a U.S. Supreme Court decision overturning the consideration of race when awarding federal highway construction contracts. Their analysis of three mainstream newspapers (*The New York Times*, *Los Angeles Times*, and *Washington Post*) showed that 65% of stories invoked the NPT frame. Twenty-four percent of mainstream newspaper stories, and 67% of stories in a sample of Black newspapers, invoked a frame the researchers dubbed: *dramatic setback*. Described as an outgrowth of the RA frame, the dramatic setback frame asserted that policies to redress racial discrimination remained necessary and decried their reversal.

Richardson and Lancendorfer (2004) analyzed 158 newspapers' editorial responses to *Gratz v. Bollinger* (2003) and *Grutter v. Bollinger* (2003), two U.S. Supreme Court decisions addressing affirmative action in student admissions at The University of Michigan. The underlying decisions overturned a quantitative admissions procedure awarding extra points to minority applicants to the undergraduate school (*Gratz*), but upheld a qualitative admissions procedure that treated membership in an

underrepresented minority group as a “plus factor” for law school applicants (*Grutter*). The *Grutter* decision represented the first time a majority of the Supreme Court recognized diversity as a compelling state interest that could justify the consideration of race—it also reversed lower court rulings (See, e.g., *Hopwood v. Texas*, (5th Cir., 1996)).

Richardson and Lancendorfer (2004) found the discourse surrounding The University of Michigan cases was dominated by a frame not revealed in any prior content analysis of news/editorial media: *Diversity*. More than 80% of the newspaper editorials sampled presented the Diversity frame in a positive light, compared to 30% for the RA frame and 17% for the NPT frame (some editorials presented two frames simultaneously).

#### *The Diversity frame*

The liberal tradition supporting early affirmative action efforts assumed race and ethnicity are superficial—group membership makes no difference (Allport, 1954; Gandy, 1998). However, a growing school of thought challenges this assumption. Under this perspective, racial and ethnic differences are neither fictitious nor pejorative; to the contrary, inter-group differences are presumed real and valuable: “Since we are all different, we all lose something important if the place we go to college or work fails to reflect the diversity around us” (Gamson, 1999, p. 45). Jones’ (1998) diversity hypothesis articulates this point of view:

[S]ocietal cohesion and organizational effectiveness can be increased when racially and culturally diverse citizens are represented or employed, provided they are represented throughout all levels of the organizational structure; diversity exceeds some minimal ratio; the diverse citizens or



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workers have feelings of common purpose (we-ness); and racial and cultural identity are valued (p. 658).

In the context of frame analysis, Richardson and Lancendorfer (2004) referred to this perspective as the Diversity frame.

Bowen and Bok (1998) observed that educators have stressed the value of diversity for more than 150 years. Initially, diversity was embraced in the context of regional differences—allowing students from the North and South to associate with dissimilar people they had not known before was believed to promote learning.

According to Foster (1993), the extension of this concept to racial and ethnic differences is attributable to Justice Powell's concurrence in *Regents of the University of California v. Bakke* (1978). Therein, Justice Powell opined that a racially diverse student body enhances the educational experience of all students, in part by promoting a robust exchange of ideas in the classroom. Significantly, Powell shifted focus away from the backward-looking RA frame to a frame recasting affirmative action as a forward-looking policy that could also benefit non-minority students and society at large (Foster).

Beginning in the mid-1980s, the argument for diversity gained momentum in corporate America. Management publications transformed affirmative action from a legal mandate into *diversity management*—a new way to raise profits. Specifically, business experts asserted two reasons why firms should develop diverse workforces: (a) to better understand and serve an increasingly diverse and global market, and (b) because White males constituted a declining percentage of the skilled labor pool—soon there would not be enough of them to fill all highly-skilled positions (Edelman et al., 2001; Kelly & Dobbin, 1998).



In the context of education, Asante's (1991) conceptualization of multiculturalism sheds light on the rationale underpinning the Diversity frame. Asante observed that for most of our history, a white-only perspective dominated the curriculum of American schools. Major achievements in history, science and the humanities were attributed only to whites, while contributions made by people of color were ignored, slighted or misattributed. In contrast, multiculturalism acknowledges that our system of knowledge is the product of contributions from people of many different racial and ethnic backgrounds. Asante contended that recognizing the value of all racial and ethnic groups would be a catalyst for the emergence of a common American culture. Moreover, he argued that a multicultural approach to education promotes the self-esteem of minorities and increases Whites' awareness of the achievements of other cultures, thereby reducing Whites' aptness to assume a superior attitude.

Supporters of diversity in education assert that race-conscious policies provide a number of benefits. Diversity in the classroom can promote learning—students are exposed to different perspectives, thereby learning to work effectively and get along with people different from themselves (Bowen & Bok, 1998; Brown, 2002; Crosby et al., 2003; Gamson, 1999; Gurin, et al., 2002; Palmer, 2001; Terrenzini et al., 2001). Indeed, because housing patterns and school districts in America remain highly segregated, most Whites and minorities enter college having little prior contact with diverse peers (Gurin, et al.). Diversity can also prepare students for democratic citizenship (Brown; Crosby, et al.; Palmer). Advocates further assert that diversity in education provides a stream of well-educated minorities who can go on to serve and lead their communities (Crosby et al.; Palmer).

Of course, the Diversity frame has critics. The fundamental assumption of the Diversity frame is that members of different racial and ethnic groups are culturally different, in part because of White domination (Merelman, 1994). Some challenge this assumption, arguing that it is specious to assume that culture follows race/ethnicity (See e.g., Foster, 1993; Hollinger, 1998). Diversity has also been criticized as being too amorphous—if differences are valuable, then why not value left-handedness, obesity, red hair, etc.? (Foster). Terrenzini and colleagues (2001) suggested the effects of diversity in education are small and might not be linear, i.e., there might be a point where further increasing diversity could be counter-productive.

Other critics of the Diversity frame view it as a retreat from the original goals of affirmative action, particularly parity. Although diversity requires more than a token representation of minorities to attain its objectives, diversity does not necessarily require proportionate racial/ethnic representation, which some view as an essential element of equality (*Grutter v. Bollinger*, 2003; Jones, 1998; Palmer, 2001). By refusing to look backward at the legacy of racism in America, the diversity frame could serve to perpetuate the existing racial hierarchy:

[T]he liberal defenders do not expressly deny the presence of past or current racial discrimination. Instead they claim disinterest in either, arguing that it is more fruitful and less divisive to focus on the future than to stir the ashes of a troubled past. But the effect is much the same. The liberal defense is framed as if there is no structural discrimination to remedy (Lawrence, 2001, p. 954).

Indeed, some advocates of the Remedial Action frame argue the Diversity frame reduces people of color into useful tools for exploiting global markets, conquering developing nations, or policing minority neighborhoods (Fancher, 2003; “The Slow and Tortured Death of Affirmative Action,” 2003).

The Diversity frame presents a rationale for race-conscious policies quite distinct from the traditional RA frame. Many businesses and educational institutions have embraced diversity for some time. The mass media and legal system have now become sites for grappling with diversity and its implications. How the general public will react to the Diversity frame remains to be seen. Prior research on the effects of other affirmative action frames offer some insights on this question.

#### *Effects of Affirmative Action Frames*

A number of prior studies have examined the effects of framing on attitudes toward affirmative action and/or its beneficiaries. Results have been mixed, in part due to features of different research designs. Nevertheless, prior research does appear to suggest that frames can: (a) affect attitudes toward affirmative action, and/or (b) moderate the effects of individual predispositions on attitudes toward affirmative action.

Kinder and Sanders (1990) employed a survey-based experiment to examine the effects of framing on support for affirmative action in employment and college admissions. Respondents were randomly assigned to answer questions invoking either of two NPT packages drawn from Gamson and Modigliani (1987): reverse discrimination (emphasizing harm to whites outside the target group) or unfair advantage (emphasizing that beneficiaries did not earn the benefits of the affirmative action). The frame induction did not significantly affect support for affirmative action; whites opposed it strongly in

either framing condition. Nevertheless, the frame induction did affect which factors respondents took into consideration. Whites' support for the principle of equal opportunity was a positive predictor of support for affirmative action in the unfair advantage condition. However, in the reverse discrimination condition, whites' support for the principle of equal opportunity was negatively associated with support for affirmative action. Interestingly, Kinder and Sanders' (1990) interpretation was that the unfair advantage frame induced whites to access negative racial sentiments under which: "Public opinion [of white people] on affirmative action becomes a kind of referendum on the moral character of black citizens" (p. 96). Unfortunately, the researchers did not measure respondents' attitudes or affect towards Blacks.

Fine (1992) examined data from a national survey using a split-sample approach similar to Kinder and Sanders (1990). Again, respondents were randomly assigned to answer survey questions invoking either of two NPT packages: reverse discrimination or unfair advantage. This time opposition to affirmative action was stronger in the reverse discrimination framing condition, among Whites and Blacks alike. Consistent with Kahnemann and Tversky's (1984) work concerning the relative attractiveness of frames emphasizing gain versus loss, Fine concluded the public appears more opposed to an unwarranted loss than an undeserved gain.

Murrell et al. (1994) conducted a survey-based experiment involving alternative frames for supporting affirmative action. Frames were manipulated between-subjects in three conditions: (1) to compensate for past discrimination (the RA frame), (2) to provide diversity within the organization (the Diversity frame), or (3) a control condition, offering no justification for affirmative action. Results showed that compared to the control

condition, both the Remedial Action and Diversity frame conditions garnered more support for affirmative action. However, there was no significant difference in support for affirmative action between respondents in the Remedial Action versus the Diversity framing condition.

Sniderman and Piazza (1996) conducted experiments in which participants read descriptions of fictional government programs. One study involved the issue of government assistance to a fictional laid-off worker. The target beneficiary's race and dependability were manipulated between-subjects. A striking result was that politically conservative participants were *more* likely to favor government assistance when the target was described as an African-American. Race of the target made no difference for liberal participants. Targets described as dependable garnered more support from both groups. The researchers interpreted their result with enthusiasm:

It has long been assumed that whites are dug in on racial issues. In fact, large numbers of whites can be dislodged from the positions they have taken on many issues of race by calling their attention to countervailing considerations. ... A large number of Americans are open to argument to tip the scales, not on every issue of race but on the largest number of them. The case for public policies to assist blacks can be won; and it can be lost (p. 64).

Sniderman and Piazza (1996) further argued that opposition to affirmative action is driven more by program characteristics than racial sentiments. If racial sentiments were the primary impetus, they contended, then white respondents should have been less willing to help the target in the black beneficiary condition.

In a subsequent experiment, Sniderman and Piazza (1996) instructed participants to read descriptions of fictional “equal opportunity” programs. Follow-up questions mentioning a quota system favoring Blacks induced White participants to describe Black people as irresponsible and lazy. The researchers interpreted these findings as indicating that affirmative action causes white backlash:

The new race-conscious agenda has provoked broad outrage and resentment. Affirmative action is so intensely disliked that it has led some whites to dislike blacks—an ironic example of a policy meant to put the divide of race behind us in fact further widening it” (p. 62).

However, given that quotas represent the most rare and extreme form of affirmative action, it is possible that lesser forms of affirmative action might have no such impact.

Kuklinski et al. (1997) conducted an elegant program of survey-based experiments that unobtrusively examined between-groups attitudes toward affirmative action. Their results showed that respondents opposed affirmative action policies much less when framed as making “an extra effort” compared to giving “a preference.”

Entman and Rojecki (2000) conducted qualitative interviews to examine Indiana residents’ attitudes toward affirmative action. Many were vehemently opposed to affirmative action, even though they had no personal experience with it. The researchers interpreted this finding as suggestive that mass media reports were a powerful influence. In addition, the researchers also found that when they mentioned that special preferences are routinely given to other groups, such as children of alumni and athletes, respondents’ opposition to affirmative action softened.

Quinn et al. (2001) conducted an experiment in which participants read fictional newspaper editorials about affirmative action. The editorials manipulated attributions of minorities' responsibility for causing the problem of disparate minority unemployment, as well as their responsibility for solving it. Results showed that when editorials were framed such that minorities were portrayed as responsible for *either* causing *or* solving the problem, support for affirmative action was higher. Frames suggesting minority responsibility for *both* causing and solving the problem, or *neither*, induced less support for affirmative action.

