Section II

Examining Specific Groups and Categories

Chapter 7

Whites/European Americans

Diversity in Organizations
Myrtle Bell
Chapter Objectives

After completing this chapter, readers should have a greater understanding of White Americans as they relate to diversity in organizations. Readers can expect to

- have an awareness of the historical background of White ethnic groups in the United States.
- be able to discuss participation rates, employment, and income levels of White men and women.
- examine racial differences in educational return on investment for Whites and other racial and ethnic groups.
- be able to discuss similarities and differences between employment experiences of White men and women.
Chapter Objectives (cont’d)

After completing this chapter, readers should have a greater understanding of White Americans as they relate to diversity in organizations. Readers can expect to

- discuss the fluidity in groups deemed “White” in the United States and aspects of “White privilege” and the “myth of meritocracy.”

- understand individual and organizational measures that can be employed to include Whites in the study of diversity and to obtain their commitment to diversity in organizations.
History of Whites in the United States

• **1820s to 1920s**
  - Nearly 40 million Europeans migrated to the United States establishing a pecking order of Whites, with the earliest entrants, the English, at the top, followed by Germans, Irish, Italians, and Polish.

• **“Insiders” versus “Others”**
  - Different ethnic White groups used their invisible ethnicity to define “Americans” as “White insiders.”
  - Blacks and immigrants of color were considered as “others” not to be admitted to the institutions of larger society.
Becoming “White” in America

- White ethnic groups “became White” through:
  - Overt actions of the government
  - Their own recognition that the way to become American was to assert their Whiteness
  - Intermarriage among other Whites that diluted the strength of differences among White groups, and enhanced the invisibility of their ethnicity
Becoming “White” in America (cont’d)

- The Myth of Meritocracy

  - The discriminatory and disadvantaging effects of unrecognized and unearned social and cultural capital that accrue to Whites at the expense of non-Whites.
    - Inheritance
    - Knowing the right people
    - Being able to fit in
  
  - Unearned privileges that confer racial dominance, control, and acceptance are moral and ethical issues.
Myth: White racial categorizations are inerrant and stable.

Reality: White racial categorizations have varied considerably in the United States.

Note: Others include Lithuanian, Slovak, Ukrainian, Swiss, Greek, Arab, Czech, Danish, Hungarian, Welsh, French Canadian, Portuguese, and Russian; each was less than 1% of the U.S. population.

Diversity Allies

• Throughout the history of the United States, Whites have participated in the quests for equality of Blacks, American Indians, Latinos, and Asians.
  
  ➢ Abolitionists and the underground railroad
  ➢ Participants in boycotts, marches, and sit-ins
  ➢ Educators, and researchers
Relevant Legislation and Cases

- **Title VII of the Civil Rights Act**
  - Prohibits discrimination against Whites (national origin, religion, and race) including White males.

- **Title VII cases:**
  - **EEOC v. Horizon/Mercy Health Plan of Trenton**
    - Race discrimination
  - **EEOC v. Control Building Services, Inc.**
    - Hostile working environment based on sex and national origin (Polish)
Relevant Legislation and Cases (cont’d)

• Title VII cases (cont’d):
  ➢ *EEOC v. Pinnacle Nissan, Inc., and ABC Nissan, d/b/a Automotive Investment Group, Inc.*
    ➢ Retaliation for opposing discrimination; discrimination in hiring, hostile work environment
  ➢ *EEOC v. G.F.B. Enterprises, LLC d/b/a Lexus of Kendall*
    ➢ Hostile working environment based on sex and national origin (Hispanic), race (Black), religion (Jewish)
Population

• U.S. Census (2000)
  - White refers to peoples of Europe, the Middle East, or North Africa, and includes Irish, German, Italian, Lebanese, Arab, and Polish, among other areas.
    - 75.1% of the population (about 217 million people) reported being White.
  - The White population is declining as a percentage of the total U.S. population.
    - 1790 Census: 80.7% White and 19.3% Black (92% were slaves).
    - In 1930 and 1940, the White population was the largest proportion, 89.8%.
**Figure 7.2** Mean Income for White Men and Women Working Full-Time, Year-Round, 2002