Clawson and Waltenburg (2003) conducted an experiment in which participants read fictional news stories concerning the Supreme Court's ruling in *Adarand v Pena* (1995). In line with the content analysis of Clawson et al. (2003), the researchers manipulated the story between-subjects, presenting either the *dramatic setback* frame (a regrettable retreat from remedial action), or the NPT frame. Results showed that white participants in the NPT frame condition were more supportive of the *Adarand* decision, i.e., the NPT frame induced more support for a ruling against affirmative action.

Several conclusions can be drawn from this body of research. First, there is abundant evidence that framing can affect attitudes toward affirmative action (Clawson & Waltenburg, 2003; Entman & Rojecki, 2000; Fine, 1992; Kuklinski, et al. 1997; Murrell et al.; 1994; Sniderman & Piazza, 1996; Quinn et al., 2001). The power of frame manipulations to affect support for affirmative action can depend on the race of the respondent; whites' support for affirmative action appears more susceptible to framing effects (Clawson & Waltenburg; Kuklinski). Framing can also moderate the effects of individual predispositions (prior attitudes) on attitudes toward affirmative action (Kinder

& Sanders, 1990). There is also evidence suggesting some affirmative action frames might negatively influence whites' attitudes toward blacks (Kinder & Sanders; Sniderman & Piazza).

Murrell et al. (1994) is the only published study examining the impact of the Diversity frame. They found the Diversity frame induced more support for affirmative action compared to a control condition offering no justification for affirmative action, but it did not induce significantly greater support than the RA frame. One possible explanation is that the Diversity frame and RA frame are equally better than nothing, but neither more so than the other.

Another possibility is that Murrell and colleagues' (1994) experimental manipulation was too weak. A tersely worded survey question might have been insufficient to induce their respondents to give much consideration to the Diversity frame's implications. Respondents likely had little prior familiarity with the concept of diversity—media discourse surrounding affirmative action appears rarely to have mentioned it (Richardson & Lancendorfer, 2004). Moreover, while Murrell and colleagues tested the impact of the Diversity frame on support for affirmative action, they did not test its potential impact on affect toward African-Americans nor on the relative weight respondents assign to underlying beliefs. Hence, the prior literature leaves many questions about the Diversity frame unanswered.

Despite this gap in prior research, there is good reason to hypothesize that the Diversity frame can affect respondents quite differently than the Remedial Action frame. Social Identity Theory and Procedural Justice Theory suggest the Diversity frame might sway respondents to view affirmative action and its beneficiaries more positively.



### *Social Identity Theory*

To understand the effects of media content on attitudes toward affirmative action and its beneficiaries, it is necessary to consider how people think and feel about social groups. Disparities between social groups gave rise to affirmative action. Social group membership is the criterion for receiving affirmative action benefits. Indeed, the debate over affirmative action can be viewed as a clash of ideas concerning social groups:

“Without denying that racism remains a problem or that ideological conservatism matters for White attitudes, affirmative action is about the place racial groups should occupy in American society” (Bobo, 1998, p. 999).

A social group can be defined as two or more people who perceive themselves to be members of the same social category (Tajfel & Turner, 1979; Turner, 1982). Unlike the categorization of things, every social category is either an in-group that includes the perceiver or an out-group that excludes them (Simon, 1993). Social categories are an important component of every person’s self-concept; they provide a frame of reference that helps create and define a person’s place in society (Tajfel & Turner).

Social Identity Theory posits that the need for positive self-esteem motivates people to perceive the in-group favorably and as differentiated from out-groups (Brewer, 1979; Tajfel & Turner, 1979; Turner, 1982). Identification with a social category is also associated with a perception that in-group members are less differentiated from the self. People come to perceive outcomes for other in-group members as their own and to like in-group members more. A sense of togetherness, belonging and *we-ness* develops:

“Thus group members do not perceive themselves as isolated individuals but as members

of a social entity whose properties are thereby modified” (Brown & Turner, 1981, p. 35). All of this leads to bias favoring the in-group in evaluations and behavior.

Social Categorization Theory (Turner, 1985) holds that the self-concept includes both a personal identity and a social identity. Personal identity is the individuated self, i.e., the characteristics that differentiate an individual from others within a given social context. Social identity is the sum total of significant social categorizations in which a person includes the self (Brewer, 1991; Turner, 1982, 1985). Hence, Social Categorization Theory rejects the assumption that the true person lies only in their idiosyncrasies: “Human beings are both and equally individual persons and social group members” (Oakes & Turner, 1990, p. 114).

Tajfel and colleagues’ (1971) *minimal group* experiments elegantly demonstrated that social identity and the resultant in-group bias are primarily cognitive phenomena—the very act of social categorization, in and of itself, is sufficient to generate bias. Participants were induced to identify with ad hoc groups based on meaningless membership criteria, e.g., aesthetic preference for Kandinsky or Klee; a supposed inclination to over-estimate or under-estimate the number of dots in a cluster projected briefly on a screen. These “groups” had no interaction, no instrumental value and were completely anonymous. Nevertheless, when asked to allot money to people identified only by their “group membership,” participants with nothing at stake discriminated in favor of in-group members, even when detrimental to the greater common good.

Race is a salient category for social identification that can lead to exaggerated perceptions of difference and bias favoring one’s own racial group (Jones, 1998). The pervasive tendency to discriminate on the basis of race has been confirmed in meta-

analyses of numerous studies (Kraiger & Ford, 1985; Mullen, et al., 1992). Social constructions of race can have profound psychological and social meaning (Omi, 2001; Omi & Winant, 1994; Winant, 2000).

Of course, most people identify with many social categories. Different situational stimuli work to activate a particular social identity at a given time:

Distinctiveness of a given social identity is context-specific. It depends on the frame of reference within which possible social entities are defined at a particular time, which can range from participants in a specific social gathering to the entire human race (Brewer, 1993, p. 158).

Stimuli which can heighten the salience of a social identification include: conflict or confrontation, competition between identity groups, unequal distribution of resources, group distinctiveness in a particular setting, inter-group similarities, shared fate, interdependence, the number of in-group and/or out-group members present, and physical proximity (Brewer, 1979; Brewer & Harasty, 1996; Brewer & Miller, 1984; Brown & Turner, 1981; Garcia-Prieto et al., 2003; Kramer & Brewer, 1984; Tajfel & Turner, 1979; Turner, 1982, 1985). Tajfel and Turner argued that immutable social categories such as race intensify inter-group bias and conflict. Among highly prejudiced people, racial identity is more chronically salient across many situations (Brown & Turner, 1981; Byrne & McGraw, 1964).

An analogy offered by Oakes and Turner (1990) is instructive. When a person looks at a busy street, there are several ways to conceptualize the scene: as traffic; as cars, buses, trucks and motorcycles; as Hondas, Fords, BMWs, etc. The underlying stimuli remain the same, but the subjective momentary experience of similarity and difference



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depends on which typology is employed. None of these typologies is more or less valid; they neither distort nor deny the existence of one another. They simply call up different bundles of information, making some considerations more salient. Put another way, different frames suggest the applicability of different organizing heuristics.

Similarly, attitudes toward social issues and other people can depend on which social identity is activated. The ability to call up different social identifications and act accordingly, depending on external circumstances, is neither irrational nor primitive. Rather, it is an adaptive process making possible pro-social relations such as social cohesion, cooperation and influence (Turner, 1985).

#### *Re-categorization*

Social identity theory explains why people discriminate in favor of in-group members. But how can people be persuaded to treat out-group members more equitably? One approach is *re-categorization* (Dovidio et al., 1995; Gaertner et al., 1989, 1993, 1994), which attempts to reduce inter-group bias by inducing group members to identify with a larger social group. The concept posits that by inducing people to identify with a larger group, the number of in-group members can be expanded. Thus, people formerly regarded as out-group members can be re-categorized as in-group members. Once regarded as in-group members, bias against the former out-group members diminishes. In a sense, re-categorization invokes the logic of the familiar maxim: “If you can’t beat them, join them.”

Several studies suggest that inducing group members to change their perceptions of group boundaries can invoke different social identities, thereby reducing inter-group bias. Inducing experimental participants in two groups to re-conceive of themselves as

belonging to a single, super-ordinate group improves favorable affect toward former out-group members (Dovidio et al., 1995; Gaertner et al., 1989, 1993). The perception of a super-ordinate group identity can also cause people to act in a manner more consistent with the common good (Kramer & Brewer, 1984). A survey of high school students demonstrated that perceptions of the student body as “one group” and “on the same team” were positively associated with lower affective bias toward members of different racial and ethnic groups (Gaertner et al., 1994). Similarly, a survey of ethnically diverse union members revealed that strong identification with the super-ordinate group (their employer) was positively associated with values conducive for organizational cohesion (Huo et al., 1996). Collectively, these studies suggest that positive affect toward others is a consequence, rather than a cause, of group cohesiveness (Brewer & Harasty, 1996).

Several scholars have suggested that social identity and re-categorization are implicated in the affirmative action debate. Chang (1996) observed that an inadvertent effect of affirmative action policies is to call attention to conflict between different social groups. Gandy et al., (1997) argued blacks are more likely to favor affirmative action because they are more likely to identify with black affirmative action recipients. Brewer (1995) noted that the concept of diversity implies social identities; within an organization, various demographic identifies exist side-by-side with work subgroup identities and the super-ordinate identity of the entire firm or institution. She suggested that the concept of re-categorization could improve organizational performance by reminding members of rival departments about their common super-ordinate identity. Garcia-Prieto et al. (2003) observed that because team members have multiple, dynamic and context-dependent social identities, diversity is best understood as a subjective

experience; the important social identity is not that into which a person “objectively” falls, but the one to which they subjectively feel they belong. Perhaps most directly on point were Murrell et al. (1994):

In the case of affirmative action, individuals may be motivated to promote their own group’s interests. Thus, resistance to affirmative action policies is likely contingent on the extent to which these policies are seen as benefiting out-group members at the expense of in-group members. This conceptualization suggests that strategies that reduce the extent to which affirmative action is seen as benefiting an out-group (e.g., Blacks) relative to the in-group (e.g., Whites) should reduce opposition to affirmative action. Thus, refocusing or recategorizing social boundaries may reduce evaluations of affirmative action on the basis of racial group boundaries (p. 83).

Re-categorization toward a common super-ordinate identity does not require people to forfeit their subgroup identities. Two groups can be viewed as operating independently toward a common goal, such as the offensive and defensive units of a football team (Gaertner et al., 1994). Optimal distinctiveness theory posits that a balance between personal and social identity is consistent with good mental health (Brewer, 1991). The self-concept involves a fundamental tension between two opposing processes: people want to be like others, but they simultaneously want to be unique. In other words, people are motivated to be “different and the same at the same time.”

### *Procedural Justice Theory*

Social identity is clearly not the only factor that influences attitudes toward affirmative action and its beneficiaries. For example, many Blacks oppose affirmative action and many Whites support it (Krysan, 2000; Schumann et al., 1997; Steeh & Krysan, 1996). This strongly indicates something more than social identity is at work. Many scholars assert perceived procedural justice is a powerful determinant of attitudes toward affirmative action.

Tyler and colleagues (Lind et al., 1993; Lind & Tyler, 1988; Tyler, 1990; Tyler & McGraw, 1986; Tyler, et al., 1986) challenged the long-standing presumption that political opinions are determined primarily on the basis of economic self-interest. They observed that many people hold opinions about issues in which they have no personal economic stake, and that people can also take positions contrary to their economic self-interest. Tyler and colleagues argued the explanatory power of economic self-interest was limited and suggested an alternative explanation: Procedural Justice Theory.

Distinct from the fairness of policy outcomes, procedural justice concerns decision-making methods and includes factors such as: consistency, predictability, neutrality, trustworthiness and respect for all interested parties. Tyler and colleagues (Lind et al., 1993; Lind & Tyler, 1988; Tyler, 1990; Tyler & McGraw, 1986; Tyler, et al., 1986) posited that people use perceived procedural justice as a heuristic to evaluate policy questions, especially when issues are complex, ambiguous or have uncertain outcomes. This heuristic is learned in early childhood and its use is not necessarily conscious.



Subsequent work indicates that perceived procedural justice could predict support for affirmative action. However, a complicating factor is that perceived fairness can motivate either support or opposition for affirmative action (Golden et al., 2001). Perceptions of procedural justice depend on which allocation rule is judged most fitting; i.e, justice is context-dependent (Azzi, 1992; Barnes Nacoste, 1994; Brewer & Harasty, 1996; Clayton & Tangri, 1989; Esses & Seligman, 1996; Jencks, 1988; Nacoste, 1987; Opatow, 1997; Peterson, 1994).

Thibault and Walker (1978) described one influential allocation principle, the *proportionality rule*. This principle holds that benefit distribution should be proportional to the contributions made or achievements attained by those competing for the benefit. Barnes Nacoste (1994) observed that affirmative action could lead to a perception that the proportionality rule is being violated. Indeed, Gamson & Modigliani (1987) identified an NPT package in mass media content, *unfair advantage*, which clearly invokes the proportionality principle. Likewise, Chang (1996) asserted that affirmative action is procedurally unjust because it deprives candidates outside the target group of an equal chance to compete.

A countervailing allocation rule identified by Thibault and Walker (1978) is equity. This principle holds that all human beings are worthy and society has an obligation to help the disadvantaged. Jencks (1988) observed that no society fully reconciles the conflict between the norms of proportionality and equity, in part because every moment in time is both a beginning and an end. For instance, viewing admission to college as an end suggests the proportionality principle—students should be admitted on the basis of grades, test scores, recommendations and other past achievements. However,

if college admission is viewed as a beginning, i.e., as a gateway to prosperity and a share of the American dream, then equity for all groups becomes more salient.

Prior research suggests that both of these allocation principles, equity and proportionality, influence evaluations of affirmative action policies. When participants are specifically told that both merit and group membership factor into benefit allocation decisions, they support affirmative action programs more (Major et al., 1994). “Milder” affirmative action programs that help minorities without “penalizing” Whites (e.g., job training, mentorship) receive overwhelming support (Bobocel et al., 1998; Kravitz, 1995; Kravitz & Platania, 1993; Krysan, 2000; Nosworthy et al., 1995; Schumann et al., 1997; Steeh & Krysan, 1996; Summers, 1995). Racial prejudice is a strong predictor of opposition to these types of programs (Bobocel; Nosworthy). However, as race becomes weighted more heavily as a preferential factor, support for affirmative action decreases (Bobocel; Kravitz; Kravitz & Platania; Krysan; Nosworthy et al.; Schumann, et al.; Skedsvold & Mann, 1996; Steeh & Krysan ). As the weight of race as a preferential factor increases, the correlation between racial prejudice and opposition to affirmative action decreases (Bobocel; Nosworthy).

Implicit in this body of work is an assumption (by participants) that race is irrelevant when evaluating merit (Summers, 1995). However, several scholars have challenged this assumption (Crosby, 1994; Crosby et al., 2003; Eberhardt & Fiske, 1994; Jackman & Muha, 1984; Moses, 1999; Winkelmann & Crosby, 1994). Under this view, merit is a myth—an ideological construct used to perpetuate the advantaged position of privileged groups. Merely examining grades or test scores is specious under this view, because it ignores that members of different groups do not have equal access to resources

and are not treated equally by authority figures. Swain (2001) observed there is more than one definition of merit, and that universities should be given wide latitude to define merit in a flexible way.

Schmidt and Hunter (1999) advocated a different view. They argued that standardized tests (such as the S.A.T.) are valid and unbiased—the problem is the failure of minorities to develop the skills and abilities measured by the tests. Schmidt and Hunter further contended that ignoring such objective measures of merit would reduce economic productivity and the standard of living for everyone, whites and minorities alike. Hence, the conflict between equity and proportionality persists in academe as well.

Another complicating factor in deciding questions of fairness is the level of analysis. Brickman and colleagues (1981) observed that a procedure viewed as just when applied to society as a whole can seem very unfair when the focus shifts to a particular case involving specific individuals. For instance, the exclusionary rule in court proceedings (making evidence inadmissible if obtained illegally) is viewed as promoting justice by forcing police to respect citizens' right to freedom from unreasonable searches. However, when it leads to release of a particular criminal clearly guilty of a heinous crime, the exclusionary rule could seem much less fair.

A micro-level focus is apparent in the arguments of many affirmative action opponents. For instance, Liu (1998) argued that affirmative action is procedurally unjust because it benefits individual minorities who might not personally have been victims of discrimination, while harming non-minorities who personally committed no discriminatory act (See also, Foster, 1993). Other opponents argue minority group members who are personally “well off” should not be allowed to receive affirmative

action benefits (See, e.g., Esses & Seligman, 1996). Indeed, both of these sets of arguments appeared in NPT packages identified by Gamson & Modigliani's (1987) content analysis of news media. Jemmott & Tebbets (1980) reported affirmative action opponents were more likely to refer to micro-level information about Mr. Bakke (the white plaintiff seeking admission to medical school in the case of *Regents of the University of California v. Bakke* (1978)), while articles slanted against the *Bakke* ruling (i.e., in favor of affirmative action) more often referred to macro-level issues.

Scholars have suggested that shifting the focus from the micro-level to the macro-level can soften opposition to affirmative action (Clayton & Tangri, 1989; Esses & Seligman, 1996; Opatow, 1997). Clayton and Tangri argued that affirmative action should be viewed from the macro-level because it induces people to more accurately perceive inter-group disparities and the effects of discrimination. A micro-level focus, in contrast, tends to perpetuate the myth that discrimination is no longer widespread. Interestingly, Clayton and Tangri observed that a macro-level focus is counterintuitive; people more naturally tend to view situations from a micro-level perspective.

#### *Procedural justice and social identity*

To conceptualize social identity and perceived procedural justice as entirely separate would be inaccurate. Assessing the fairness of policies affecting groups necessarily activates mental representations of social categories (Brewer & Harasty, 1996). Hence, in-group bias and procedural fairness can be viewed as two norms exerting simultaneous influence (Braithwaite, et al. 1979; Brewer & Harasty; Tajfel et al., 1971). For instance, Tajfel and colleagues' minimal group experiments revealed participants' tendency to discriminate in favor of in-group members was tempered by considerations

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of fairness. Tougas and Veilleux (1989) argued that even in-group members will endorse affirmative action only if they believe the procedure is fair. Azzi's (1992) experiments showed that whites induced to identify with minorities were more likely to equally divide power among groups, i.e., to invoke an equity allocation principle, rather than proportionality. Therefore, not only is there an interplay between social identity and perceived fairness, it also appears that personalizing the out-group can influence which allocation rule is invoked.

Opotow (1997) described an additional consideration affecting perceptions of fairness: the scope of justice. It is possible to believe some groups do not deserve just procedures:

Concerns about fair procedure and distributions are irrelevant outside our boundary of justice. Moral values and concerns about entitlements do not apply to those viewed as nonentities, undeserving or expendable. Instead, we justify harm that befalls those outside as inevitable or as deserved because they are "morally excluded" from our scope of justice (Opotow, p. 237).

Thus, it is conceivable that a procedure recognized as unjust if applied to in-group members might not be perceived as unjust if it affects out-group members only.

### *Interracial Attitudes*

As discussed previously, the interface of politics and race is an arena in which media frames and individual predispositions can interact. Accordingly, this study pre-tested participants on interracial attitudes, toward the goal of attaining a richer

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understanding of their joint effects with the Diversity and Remedial Action frames. A discussion of these interracial attitudes is provided below.

### *Modern racism*

For centuries in America, respected members of white society openly expressed values and beliefs that were unabashedly racist. McConahay (1981, 1986) argued that in the second half of the twentieth century, disclosure of Nazi atrocities and the emergence of the American civil rights movement created an environment in which it became no longer tenable for elites to express blatantly racist beliefs. He theorized that as a result, a more contemporary form of racial prejudice emerged: *modern racism*.

Modern racism is conceptualized as a combination of the Protestant work ethic and negative affect toward African-Americans. The principle tenets of modern racists are: (1) discrimination is no longer widespread; (2) blacks push too hard and too fast into areas in which they are not wanted; (3) blacks' demands, and the tactics used to achieve them, are unfair; (4) recent gains by blacks are undeserved; (5) racism is bad but the foregoing beliefs are not racist, simply facts, and; (6) true racism is limited to old-fashioned notions such as segregation and the alleged genetic inferiority of blacks. Modern racism is believed to be acquired early in life and more difficult to change than the cognitive and policy preference components associated with it.

A key component of modern racism is a desire not to appear prejudiced. McConahay (1981) argued that because the opinions and beliefs associated with modern racism can be justified on other grounds (primarily the Protestant ethic), it often goes unacknowledged. Fiske (2000) observed that modern racists hold policy positions that: "... all happen to disadvantage minorities; the high-scoring individual thus has



ideological excuses for bias. The difference between modern racists and modern nonracists lies in the political beliefs of the racists” (p. 301).

The concept of modern racism is controversial. Critics’ primary objection is that modern racism is not clearly distinct from the underlying policy issues, particularly affirmative action and school busing (See, e.g., Katz et al., 1986; Sniderman & Tetlock, 1986; Wood, 1994). Under this view, race-neutral principled objections to policies are confounded with modern racism. The result, critics charge, is that many people are falsely labeled as racists.

Nevertheless, prior research suggests that beliefs associated with modern racism strongly predict opposition to affirmative action, above and beyond race-neutral beliefs. McConahay’s (1986) Modern Racism Scale is one widely used measure. However, measures of several analogous constructs also yield similar results.

For instance, Jacobson (1985) reported that a seven-item measure of new racism strongly predicted affirmative action attitudes in a national survey. Tuch and Hughes (1996) reported the strongest predictor of affirmative action attitudes was belief in discrimination. An analysis of four-large scale surveys by Sears et al. (1997) demonstrated that controls on political ideology, party identification and social welfare attitudes had weaker effects on affirmative action attitudes than symbolic racism, the effects of which were not substantially reduced by such controls. Williams et al. (1999) found that a measure of contemporary prejudice (incorporating several items from McConahay’s (1986) Modern Racism Scale) was by far the strongest predictor of opposition to affirmative action —controlling for contemporary prejudice reduced the association between conservatism and affirmative action opposition to marginal

significance. A survey by James et al. (2001) demonstrated that modern racism scores were negatively associated with support for equal opportunity policies targeted to benefit African-Americans. Several commentators have suggested that a central tenet of modern racism is also the key reason for white opposition to affirmative action: the belief discrimination is mainly a thing of the past and therefore blacks are themselves primarily responsible for inter-group disparity (See, e.g., Gandy & Baron, 1998; Gandy et al., 1997; Iyengar, 1989; Kluegel, 1985; Kluegel & Smith, 1983).

Interestingly, Bonilla-Silva's (2000) in-depth interviews with white students suggested scores on the Modern Racism Scale might actually underestimate the pervasiveness of racial prejudice. Her qualitative study showed that even students with low to moderate scores on the Modern Racism Scale displayed tendencies to: (1) express racial views in a "sanitized way," (2) claim ambivalence to avoid disclosing their true beliefs, (3) believe that racial prejudice is a thing of the past, and (4) construct a we-they dichotomy between whites and blacks.

#### *White guilt and belief in white privilege*

Written from his perspective as an African-American living in the Southern United States during the 1960s, Steele's (1990) essay, *White Guilt*, described a sea change in white society's racial attitudes. After centuries of oppressing minorities, Steele argued that whites in the 1960s came to experience a sense of collective guilt for the harms their group had inflicted: "White guilt became so palpable you could see it on people. ... guilt had changed the nature of the white man's burden from the administration of inferiors to the uplift of equals—from the obligations of dominance to the urgencies of repentance" (pp. 497-498). Steele further argued that momentous public

policy changes such as the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and Great Society were directly attributable to this collective sense of white guilt.

Steele (1990) asserted that white guilt motivated a misguided approach to affirmative action. For Steele, the goal of affirmative action should be to assist African-Americans to develop their full potential, toward achieving parity with whites. Referencing President Johnson's famous 1965 address at Howard University (excerpts quoted above), Steele argued that affirmative action has instead focused primarily on alleviating white guilt:

On its surface this seems to be the most reasonable of statements, but on closer examination one can clearly see how it deflects the emphasis away from black responsibility and toward white responsibility.... blacks are the passive recipients of white action. The former victimizers are challenged now to be patrons, but where is the black challenge? This is really a statement to and about white people, their guilt, their responsibility, and their road to redemption. Not only does it not enunciate a black mission, but it sees blacks only on the dimension of their victimization—'hobbled by chains'—and casts them once again into the role of receivers of white beneficence. Nowhere in this utterance does President Johnson show respect for black resilience or faith in the capacity of blacks to run fast once they get to the 'starting line' (p. 504).