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>&lt;H.S.</th>
<th>H.S. Graduate</th>
<th>Some College</th>
<th>Associate's Degree</th>
<th>Bachelor's</th>
<th>Master's Degree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>White men</td>
<td>$60,169</td>
<td>$32,441</td>
<td>$41,439</td>
<td>$50,558</td>
<td>$51,683</td>
<td>$76,832</td>
<td>$88,234</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White women</td>
<td>$39,844</td>
<td>$23,016</td>
<td>$29,675</td>
<td>$35,045</td>
<td>$36,231</td>
<td>$51,283</td>
<td>$58,800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women's percentage of men's</td>
<td>66%</td>
<td>71%</td>
<td>72%</td>
<td>69%</td>
<td>70%</td>
<td>67%</td>
<td>67%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 7.1 Mean Income in 2002 for Full-Time, Year-Round Workers by Race, Sex, and Hispanic Origin**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Race</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>&lt;H.S.</th>
<th>H.S. Graduate</th>
<th>Some College</th>
<th>Associate’s Degree</th>
<th>Bachelor’s</th>
<th>Master’s Degree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>White male</td>
<td>$60,169</td>
<td>$32,441</td>
<td>$41,439</td>
<td>$50,558</td>
<td>$51,683</td>
<td>$76,832</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>White female</td>
<td>$39,844</td>
<td>$23,016</td>
<td>$29,675</td>
<td>$35,045</td>
<td>$36,231</td>
<td>$51,283</td>
<td>$58,800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian male</td>
<td>$57,862</td>
<td>$21,937</td>
<td>$35,209</td>
<td>$44,625</td>
<td>$41,939</td>
<td>$64,336</td>
<td>$79,389</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian female</td>
<td>$41,006</td>
<td>$20,793</td>
<td>$24,657</td>
<td>$31,751</td>
<td>$35,292</td>
<td>$47,692</td>
<td>$59,890</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black male</td>
<td>$40,289</td>
<td>$28,073</td>
<td>$31,008</td>
<td>$40,978</td>
<td>$44,938</td>
<td>$54,655</td>
<td>$71,470</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black female</td>
<td>$32,843</td>
<td>$19,719</td>
<td>$27,111</td>
<td>$29,663</td>
<td>$32,951</td>
<td>$45,367</td>
<td>$54,844</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic male</td>
<td>$34,822</td>
<td>$25,374</td>
<td>$32,794</td>
<td>$39,659</td>
<td>$46,018</td>
<td>$53,067</td>
<td>$66,781</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic female</td>
<td>$28,062</td>
<td>$18,889</td>
<td>$24,058</td>
<td>$27,938</td>
<td>$32,668</td>
<td>$44,475</td>
<td>$65,953*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Large standard error ($13,004) explains high mean wage for Hispanic women with master’s degree. Median of $46,255 is more representative.

**Key Fact:** When working full-time, year-round, White men with college degrees earn about $22,000 more than Black men with college degrees.

**Key Fact:** When working full-time, year-round, White women with college degrees earn about $25,000 less than White men with college degrees.

### Table 7.2 Unemployment Level by Educational Attainment by Race (Percent of Population 25 and Over): 2003

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Men</th>
<th>Women</th>
<th>White</th>
<th>Black</th>
<th>Asian</th>
<th>Hispanic*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Less than high school</td>
<td>8.8</td>
<td>8.2</td>
<td>9.8</td>
<td>7.8</td>
<td>13.9</td>
<td>9.5</td>
<td>8.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High school graduate</td>
<td>5.5</td>
<td>5.7</td>
<td>5.2</td>
<td>4.8</td>
<td>9.3</td>
<td>5.6</td>
<td>5.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some college, no degree</td>
<td>5.2</td>
<td>5.4</td>
<td>4.9</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>8.6</td>
<td>6.4</td>
<td>5.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Associate’s degree</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>6.2</td>
<td>5.2</td>
<td>5.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bachelor’s and higher†</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>4.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Persons whose ethnicity is Hispanic are classified by ethnicity as well as by race.

†Bachelor’s and higher includes persons with bachelor’s, master’s, professional, and doctoral degree.

The Meaning of Ethnicity for Whites

• Research Findings:
  - Whites with high racial identity development were most comfortable with Blacks; managers perceived as more supportive of minority employees.

• Symbolic Ethnicity
  - Ethnicity which is invoked at will, but has little meaning on a person’s every day life.
White women’s experiences at work

- Black men obtained (theoretical) right to vote before White women.
- Overall, White women earn 66% of White men’s mean annual earnings.
- White women work in female dominated jobs and experience glass ceilings and walls.
- Although advantaged relative to other women, White women are disadvantaged relative to White men.
Perceptions of “Quotas” and “Reverse Discrimination”

• **Affirmative Action**
  - The use of flexible goals and timetables (rather than quotas) to reduce historical imbalances in the participation of underrepresented groups in the workplace.

• **Reverse Discrimination**
  - The act of giving preference to members of protected classes to the extent that others feel they are experiencing discrimination.
  - Reverse discrimination established in very few EEOC cases.
Race, Sex, Performance Ratings, and Salary Increases

- **Castilla’s Findings**
  - Women and minorities received lower salary increases than White men even with the same performance.
  - “Performance-reward” discrimination occurred when employers consciously or unconsciously under weigh the work of minorities in reward situations.
Recommendations

• Whites
  ➢ Should view diversity as a potential source of competitive advantage to be embraced rather than fearing it as lowering their individual power.

• Organizations
  ➢ Should proactively work toward diversity to increase competitiveness for all, resulting in more rather than in fewer opportunities and advantages for Whites.
  ➢ Should include Whites as active participants and allies in the diversity process is a key step to reduce resistance.
Key Terms

- Myth of meritocracy
- Performance-reward discrimination
- Reverse discrimination
- Symbolic ethnicity