Steele (1990) argued further that granting preferences to a handful of blacks might be a quick and easy way to make some whites feel better, but it fails to address the core problem of assisting blacks to accept and shoulder responsibility for uplifting themselves:

“Here one falls into Orwellian doublespeak, where *preference* equals *equality*” (p. 505, emphasis original).

Tatum (1992), a professor who taught seminars on the psychology of race for two decades, discussed white guilt in the context of a recurrent pattern she observed among white students. Initially, typical white college students were largely ignorant about the extent and effects of past and present racism in American society. Once better informed, many white students expressed a deep sense of guilt for the harm their group caused.

As discussed above, modern racism is characterized by, among other things, the belief that African-Americans and other minorities are no longer seriously disadvantaged by racial discrimination. However, McIntosh (1989) observed that even among whites believing that racial discrimination creates a substantial disadvantage for minorities, there is often a failure to appreciate the corollary advantage accruing to whites.

McIntosh conceptualized *white privilege* as “an invisible package of assets,” including advantages such as: (1) protection from many kinds of hostility, distress and violence; (2) freedom to criticize the dominant culture; (3) freedom to disparage, fear, neglect or be oblivious to anything outside the dominant culture; and (4) a sense of belonging in mainstream society. Consistent with the critical view of a hegemonic ideology of race, McIntosh argued the potency of white privilege is evidenced by the fact it is rarely discussed: “The silences and denials surrounding privilege are the key political tool here. They keep the thinking about equality or equity incomplete, protecting unearned advantage and conferred dominance by making these taboo subjects” (p. 12).

Swim and Miller (1999) were first to empirically investigate the concepts of white guilt and white privilege. They developed a five-item White Guilt Scale demonstrating

good internal consistency and correlated only moderately ( $r = -.23$ ) with the Modern Racism Scale (McConahay, 1986). Significantly, the White Guilt Scale predicted endorsement of statements concerning support for affirmative action, over and above controls for gender, age, political orientation, and four explicit measures of racism. The researchers also reported that mean white guilt across their student sample was low. They attributed this finding to the fact their student participants were not old enough to have experienced the racial strife of the 1960s. Swim and Miller (1999) also developed a five-item Belief in White Privilege Scale. This scale predicted attitudes toward affirmative action and was only moderately correlated with the White Guilt Scale ( $r = .23$ ).

Iyer et al. (2003) pointed to a limitation of the Swim and Miller (1999) studies: all the affirmative action statements they tested were couched in term of the Remedial Action frame, i.e., as a means necessary to recompense past harms. Iyer and colleagues asserted that because white guilt is self-focused, i.e., primarily concerned with alleviation of dysphoria, the extent to which it predicts support for affirmative action should vary depending on how a particular affirmative action policy is framed. To test this idea, they examined the power of white guilt to predict support for two different types of affirmative action statements: compensatory (remedial action) policies, and so-called soft affirmative action programs designed to increase minority recruitment efforts. Consistent with their hypothesis, the researchers demonstrated that white guilt was a reliable predictor of support for compensatory affirmative action, but did not predict support for soft affirmative action policies. The researchers concluded that white guilt appears to interact with affirmative action framing:

Not only do levels of support for an affirmative action program change based on the way it is framed, but the psychological predictors of this support may change as well.... Research on support for, or opposition to, affirmative action must take account of the fact that the definitions employed may affect the psychological basis of support. Research that defines affirmative action as compensation, for example, is more likely to show white guilt as a predictor than research that frames the policy as concerned with equal opportunity (p. 127).

Iyer and colleagues (2003) also found that white privilege predicted support for compensatory affirmative action (i.e., invoking the RA frame). This effect was partially mediated by white guilt. However, they did not test the association between belief in white privilege and support for affirmative action in the context of other frames.

### *Racial ambivalence*

Katz and Hass (1988) theorized that the thoughts and feelings of whites toward blacks are often characterized by a conflict between dual perceptions. Many whites perceive that blacks are disadvantaged by social and economic discrimination. However, many whites also perceive blacks as deviant, lacking essential attributes of mind and body. These ideas are believed to be orthogonal—having sympathy for blacks as targets of discrimination does not necessarily determine how a person thinks about what blacks can and should be doing to improve their own lot. In other word, it is entirely possible to believe that blacks are deserving of assistance *and* that blacks are not doing enough to help themselves. Katz and Hass conceptualized racial ambivalence as the tension between dual cognitive (value-attitude) structures existing simultaneously within individuals.

Katz and Hass (1988) developed scales to measure these dual cognitive structures. The Pro-Black Affect Scale consists of ten items that tap liking and sympathy for blacks as an underdog group. High scores on the Pro-Black Affect Scale suggest greater social acceptance of blacks. The Anti-Black Affect Scale consists of ten items reflecting the view that blacks lack qualities essential to uplift themselves, such as discipline, self-respect, and concern for one another. High scores on the Anti-Black Affect Scale suggest disdain and hostility toward blacks.

Katz and Hass (1988) further demonstrated that experimental primes can influence Pro-Black affect and Anti-Black affect. Specifically, participants primed with a scale measuring humanitarianism scored higher on Pro-Black affect; participants primed with a scale measuring Protestant ethic tended to score higher on Anti-Black affect.

## CHAPTER 3

### Hypotheses

Social Identity Theory (Brewer, 1979; Tajfel & Turner, 1978; Turner, 1982) posits that people like in-group members more and regard outcomes for in-group members as their own. Increasing the salience of group boundaries and inter-group conflict strengthens these effects (Brewer, 1979; Brewer & Harasty, 1996; Brewer & Miller, 1984; Brown & Turner, 1981; Garcia-Prieto et al., 2003; Kramer & Brewer, 1984; Tajfel & Turner, 1979; Turner, 1982, 1985). Procedural Justice Theory (Lind et al., 1993; Lind & Tyler, 1988; Tyler, 1990; Tyler & McGraw, 1986; Tyler, et al., 1986) posits that people support policies to the extent they view them to be procedurally fair.

These theories suggest the Diversity frame could induce whites to support affirmative action more. The Diversity frame can be viewed as a re-categorization, shifting focus away from racial conflict (Murrell et al., 1994). Whites and blacks are depicted as joint members of a super-ordinate organization and/or society, with common goals and interests. Consistent with the proportionality rule of distribution (Thibault & Walker, 1978), the Diversity frame argues that minorities receiving affirmative action benefits give something in return—a different perspective beneficial to the entire group. Moreover, the Diversity frame suggests a macro-level focus on the common welfare of the super-ordinate group (Brewer, 1995). Therefore,

**H1:** White participants reading editorials presenting the Diversity frame will support an affirmative action policy more than white participants reading editorials without the Diversity frame.





These theories also suggest the Remedial Action frame could induce whites to support affirmative action less. The Remedial Action frame heightens the salience of racial identity, depicting whites and blacks as distinct groups with conflicting interests. The Remedial Action frame can also be viewed as incongruent with the proportionality rule—blacks receive benefits, but their contribution in return is not emphasized (Barnes Nacoste, 1994; Chang, 1996; Gamson & Modigliani, 1987). Therefore,

**H2:** White participants reading editorials that present the Remedial Action frame will support the affirmative action policy less than white participants reading editorials without the Remedial Action frame.

Interracial attitudes such as modern racism, white guilt and belief in white privilege can predict attitudes toward affirmative action (Iyer et al., 2003; James, 2001; Swim & Miller, 1999; Williams et al., 1999). However, media frames can moderate the influence of individual predispositions on attitudes toward the subject matter (Domke, 2001; Domke et al., 1999; Price et al., 1997; Shen, 2004; Tewksbury et al., 2000). In the context of race and political cognition, prior studies suggest frames can moderate the relation between interracial attitudes and support for a political issue (Domke; Domke et al.; Kinder & Sanders, 1990). The Diversity frame reduces the salience of racial group identities. Affirmative action is presented not as a debt whites owe to blacks, but instead as a means to strengthen and benefit the super-ordinate group. Accordingly, the Diversity frame could switch whites' train of thought away from their pre-existing interracial attitudes. Therefore,

**H3:** The relation between interracial attitudes and support for an affirmative action policy will be weaker among white participants

reading editorials that present the Diversity Frame, compared to white participants reading editorials without the Diversity frame.

Frames that differentially affect in-group bias should also influence interracial affect. Interracial affect is susceptible to change due to situational cues (Katz & Hass, 1988). The need for self-esteem motivates people to feel favorably toward other in-group members (Turner, 1985). When group identities are salient, people like in-group members more. People discriminate in favor of in-group members even when the criterion for membership is meaningless (Tajfel et al., 1971). The Diversity frame suggests to whites that they share a super-ordinate group identity with blacks. This should induce more favorable affect and less disdain toward blacks. In contrast, the Remedial Action frame emphasizes that blacks and whites are different groups with conflicting interests. This frame could have the opposite effect. Therefore,

**H4:** Editorials presenting the Diversity frame will induce white participants' affect toward blacks to become more favorable compared to whites reading editorials without the Diversity frame.

**H5:** Editorials presenting the Remedial Action frame will induce white participants' affect toward blacks to become less favorable compared to whites reading editorials without the Remedial Action frame.

## CHAPTER 4

### Method

An experiment was conducted to test the joint effects of media frames on support for an affirmative action policy and interracial affect. This study also pre-tested participants' interracial attitudes to investigate whether media frames moderated the influence of those interracial attitudes on support for an affirmative action policy. This chapter describes the participants, procedures and instrumentation involved in conducting this study.

#### *Participants*

Participants were recruited from telecommunication and advertising classes at Michigan State University. Students received course extra credit for participating. Data were collected in two phases: a pretest and an experiment.

A total of 436 students completed the pretest. The pretest instrument instructed participants to provide the last four digits of their social security number "for coding purposes." Two weeks thereafter, a total of 461 students from the same classes participated in the experiment. The experimental packets also instructed participants to provide the last four digits of their social security number "for coding purposes."

Comparison of these four-digit responses identified a total of 293 matching data sets. Responses to demographic items indicated that among the matched data sets there were 186 white Non-Hispanic, 41 Asian, 40 black, five Hawaiian/Pacific Islander and four Native American participants. Of the 41 Asian participants, 23 reported they were citizens of countries other than the United States. There were eight Hispanic/Latino

participants, one of whom also identified herself as African American/Black. Among the matching data sets, racial/ethnic data was missing for the remaining ten participants

Data analysis focused mainly on the 186 white non-Hispanic participants.

Because whites constitute the majority of the U.S. electorate and are also the group most likely to oppose affirmative action, understanding how frames affect their opinions and underlying cognitive processes is a pressing social concern. Given the demographics of the sampling frame (Michigan State University students), large numbers of white subjects were more readily available for study. For the sake of brevity, the terms white and white non-Hispanic appear interchangeably in the remainder of this paper.

#### *Statistical power*

The power of a statistical test is the probability that the test will detect an effect in a sample when, in fact, a true effect exists in a population. Factors influencing the power of a statistical test include: (1) the specific statistical test that is chosen, (2) the level of significance chosen, (3) the magnitude of the true effect in the population, and (4) sample size (Cohen, 1992). Cohen suggested that .80 (an 80% chance of finding an effect in a sample that truly exists in the population) is a good standard for the minimum power necessary before undertaking an investigation. This standard has been widely accepted throughout the social sciences (Aiken & West, 1991).

In calculating the number of subjects necessary to attain adequate power, a complicating factor is that the magnitude of the true effect in the population is often unknown *a priori*. Accordingly, a number of rules of thumb have emerged to guide researchers when deciding how large a sample will suffice. Green's (1991) analysis of these rules of thumb in the context of multiple regression analyses suggested that the

formula:  $N \geq 50 + 8p$ , where  $N$  is the number of subjects and  $p$  is the number of predictor variables, generally yields a sample size to find medium-sized effects with power = .80. The multiple correlation models tested here used up to five predictor variables, suggesting a minimum sample of 90 participants. The sample of 186 white participants used here would therefore appear sufficient.

### *Procedure*

Express approval for all instruments and procedures used in this study was obtained from the University Committee on Research Involving Human Subjects at Michigan State University. Faculty members teaching large undergraduate courses were contacted and asked to consider offering an extra credit incentive to students for participation in a two-phase study. Faculty members were asked not to advise students that the studies were related, and to offer a separate extra-credit incentive for participation in either or both phases. Data were collected during the Spring 2004 term.

### *Pretest*

White graduate students administered the pretest in large lecture halls, immediately at the end of regularly scheduled class time. Participants were advised the researchers were conducting a survey to learn about students' opinions toward a variety of social issues. Participants were assured of the confidentiality of their responses. After obtaining their written informed consent, participants were instructed to complete the pretest instrument and place the last four digits of their social security number on its face "for coding purposes." Written instructions provided to pretest participants are annexed as Appendix A.

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Participants completed the pencil-and-paper pretest instrument at their own pace. Most completed the pretest in 15 minutes or less. When finished, participants placed their completed pretest instruments in a large box, were thanked by the pretest administrator and excused.

### *Experiment*

Experimental data were collected approximately two weeks after the pretest from each class. The experimental phase of the study was conducted in the same lecture halls, immediately at the end of the same courses sampled in the pretest. A different White graduate student conducted the experiment. Experimental packets used typeface, font size, layout and language intentionally manipulated to appear different from the pretest instrument.

Participants were instructed that the study required them to read a newspaper editorial and answer questions about the issues involved. Participants were assured of the confidentiality of their responses. After obtaining their written informed consent, participants were given an experimental packet containing one mock newspaper editorial followed by scales to assess the dependent variables. Participants were instructed to read the editorial carefully, paying close attention to the arguments the newspaper made to support its editorial stance. Participants were advised the editorial was published in a large metropolitan newspaper, the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*. Participants were further instructed to place the last four digits of their social security number on the instrument “for coding purposes.” The written instructions provided to experimental participants are annexed as Appendix B.



The *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* was chosen as the putative source of the experimental stimuli for several reasons. First, it is a newspaper published in a major market. Second, it is published in the Midwest, the same general region of the country as the data collection site. Third, it is not published close enough to the data collection site to present much chance that any participant had prior negative experiences with it.

Four different experimental packets were employed. Each packet included one editorial systematically manipulated to reflect one editorial frame condition: DIVERSITY, REMEDIAL ACTION, COMBINED, or CONTROL. Participants were randomly assigned to frame conditions without regard to race. As a result, sub-samples of participants from various racial/ethnic groups across frame conditions were unequal. Independent sample *t*-tests examining white participants' scores on the pre-tested interracial attitude scales showed that random assignment to experimental conditions successfully equalized the groups on these variables—none were significantly different from the control group.

Participants read the experimental stimuli and responded to the pencil-and-paper dependent measures at their own pace. When finished, participants placed the completed experimental packets in a large box and were given a document entitled: "Debriefing Form." The debriefing form advised participants that: (1) the editorial was fictitious, (2) the editorial was created by the researchers, not the *St. Louis Post Dispatch*, and (3) data from the survey they participated in about two weeks earlier would be used to enhance the researchers' understanding of the responses provided in the experimental packet. Participants were thanked for their participation and excused.

## *Instrumentation*

### *Pretest*

The pretest instrument included three interracial attitude scales: McConahay's (1986) seven-item Modern Racism Scale, Swim and Miller's (1999, Study 1) five-item White Guilt Scale, and a modified version of Swim and Miller's five-item Belief in White Privilege Scale. The original Belief in White Privilege Scale is phrased such that it assesses whether white respondents believe that society gives them advantages because they are white. By slightly adjusting the wording of the items, this scale was modified such that it asked respondents from all racial/ethnic groups whether they believe that society gives advantages to whites. In order to provide a consistent format, the interracial attitude scales presented pretest participants with uniform response options: (1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Unsure, 4 = Agree, 5 = Strongly Agree).

The data were analyzed to assess the reliability of the interracial attitude scales. In addition, confirmatory factor analyses were conducted to test the implicit hypothesis that the items within each scale were internally consistent (Hunter & Gerbing, 1982). Confirmatory factor analysis of McConahay's (1986) Modern Racism Scale indicated dropping one of the seven items (Item 2) would improve its internal consistency. The resultant six-item scale demonstrated good reliability (Cronbach's  $\alpha = .85$ ). Swim and Miller's (1999, Study 1) White Guilt Scale was internally consistent with good reliability (Cronbach's  $\alpha = .84$ ). Their five-item Belief in White Privilege Scale (as modified) was internally consistency with excellent reliability (Cronbach's  $\alpha = .91$ ).

A complicating issue was that the Modern Racism Scale (McConahay, 1986) and White Guilt Scale (Swim and Miller, 1999, Study 1) are designed to assess the attitudes

of whites; when addressed to a person of color, some of the items make little sense (e.g., “When I learn about racism, I feel guilt due to my association with the White race”). However, data from minority participants was desired for the other variables. Moreover, to not provide minority students with equal access to an extra-credit opportunity would have presented an ethical problem. In a study administered to large groups, using different forms for minority and white participants could have created other complications. Accordingly, it was decided to instruct respondents that: “Some questions address issues involving race and do not apply equally to members of all groups....” Members of minority groups were advised they might wish to skip designated items (See Appendix A for details).

Demographic information was also collected. Respondents were asked to indicate their sex, age, race (African-American/Black, Asian, Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, Native American/Alaska Native or White/Caucasian) and ethnicity (Hispanic/Latino or Not Hispanic/Latino) by checking the appropriate category. Political orientation was measured using a five-point scale (1 = Strongly Conservative, 5 = Strongly Liberal). Political party identification was measured using a five-point scale (1 = Strong Republican, 5 = Strong Democrat). Annual household income was measured using a 4-category scale (1 = Under \$25,000, 2 = \$25,000-\$50,000, 3 = \$ 50,001-\$75,000, 4 = Over \$75,000). Respondents were also asked whether they were: (1) U.S. citizens, (2) registered to vote, and (3) voted in the 2002 General Election. Likelihood of voting in the 2004 General Election was measured using a five-point scale (1 = Very Low Likelihood, 5 = Very High Likelihood).



### *Experimental stimuli*

The experimental stimuli were four mock newspaper editorials created for this study. Each mock editorial was dated June 24, 2003 and purported to be the editorial response of the *St Louis Post-Dispatch* to the U.S. Supreme Court's ruling in *Grutter v. Bollinger* (2003). To make the experimental stimuli appear authentic, the logo used on newspaper's actual Web site, *St. Louis Today*, was digitally copied and pasted to the top of the stimuli. Typeface and layout were chosen to mimic the physical appearance of an editorial printed out from the actual Web site. Also consistent with the actual *St. Louis Today* Web site, no bylines were used. Copies of the experimental stimuli are annexed as Appendices C1-C4.

Each mock editorial provided an identical headline and introductory paragraph, advising that the U.S. Supreme Court ruled in favor of The University of Michigan's affirmative action policy, treating membership in underrepresented minority groups (African-American, Hispanic or Native American) as a "plus factor" for admission to law school. Each mock editorial also provided an identical closing statement, expressing the newspaper's support for the decision on the grounds that higher education is important and should be kept open for everyone.

The remainder of each editorial was systematically manipulated for use in one of four frame conditions: DIVERSITY, REMEDIAL ACTION, COMBINED, or CONTROL. In the DIVERSITY condition, the body of the editorial presented arguments consistent with the Diversity frame. Bowen and Bok's (1998) discussion of the case for diversity, together with actual newspaper editorials analyzed by Richardson and Lancendorfer (2004) were used to construct these arguments. The arguments in this

framing condition presented three diversity packages identified by Richardson and Lancendorfer: LEARNING (emphasizing that affirmative action enhances the educational experience for all students), LEADERSHIP (emphasizing that affirmative action helps teach students to work and get along well with people different from themselves), and COMPETE (emphasizing that affirmative action promotes America's ability to compete in increasingly global and diverse markets).

In the REMEDIAL ACTION condition, the body of the editorial presented arguments consistent with the RA frame. Gamson and Modigliani's (1987) conceptualization of the RA frame, together with actual newspaper editorials analyzed by Richardson and Lancendorfer (2004) were used to construct these arguments. The arguments in this framing condition focused on three RA packages identified by Richardson and Lancendorfer: HISTORY (emphasizing America's past legacy of racial/ethnic discrimination), CURRENT (emphasizing that discrimination is a continuing problem), and KTWELVE (emphasizing disparities in elementary and secondary schools located in minority communities).

The mock editorials used in the DIVERSITY and REMEDIAL ACTION conditions were exactly the same length: 264 words. The goal was to present persuasive arguments for affirmative action emphasizing grounds consistent with each respective frame, but without including arguments characteristic of the alternate frame.

In the COMBINED condition, the mock editorial presented all the pro-affirmative action arguments used in both the DIVERSITY and REMEDIAL ACTION conditions. The COMBINED editorial was 414 words long. In the CONTROL condition,

only the introductory and closing statements common to every other mock editorial were presented. The CONTROL editorial was 113 words long.

#### *Induction checks*

The experimental packets included three true-false questions for use as induction checks and instructed participants to: "...indicate your understanding of **what the editorial actually said** (putting aside your own personal thoughts and feelings)." (Emphasis original).

The first induction check item asked whether the editorial asserted that without an affirmative action policy, minority enrollment at the University of Michigan law school would drop. The introductory paragraph common to all four editorials made such a statement. Therefore, it was anticipated that participants in all four conditions would answer this question as true.

The second induction check item asked whether the editorial argued that racism is a long-standing problem in America. This argument was presented in the REMEDIAL ACTION and COMBINED experimental conditions, but was not mentioned in the DIVERSITY or CONTROL experimental conditions. The third induction check item asked whether the editorial argued that: "... a diverse student body is good for all students." This argument was specifically mentioned in the DIVERSITY and COMBINED experimental conditions, but not in the REMEDIAL ACTION or CONTROL experimental conditions.

Results from the induction check are presented in Table 4.1. On the first two induction check items, most respondents answered in the expected direction. However,

**Table 4.1**

*Percentage of Respondents Answering Induction Check Items in the Expected Direction as a Function of Editorial Frame Condition*

Experimental Condition	Induction Check Item		
	Impact on Minority Enrollment	Racism Longstanding	Diversity Good for all Students
CONTROL ( <i>n</i> = 38)	92.1	86.8	55.3
REMEDIAL ACTION ( <i>n</i> = 53)	90.6	88.7	49.1
DIVERSITY ( <i>n</i> = 48)	93.8	70.8	97.9
COMBINED ( <i>n</i> = 47)	97.9	97.9	95.7

Note: *n* = 186 white participants included in this portion of the data analysis.

about half the participants in the CONTROL and REMEDIAL ACTION conditions answered the third induction check item contrary to expectation. In hindsight, this latter finding probably resulted from an ambiguity in the induction check item. The closing paragraph common to all four editorial inductions stated: “It is vital that the doors of higher education be kept open for everyone.” The issue tapped by induction check item 3 was whether: “The editorial argued that a diverse student body is good for all students.”



Some participants in the CONTROL and REMEDIAL ACTION conditions might have interpreted this closing statement of the editorial as an argument for diversity. Given the high rate of correct responses for induction check items 1 and 2, as well as for item 3 among participants in the DIVERSITY and COMBINED conditions, the editorial inductions were judged to have passed the checks.

### *Dependent measures*

The dependent variable of primary interest was support for an affirmative action policy. A weakness of many prior studies is they purport to assess attitudes toward affirmative action as a generalized, abstract principle, ignoring the fact that affirmative action is an umbrella term encompassing a variety of different programs. Another frequent shortcoming is the use of single-item dependent measures, an approach that limits reliability.

Accordingly, a new scale was developed to assess support for the particular affirmative action policy discussed in the editorial stimuli, i.e. The University of Michigan's use of race as a "plus factor" when deciding law school admissions. The goal of this scale was to measure the extent to which participants favored or opposed the policy at The University of Michigan and all other colleges and universities throughout Michigan—implicitly including the participants' university, Michigan State. Confirmatory factor analysis (Hunter & Gerbing, 1982) indicated that of the original eleven items, ten were internally consistent. The resultant scale was highly reliable (Cronbach's  $\alpha = .95$ ). Appendix D sets forth the ten-item Support for an Affirmative Action Policy Scale retained for analysis.

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In addition, participants were also instructed to complete Katz and Hass' (1988) Pro-Black Affect Scale and Anti-Black Affect Scale. To be consistent with the remainder of the instrument, Katz and Hass' original response options were replaced with the following: (1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Unsure, 4 = Agree, 5 = Strongly Agree). Confirmatory factor analysis of responses to the Pro-Black Affect Scale indicated dropping one item (Item 1) would improve its internal consistency. The resultant nine-item scale demonstrated acceptable reliability (Cronbach's  $\alpha = .79$ ). Internal consistency of the Anti-Black Affect Scale was improved by dropping two items (Items 2 and 8). The resultant eight-item scale demonstrated good reliability (Cronbach's  $\alpha = .81$ ).

Like the pretest, a complicating issue was that the Pro-Black Affect Scale and Anti-Black Affect Scale were designed primarily to tap whites' affect toward blacks. A procedure similar to that used in the pretest was proposed. However, the UCHRIS reviewer objected to that procedure, suggesting instead that a special instruction be given. Accordingly, it was agreed to insert the following instruction preceding these scales:

Questions 28-37 concern attitudes about race and include questions that may be deemed inappropriate and offensive. We apologize for any discomfort to respondents of these questions. You may choose to not answer any of these questions. Using the scale below, write a number next to each item that best describes your opinion. There are no right or wrong answers. Please just give us **your honest personal opinion**.

## CHAPTER 5

### Results

#### *Participant Demographics*

Demographic information concerning blacks and white non-Hispanics participating in both phases of the study is set forth in Table 5.1. Among black participants, males were underrepresented compared to females. White participants' mean income bracket was higher compared to black participants,  $t(224) = 3.217, p < .001$  (two-tailed). Black participants were more likely than white participants to identify with the Democratic Party,  $t(224) = 5.949, p < .001$  (two-tailed), and describe themselves as liberal,  $t(220) = 2.065, p < .05$  (two-tailed).

#### *Interracial Attitudes*

Table 5.2 summarizes white participants' pretest responses on the three interracial attitude scales. White participants' mean scores were significantly below the scale midpoint (3 = "Unsure") on the Modern Racism Scale,  $t(185) = -11.650, p < .001$  (two-tailed), White Guilt Scale,  $t(185) = -13.161, p < .001$  (two-tailed), and Belief in White Privilege Scale (as modified),  $t(185) = -3.442, p < .001$  (two-tailed). Black participants scored higher on the Belief in White Privilege Scale (as modified) ( $M = 4.46, SD = .55$ ), compared to whites,  $t(224) = 11.039, p < .001$  (two-tailed). Compared to the relation between modern racism and white guilt, the relation between modern racism and belief in white privilege was stronger,  $z = 3.574, p < .001$ .

**Table 5.1***Black and White Participants' Responses to Demographic Items*

	Whites ( <i>n</i> = 186)	Blacks ( <i>n</i> = 40)
Sex		
Female	49.2 %	66.7 %
Male	50.8 %	33.3 %
Mean Age	21.8 (3.1)	22.8 (4.2)
Annual Household Income Bracket		
Under \$25,000	15.7 %	37.5 %
\$25,001-\$50,000	10.8 %	15.0 %
\$50,001-\$75,000	27.6 %	17.5 %
Over \$75,000	45.4 %	30.0 %
Political Orientation <sup>a</sup>	2.97 (.98)	3.32 (.70)
Party Identification <sup>b</sup>	3.02 (1.10)	4.13 (.88)
Registered to Vote	80.5 %	77.5 %
Voted in 2002	43.8 %	43.1 %
Likelihood of Voting in 2004 <sup>c</sup>	4.43 (1.07)	4.30 (1.29)

*Note:* Standard deviations in parentheses.

<sup>a</sup> Based on five-point scale (Strong Conservative = 1, Strong Liberal = 5).

<sup>b</sup> Based on five -point scale (Strong Republican = 1, Strong Democrat = 5).

<sup>c</sup> Based on five-point scale (Very Low Likelihood = 1, Very High Likelihood = 5).



**Table 5.2**

*Intercorrelations and Mean Item Responses to Interracial Attitude Scales among White Participants*

Interracial Attitude Scale	1	2	3	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
1. Modern Racism	--	-.20 **	-.52 ***	2.33	.78
2. White Guilt		--	.36 ***	2.18	.85
3. Belief in White Privilege			--	2.76	.93

*Notes:*  $n = 186$ . Values are mean item responses on five-point scales.

\*  $p < .05$ , \*\*  $p < .01$ , \*\*\*  $p < .001$  (two-tailed).

### *Dependent Variables*

Table 5.3 summarizes white participants' responses on the dependent variable scales. Consistent with prior research (Katz & Hass, 1988), Pro-Black affect correlated moderately with Anti-Black affect. Compared to the relation between support for affirmative action and anti-black affect, the relation between support for affirmative action and Pro-Black affect was stronger,  $z = 4.225$ ,  $p < .001$ . White participants' mean scores were significantly below the midpoint (3 = "Unsure") on the Support for an Affirmative Action Policy Scale,  $t(185) = -9.075$ ,  $p < .001$  (two-tailed), Pro-Black Affect Scale,  $t(184) = -3.641$ ,  $p < .001$  (two-tailed) and Anti-Black Affect Scale,  $t(185) = -5.165$ ,  $p < .001$  (two-tailed).

**Table 5.3**

*Intercorrelations and Mean Item Responses to Dependent Variable Scales among White Participants*

Dependent Variable Scale	1	2	3	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
1. Support for Affirmative Action	--	.63 ***	-.26 ***	2.42	.87
2. Pro-Black Affect		--	-.29 ***	2.85	.57
3. Anti-Black Affect			--	2.73	.72

*Notes:*  $n = 186$ . Values are mean item responses on five-point scales.

\*  $p < .05$ , \*\*  $p < .01$ , \*\*\*  $p < .001$  (two-tailed).

### *Tests of the Hypotheses*

The following sections describe data analyses used to test the hypotheses. No specific hypothesis predicted the relation between participant sex and the dependent variables. Post hoc multiple regression analyses adding this variable to the equations demonstrated participant sex was not significant predictor of any dependent variable discussed below.

#### *White participants' support for an affirmative action policy*

Hypothesis 1 predicted white participants reading editorials that presented the Diversity frame would support the affirmative action policy more compared to those reading editorials without the Diversity frame. Hypothesis 2 predicted white participants reading editorials that presented the Remedial Action frame would support the



**Table 5.4**

*Mean Support for an Affirmative Action Policy among White Participants as a Function of Editorial Frame*

REMEDIAL ACTION Frame	DIVERSITY Frame		
	Absent	Present	
Present	2.29 (.80) <i>n</i> = 53	2.59 (.90) <i>n</i> = 47	2.43 (.86) <i>n</i> = 100
Absent	2.42 (.89) <i>n</i> = 38	2.41 (.88) <i>n</i> = 48	2.42 (.88) <i>n</i> = 86
	2.34 (.84) <i>n</i> = 91	2.50 (.89) <i>n</i> = 95	2.42 (.87) <i>n</i> = 186

*Notes:* Mean-item responses to a Support for an Affirmative Action Policy Scale (Average response on a five-point scale across ten items retained for analysis). Higher scores indicate more support for the law school admissions policy upheld in *Grutter v Bollinger* (2003). Standard deviations in parentheses.

affirmative action policy less compared to those reading editorials without the Remedial Action frame.

Table 5.4 sets forth white participants' mean item responses to the Support for an Affirmative Action Policy Scale as a function of editorial frame. Multiple comparison

**Table 5.5**

*Support for an Affirmative Action Policy among White Participants Regressed on Scores on Interracial Attitude Scales and Editorial Frame*

	<u>Model 1</u>	<u>Model 2</u>
Modern Racism	-.29 ***	-.28 ***
White Guilt	.24 ***	.24 ***
Belief in White Privilege	.17 *	.18 *
Remedial Action Frame		.04
Diversity Frame		.03
Adjusted $R^2$	.26	.26
$\Delta F$	23.73 ***	.29

*Notes:*  $n = 186$  white participants. Numbers in the table are standardized beta coefficients.

\*  $p < .05$ , \*\*  $p < .01$ , \*\*\*  $p < .001$  (two-tailed).

and contrast testing indicated no significant between-groups differences in support for the affirmative action policy.

Support for affirmative action was also examined in a multiple regression analysis. Model 1 regressed this dependent variable on White participants' pretest scores on the interracial attitude scales. Model 2 added as independent variables the editorial frame inductions, dummy coded for the presence (coded 1) or absence (coded 0) of the Remedial Action and Diversity frames. Table 5.5 summarizes the results of these analyses.

Examination of these data reveals that scores on the pretest interracial attitude scales explained 26% of the variance in white participants' support for the affirmative action policy. The corresponding *F*-Change value indicates these variables were significant predictors of support for the affirmative action policy.

In Model 2, the standardized beta coefficients indicate neither editorial frame induction significantly influenced support for the affirmative action policy. Adding the editorial frame inductions to the original model did not increase the amount of variance explained. The corresponding *F*-Change value indicates the addition of the editorial frame inductions had no significant effect on the original model's capacity to predict support for the affirmative action policy.

The data were not consistent with Hypotheses 1 and 2. Neither the Diversity nor the Remedial Action editorial frame inductions significant affected white participants' support for the affirmative action policy.

#### *The moderating influence of the Diversity frame*

Hypothesis 3 predicted support for the affirmative action policy would be less strongly associated with interracial attitudes among white participants reading editorials presenting the Diversity frame, compared to those reading editorials without the Diversity frame. Table 5.6 summarizes the results of analyses of support for an affirmative action policy regressed on participants' scores on interracial attitude scales between experimental groups.

Examination of these data reveal that white participants' pretest interracial attitude scores were powerful predictors of their support for the affirmative action policy in the CONTROL and REMEDIAL ACTION conditions, explaining roughly half the

**Table 5.6**

*Support for an Affirmative Action Policy Between Experimental Conditions Regressed on Scores on Interracial Attitude Scales among White Participants*

	<u>Editorial Frame Condition</u>			
	Control	Remedial Action	Diversity	Combined
	<i>n</i> = 38	<i>n</i> = 53	<i>n</i> = 48	<i>n</i> = 47
Modern Racism	-.09	-.45 ***	-.18	-.36 *
White Guilt	.28	.28 **	.21	.16
Belief in White Privilege	.51 **	.23	-.01	.06
Adjusted $R^2$	.54	.49	.03	.14
$\Delta F$	15.67 ***	17.65 ***	1.52	3.43 *

variance. The corresponding  $F$ -Change values demonstrate the significance of these relations.

However, among white participants in the DIVERSITY condition, i.e., when participants read editorials presenting the Remedial Action frame but not the Diversity frame, interracial attitude scale scores explained only three percent of the variance in support for the affirmative action policy. Put another way, compared to white participants in the DIVERSITY condition, the relation between interracial attitudes and support for the affirmative action policy was 18 times stronger in the CONTROL condition and more than 16 times stronger in the REMEDIAL ACTION condition. The corresponding  $F$ -Change value demonstrates that among white participants in the DIVERSITY condition,

interracial attitude scores were not significant predictors of support for the affirmative action policy.

The data were fully consistent with Hypothesis 3. Editorials presenting the diversity frame moderated the relation between white participants' interracial attitudes and their level of support for the affirmative action policy. When white participants read editorials presenting the Diversity frame, the relation between their interracial attitudes and their support for the affirmative action policy was weaker compared to participants in the other experimental groups.

*White participants' affect toward blacks*

Hypothesis 4 predicted that editorials presenting the Diversity frame would induce white participants' affect toward blacks to be more favorable compared to those reading editorials without the Diversity frame. Hypothesis 5 predicted editorials presenting the Remedial Action frame would induce white participants' affect toward blacks to be less favorable compared to those reading editorials without the Remedial Action frame. Table 5.7 sets forth white participants' mean-item responses to the Pro-Black Affect Scale as a function of editorial frame.

Examination of these data reveals that compared to the other three experimental conditions, Pro-Black affect was lower among white participants in the REMEDIAL ACTION frame condition, i.e., when participants read editorials presenting the Remedial Action frame but not the Diversity frame. Contrast testing indicated Pro-Black affect among this group was significantly lower,  $t(181) = -3.870, p < .001$  (two-tailed), compared to the other three experimental groups.

**Table 5.7***Pro-Black Affect among White Participants as a Function of Editorial Frame*

REMEDIAL ACTION Frame	DIVERSITY Frame		
	Absent	Present	
Present	2.59 (.63) <i>n</i> = 53	2.94 (.47) <i>n</i> = 47	2.76 (.58) <i>n</i> = 100
Absent	2.84 (.58) <i>n</i> = 38	3.04 (.51) <i>n</i> = 47 <sup>a</sup>	2.95 (.55) <i>n</i> = 85
	2.70 (.62) <i>n</i> = 91	2.99 (.49) <i>n</i> = 94	2.85 (.54) <i>n</i> = 185

*Notes:* Mean-item responses to Pro-Black Affect Scale (Average response on a five-point scale across nine items retained for analysis). Higher scores indicate more positive affect toward blacks. Standard deviations in parentheses.

<sup>a</sup> Data on this variable were missing for one white participant.

Multiple regression analyses were also conducted. Model 1 examined the relation between White participants' pretest scores on the interracial attitude scales and their scores on the Pro-Black Affect scale. Model 2 added editorial frame inductions as predictor variables, dummy coded for the presence (coded 1) or absence (coded 0) of the



**Table 5.8**

*Pro-Black Affect among White Participants Regressed on Scores on Interracial Attitude Scales and Editorial Frame*

	<u>Model 1</u>	<u>Model 2</u>
Modern Racism	-.41 ***	-.38 ***
White Guilt	.29 ***	.25 ***
Belief in White Privilege	.22 ***	.25 ***
Remedial Action Frame		-.12 *
Diversity Frame		.17 ***
Adjusted $R^2$	.48	.53
$\Delta F$	58.43 ***	8.90 ***

*Notes:*  $n = 185$  white participants (Data missing on this variable from one white participant). Numbers in the table are standardized beta coefficients.

\*  $p < .05$ , \*\*  $p < .01$ , \*\*\*  $p < .001$  (two-tailed).

Diversity and Remedial Action frames. Table 5.8 summarizes the results of these analyses.

Examination of these data reveals that the pretest interracial attitude scores used as predictors in Model 1 explained 48% of the variance in pro-black affect. By adding the editorial frame inductions to the model, explained variance rose to 53%, a significant improvement as demonstrated by the corresponding  $F$ -Change value.



**Table 5.9***Anti-Black Affect among White Participants as a Function of Editorial Frame*

REMEDIAL ACTION Frame	DIVERSITY Frame		
	Absent	Present	
Present	2.89 (.78) <i>n</i> = 53	2.68 (.81) <i>n</i> = 47	2.80 (.80) <i>n</i> = 100
Absent	2.58 (.48) <i>n</i> = 38	2.70 (.71) <i>n</i> = 48	2.65 (.62) <i>n</i> = 86
	2.76 (.69) <i>n</i> = 91	2.69 (.76) <i>n</i> = 95	2.73 (.72) <i>n</i> = 186

*Notes:* Mean-item responses to Anti-Black Affect Scale (Average response on a five-point scale across eight items retained for analysis). Higher scores indicate more negative affect toward blacks. Standard deviations in parentheses.

The joint effects of editorial frame and interracial attitudes on anti-black affect were also examined. Table 5.9 sets forth white participants' mean-item responses to the Anti-Black Affect Scale as a function of editorial frame.

Examination of these data reveals that anti-black affect was somewhat higher among white participants in the REMEDIAL ACTION frame condition, i.e., when participants read editorials presenting the Remedial Action frame but not the Diversity frame. Multiple comparison testing demonstrated that when the Diversity frame was

**Table 5.10**

*Anti-Black Affect among White Participants Regressed on Scores on Interracial Attitude Scales and Editorial Frame*

	<u>Model 1</u>	<u>Model 2</u>
Modern Racism	.45***	.47***
White Guilt	-.13	-.13
Belief in White Privilege	.07	.08
Remedial Action Frame		.11
Diversity Frame		.05
Adjusted $R^2$	.20	.20
$\Delta F$	16.37***	1.42

*Notes:*  $n = 186$  white participants. Numbers in the table are standardized beta coefficients.

\* $p < .05$ , \*\* $p < .01$ , \*\*\* $p < .001$  (two-tailed).

absent, the Remedial Action frame had a significant simple effect on Anti-Black affect,  $t(89) = -2.197, p < .05$ .

Multiple regression analyses were also conducted. Model 1 examined the relation between White participants' pretest scores on the interracial attitude scales and their scores on the Anti-Black Affect scale. Model 2 added as predictor variables the editorial frame inductions, dummy coded for the presence (coded 1) or absence (coded 0) of the Remedial Action and Diversity frames. Table 5.10 summarizes the results of these analyses.

Examination of these data reveals the pretest interracial attitude scores included in Model 1 explained 20% of the variance in anti-black affect. The corresponding *F*-Change value indicates these variables were significant predictors of anti-black affect.

In Model 2, the standardized beta coefficients indicate neither editorial frame induction had a significant main effect on anti-black affect. Adding the editorial frame inductions to the original model did not increase the amount of variance explained. The corresponding *F*-Change value was also insignificant.

The data were partially consistent with Hypotheses 4 and 5. When white participants read editorials presenting the Remedial Action frame but not the Diversity frame, i.e., the REMEDIAL ACTION condition, pro-black affect was significantly lower compared to all other experimental groups. Compared to the CONTROL group, white participants in the REMEDIAL ACTION condition also scored higher on anti-black affect.

#### *Additional Analyses*

No specific hypothesis was made concerning the effect of editorial frame on black participants' support for the affirmative action policy. Nevertheless, Table 5.11 sets forth black participants' mean-item responses to the Support for an Affirmative Action Policy Scale as a function of editorial framing condition.

Support for an affirmative action policy was significantly higher among black participants compared to whites,  $t(222) = 11.053, p < .001$ . Interestingly, blacks in the REMEDIAL ACTION frame condition supported affirmative action most. Unfortunately, firm conclusions cannot be drawn from these data due to the small number of black participants. However, future studies should examine whether this frame is more

**Table 5.11**

*Support for an Affirmative Action Policy among Black Participants as a Function of Editorial Frame*

REMEDIAL ACTION Frame	DIVERSITY Frame		
	Absent	Present	
Present	4.26 (.63) <i>n</i> = 9	3.97 (.92) <i>n</i> = 7	4.13 (.75) <i>n</i> = 16
Absent	4.01 (.82) <i>n</i> = 13	4.12 (.65) <i>n</i> = 9	4.06 (.74) <i>n</i> = 22
	4.11 (.74) <i>n</i> = 22	4.06 (.75) <i>n</i> = 16	4.09 (.74) <i>n</i> = 38

*Notes:* Mean-item responses to a Support for an Affirmative Action Policy Scale (Average score on a 5-point scale across 10 items retained for analysis). Higher scores indicate more support for the law school admissions policy upheld in *Grutter v Bollinger* (2003). Standard deviations in parentheses.

effective among black message receivers, and if so, the causes thereof.

Appendices E and F set forth the correlations among the demographic variables, interracial attitudes, and the dependent variables for white and black participants, respectively. Among white participants, males scored higher on the Modern Racism Scale ( $r = .26, p < .001$ ) and Anti-Black Affect Scale ( $r = .24, p < .001$ ).

## CHAPTER 6

### Discussion

Race and ethnicity are issues regarded as something of a hot potato by many media scholars. Studies have expressed concern, with some justification, that media content mentioning or even hinting at race or ethnicity will induce audience members to respond in a prejudicial manner. Domke (2001), for example, argued that media references to race-associated cues activate racial stereotypes within the minds of the audience, increasing the extent to which these stereotypes are cognitively embedded and politically enmeshed.

Certainly there might be situations when the best course for the media would be to refrain from referencing race and ethnicity. At the same time, it is important to recognize that media references to race and ethnicity should not be made taboo. Real problems of inequality, prejudice and discrimination still persist—failure to discuss race and ethnicity would only serve to perpetuate, not alleviate them. Some issues, such as affirmative action and bilingual education, cannot be understood without reference to race and ethnicity. Perhaps even more fundamentally, eliminating racial and ethnic cues from the media threatens to deprive our society of many rich contributions that people of color have to offer.

Keeping quiet about race and ethnicity, in the hope negative stereotypes might remain dormant, is not a solution. We can tiptoe around the problem, but that does not make the problem go away. Fear of activating negative stereotypes should not induce us to treat race and ethnicity as stains to be cleansed from our media artifacts.

People of color have good reason to take pride in their racial/ethnic identities. The best way to counter the negative pictures in audience members' heads is to provide a steady stream of positive pictures as replacements. The focus should be to investigate ways race and ethnicity might be reframed so as to weaken and/or break down negative stereotypes, and improve interracial ideations.

This study was one small step in that direction. Results indicated that editorials presenting the Diversity frame weakened the linkage between interracial attitudes and support for an affirmative action policy. The Diversity frame editorial represented a media artifact larded with racial cues that squarely addressed a racially charged political issue. Nevertheless, it actually *deactivated* the influence of white participants' preconceptions about race.

Consistent with Katz and Hass's (1988) conceptualization of racial ambivalence, the evidence presented here highlights another important consideration: the interracial attitudes of a given individual can include ideations that are positive, negative or both. Media frames that moderate the influence of interracial beliefs on political cognition can reduce the impact of negative interracial attitudes, but they can also reduce the impact of pro-social interracial attitudes, such as white guilt and belief in white privilege. Reducing the influence of racial preconceptions upon the political cognition equation might not be advisable in all cases.

The long-term consequence of reducing the linkage between support for affirmative action and pro-social interracial attitudes, i.e., white guilt and belief in white privilege, bears consideration. Could weakening these linkages eventually undermine support for affirmative action? Future research should address this question. In the

meantime, a two-pronged argument combining the Remedial Action and Diversity frames might be a reasonable compromise.

The results of this study also suggest that media frames can alter interracial affect. White participants reading editorials that presented the Remedial Action frame but not the Diversity frame scored lower on the Pro-Black Affect Scale, compared to the other three experimental conditions, and scored higher on the Anti-Black Affect Scale, compared to the control group. For affirmative action advocates, this finding has important and practical social implications. Presented alone, the Remedial Action frame appears counter-productive for white audience members. It did not induce any significant change in support for affirmative action, but it did induce whites' affect toward blacks to become less favorable. Consistent with the findings reported by Sniderman and Piazza (1996), these data reveal that ironically, a frame intended to improve interracial harmony induced the opposite effect.

The findings reported here are consistent with Social Identity Theory (Brewer, 1979; Tajfel & Turner, 1979; Turner, 1982). Because the Diversity frame recasts affirmative action as a means to benefit the entire super-ordinate group, it might serve to reduce the salience of racial identity. The weaker linkage between interracial ideations and support for affirmative action among whites exposed to the Diversity frame editorial seems to nicely fit this theoretical expectation. Because the Remedial Action frame emphasizes a conflict of interest between whites and members of underrepresented minority groups, Social Identity Theory would predict that this frame would increase whites' bias against blacks. The findings of less favorable affect toward blacks among whites reading the Remedial Action editorial are consistent with this expectation.

However, further research to elucidate the connection between Social Identity Theory and these affirmative action frames is needed. For example, does the Diversity frame increase whites' aptness to regard blacks as members of the in-group? Does the Remedial Action frame induce whites to identify more closely with white candidates not included in the beneficiary group? Future studies could employ dependent variables such as these to probe this connection more directly.

Contrary to expectations, the frame inductions did not significantly influence support for affirmative action. Similarly, Kinder and Sanders (1990) found no significant change in support for equal opportunity policies between groups exposed to either of two different No Preferential Treatment frames. They argued such a result was inevitable because people hold strong opinions toward affirmative action and because their frame inductions were on the same side of the issue, i.e., they tested two anti-affirmative action frames. Given that both frames in this experiment supported affirmative action, Kinder and Sanders might have predicted no between-groups difference here.

But there are many other possible explanations as well. The experimental inductions used here might simply have been too weak. A longer, more poignant message about the benefits of diversity might have induced much stronger effects. The assertion that diversity is beneficial might not ring true for many people. If people do not view diversity as a better justification than remedial action, Procedural Justice Theory would predict no difference in support for affirmative action. Future research should explore the connection between Procedural Justice Theory and affirmative action frames more directly. For instance, whites exposed to the Diversity frame believe that affirmative action is more consistent with the proportionality rule, in that minority beneficiaries give



something back in the form of a different perspective? Does the diversity frame increase the likelihood that people will view affirmative action from a macro-level perspective? Are whites exposed to the diversity frame more likely to believe that affirmative action can benefit not only minorities, but whites as well?

The data reported here showed that among whites exposed to the Diversity frame, interracial attitudes had no significant influence on their support for an affirmative action policy. The question then becomes, what factors do predict support for affirmative action among participants exposed to this frame? Open-mindedness, one of the Big Five personality traits, is one possibility that would seem to merit exploration. Another is novelty, i.e., future studies might examine the extent to which prior familiarity with the Diversity frame interacts with its persuasive effect on support for affirmative action.

Limitations of this study include the artificiality of the experimental setting. Results from student participants instructed in college classrooms to pay close attention to mock editorials might not generalize to newspaper readers in the real world. However, real world newspaper readers are exposed to media repeatedly, not just once. Here, one-shot exposure to 264-word essays induced significant effects.

Another limitation was use of a convenience sample of students. Student samples have restricted ranges of age, intelligence, education and work experience. Moreover, students do not reflect the demographic or geographic diversity of the general population. Prior commentators have observed an alarming trend in research about race: whites are asked to report their attitudes toward minorities and issues affecting minorities, while minorities are treated as passive targets whose attitudes don't seem to matter (See e.g., Shelton, 2000). The study reported here leaves an important gap—the joint effects of

media frames and individual predispositions on minorities' political attitudes. Data from geographic areas outside the State of Michigan is also needed.

The use of one editorial exemplar per condition was another limitation. Careful effort was made to design experimental stimuli that would exemplify a persuasive case prototypical of each respective frame. Nevertheless, every message of any length is in some sense idiosyncratic—this limits the ability to generalize from a specific message to a targeted message population (Morley, 1988). Future studies should test the effects of these frames with newly developed stimuli. The wording of messages should be varied. Future studies should also test these frames across a variety of different media (e.g., television, Internet) and content formats (e.g., straight news reports, editorial content, statements by news sources).

Affirmative action is an umbrella term for a wide range of policies and programs. This study focused on support for a specific affirmative action policy employed at The University of Michigan and affirmed in *Grutter v. Bollinger* (2003). Future research should examine the influence of frames on a variety of other affirmative action policies, and other political issues as well. The University of Michigan affirmative action cases received extensive national and local media attention. The administration of Michigan State University provided its student body with access to a variety of information on this controversy. Participants sampled from Michigan State University might have entered the experiment with entrenched positions particularly resistant to frame effects. A sample from a more distant pool, and/or an induction concerning a policy that was less well known, could potentially have yielded larger effects.

Lippmann (1922) observed that: “To traverse the world men must have maps of the world” (p. 16). For too many citizens, internal maps used to evaluate political issues and make day-to-day choices are flawed by negative racial and ethnic stereotypes. Improving this misguided state of affairs requires newer, more accurate maps; maps that simultaneously respect the unique value of all racial and ethnic groups, and that appreciate our connectedness as one human family. Discovering how these new maps can be drawn most effectively, and how citizens might be induced to put their old maps away, merits further study.

## **Appendix A**

### *Instructions to Pretest Participants*

#### **STUDY INSTRUCTIONS**

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this study. We are interested in learning about students' feelings toward a variety of social issues, and their news media habits.

Please read the questions and answer them in the order presented. There are no right or wrong answers. Please be as candid, forthright, and honest as possible.

Some questions concern race and ethnicity and do not apply to members of all groups. African-American/Black people might wish to skip questions 42 to 53. Members of other racial and/or ethnic minority groups might wish to skip questions 49 to 53. We apologize in advance if any question seems offensive.

Your responses to this questionnaire will be kept confidential to the maximum extent provided by law. For coding purposes, please place the last four numbers of your social security number below.

***Last Four Digits of SS#:***

## **Appendix B**

### *Instructions to Experiment Participants*

#### **DIRECTIONS FOR PARTICIPANTS**

This study requires you to read an editorial published in a large metropolitan newspaper, the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*. Please read the editorial carefully, paying close attention to the arguments the newspaper made to support its editorial stance. *After carefully reading* the editorial, please answer each question *in the order presented*.

Your responses to this questionnaire will be kept confidential to the maximum extent provided by law. For coding purposes, please place the last four numbers of your social security number below.

Last Four Digits of SS#: \_\_\_\_

## **Appendix C-1**

### *Experimental Stimulus for Control Framing Condition*



#### **EDITORIAL: Affirming affirmative action**

06/24/2003

In a 5-4 ruling on Monday, the U.S. Supreme Court decided in favor of the affirmative action program at the University of Michigan law school. Under the program, the school considers race and ethnicity a “plus factor” for applicants who are African American, Native American or Hispanic. An expert testified that without affirmative action, minority enrollment at the school would drop from 14.5 to 4 percent.

The ruling essentially saved affirmative action as an effective means to promote minority enrollment on campus. Graduate schools are important gateways to power, influence and success in life. It is vital that the doors of higher education be kept open for everyone.

## Appendix C-2

### *Experimental Stimulus for Remedial Action Framing Condition*



#### **EDITORIAL: Affirming affirmative action**

06/24/2003

In a 5-4 ruling on Monday, the U.S. Supreme Court decided in favor of the affirmative action program at the University of Michigan law school. Under the program, the school considers race and ethnicity a “plus factor” for applicants who are African American, Native American or Hispanic. An expert testified that without affirmative action, minority enrollment at the school would drop from 14.5 to 4 percent.

The court recognized that the effects of slavery and prejudice marring this nation’s history still remain. Racism has infected this country for hundreds of years. Affirmative action exists because prejudice does damage over generations. The children of a man denied his full potential are themselves hurt by bias, kept from opportunities they would otherwise have and certainly deserve. This means that, even if one could magically make all prejudice disappear, there would still be those who suffer from the ugliness of an earlier time. Without some kind of acknowledgement of this legacy of hate, society cannot hope to overcome it.

Even today, children in minority communities attend schools that are less well funded and more dangerous than schools in affluent, predominately White communities. Affirmative action means just what it says—taking affirmative steps to address the fact that opportunities have been denied to people because of institutionalized racism, both past and present.

The ruling essentially saved affirmative action as an effective remedy for past and present discrimination. Graduate schools are important gateways to power, influence and success in life. It is vital that the doors of higher education be kept open for everyone.

## Appendix C-3

### *Experimental Stimulus for Diversity Framing Condition*



#### **EDITORIAL: Affirming affirmative action**

06/24/2003

In a 5-4 ruling on Monday, the U.S. Supreme Court decided in favor of the affirmative action program at the University of Michigan law school. Under the program, the school considers race and ethnicity a “plus factor” for applicants who are African American, Native American or Hispanic. An expert testified that without affirmative action, minority enrollment at the school would drop from 14.5 to 4 percent.

Affirmative action improves the educational experience for everyone, not just minorities. A racially diverse student body brings different perspectives to the classroom, dormitories and campus. It promotes interracial understanding and breaks down stereotypes. College students learn from books and professors, but they also learn from each other. College is a time when students encounter a wide variety of people on an intimate, day-to-day basis. Indeed, a big reason why young people go away to college is the idea there is something they can learn from new people and surroundings.

Global companies seek qualified employees who can work with a diverse workforce and serve diverse customers. Learning to work effectively and get along with people from different backgrounds is an essential job skill. The court Monday upheld a sensible principle by allowing university officials the discretion to build a diverse community of students that can learn important lessons for life from each other.

The ruling essentially saved affirmative action as an effective means to promote diversity on campus. Graduate schools are important gateways to power, influence and success in life. It is vital that the doors of higher education be kept open for everyone.



## **Appendix C-4**

### *Experimental Stimulus for Combined Framing Condition*



#### **EDITORIAL: Affirming affirmative action**

06/24/2003

In a 5-4 ruling on Monday, the U.S. Supreme Court decided in favor of the affirmative action program at the University of Michigan law school. Under the program, the school considers race and ethnicity a “plus factor” for applicants who are African American, Native American or Hispanic. An expert testified that without affirmative action, minority enrollment at the school would drop from 14.5 to 4 percent.

Affirmative action improves the educational experience for everyone, not just minorities. A racially diverse student body brings different perspectives to the classroom, dormitories and campus. It promotes interracial understanding and breaks down stereotypes. College students learn from books and professors, but they also learn from each other. College is a time when students encounter a wide variety of people on an intimate, day-to-day basis. Indeed, a big reason why young people go away to college is the idea there is something they can learn from new people and surroundings.

Global companies seek qualified employees who can work with a diverse workforce and serve diverse customers. Learning to work effectively and get along with people from different backgrounds is an essential job skill. The court Monday upheld a sensible principle by allowing university officials the discretion to build a diverse community of students that can learn important lessons for life from each other.

The court also recognized that the effects of slavery and prejudice marring this nation’s history still remain. Racism has infected this country for hundreds of years. Prejudice does damage over generations. The children of a man denied his full potential are themselves hurt by bias, kept from opportunities they would otherwise have and certainly deserve. This means that, even if one could magically make all prejudice disappear, there would still be those who suffer from the ugliness of an earlier time. Without some kind of acknowledgement of this legacy of hate, society cannot hope to overcome it.

Even today, children in minority communities attend schools that are less well funded and more dangerous than schools in affluent, predominately White communities. Affirmative action means just what it says—taking affirmative steps to address the fact that opportunities have been denied to people because of institutionalized racism, both past and present.

The ruling essentially saved affirmative action as an effective means to promote diversity and redress discrimination. Graduate schools are important gateways to power, influence and success in life. It is vital that the doors of higher education be kept open for everyone.

## Appendix D

### *Support for an Affirmative Action Policy Scale*

Questions 1-10 ask for your personal opinion about UM law school's policy for admitting students. Using the scale below, write a number next to each item that best describes your opinion. There are no right or wrong answers. Please just give us **your honest personal opinion**.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Unsure	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

\_\_\_\_\_ 1. All colleges and universities should have an affirmative action program like the one at Michigan law school

\_\_\_\_\_ 2. Michigan law should be changed to make affirmative action illegal. (Reverse-Coded)

\_\_\_\_\_ 3. It is reasonable for Michigan colleges and universities to give special consideration for admission to Minorities.

\_\_\_\_\_ 4. Affirmative action at Michigan colleges and universities is good for society as a whole.

\_\_\_\_\_ 5. I believe the Supreme Court was wise to uphold affirmative action at Michigan law school.

\_\_\_\_\_ 6. I would be willing to attend a student rally to show my support for affirmative action at Michigan colleges and universities.

\_\_\_\_\_ 7. I would be willing to donate one dollar (\$1.00) to promote affirmative action in Michigan colleges and universities.

\_\_\_\_\_ 8. I would be willing to vote for a candidate for Governor of Michigan who promised to end affirmative action at Michigan colleges and universities. (Reverse-Coded)

\_\_\_\_\_ 9. Overall, Michigan law school's affirmative action policy is just a bad idea. (Reverse-Coded)

\_\_\_\_\_ 10. I support the use of affirmative action at Michigan colleges and universities.

## Appendix E

### *Intercorrelations among Variables for White Participants*

Scale	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
1. Sex <sup>a</sup>	--	-.11	-.16*	.04	.09	-.07	-.11	.26***	-.13	-.10	.24**
2. Age		--	.02	-.02	.05	.09	-.07	-.11	.15*	.14	-.04
3. Income			--	.04	-.03	.04	-.16*	.03	-.13	-.18*	-.04
4. Political Orientation				--	.79***	.20**	.08	-.20**	-.16*	.15	-.11
5. Party Identification					--	.21*	.08	-.24**	.23**	.18*	-.17*
6. Belief in White Privilege						--	.36***	-.52***	.41***	.54***	-.21**
7. White Guilt							--	-.21**	.36***	.45***	-.20**
8. Modern Racism								--	-.44***	-.59***	.45***
9. Support for an AA Policy									--	.63***	-.26***
10. Pro-Black Affect										--	-.29***
11. Anti-Black Affect											--

Notes:  $n = 186$ . <sup>a</sup>Dummy-coded (Female = 1, Male = 2). \* $p < .05$ , \*\* $p < .01$ , \*\*\* $p < .001$  (All 2-tailed tests).

## Appendix F

### *Intercorrelations among Variables for Black Participants*

Variable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. Sex <sup>a</sup>	--	.04	.00	-.26	-.63***	.04	-.31
2. Age		--	-.41**	.02	.02	-.02	.00
3. Income			--	-.08	-.08	-.32*	.18
4. Political Orientation				--	.09	.07	.27
5. Party Identification					--	.34*	.23
6. Belief in White Privilege						--	.12
7. Support for an AA Policy							--

*Notes:*  $n = 40$ .

<sup>a</sup> Dummy-coded (Female = 1, Male = 2).

\* $p < .05$ , \*\* $p < .01$ , \*\*\* $p < .001$  (All 2-tailed tests).

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