

BLACK AND ETHNIC MINORITIES IN THE NEW EUROPE: PERCEPTIONS OF RACIAL DISCRIMINATION IN THE WORKPLACE

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This research was funded by a grant to the first author from the International Business Center, Joseph M. Katz Graduate School of Business, University of Pittsburgh.

Abstract

In this paper we examine the development of racial discrimination policies in the European Union. First, we examine the impact of the single market on ethnic and racial minorities living in Europe's member states. And secondly, we discuss preliminary findings from a survey examining Black Britons' perceptions of racial discrimination in the workplace. We use this information as a point of departure to expand the discussion on the development of a European Union-wide policy on racial discrimination.

Introduction

Following decades of struggles to guarantee equal rights under the law, the United States has moved into a painful new era of learning how to guarantee equal access and economic opportunity for ethnic and racial numerical minorities. During the last twelve months conservative attitudes toward immigration and equal rights in the workplace have increased. For example, in the Fall of 1994 California voters passed Proposition 187 which prohibits illegal immigrants from receiving state-funded services such as grade school education and non-emergency health care. Additionally, during the last six months affirmative action, the range of policies aimed at compensating for past discrimination by increasing the chances that targeted group members will be chosen for jobs, promotions, admissions or contracts, has come under a broad based attack from conservative lawmakers claiming that these policies give unfair advantage to minority group members and women. On the surface, these occurrences signal the public's dissatisfaction with preferential treatment in the workplace and granting benefits to immigrants. On a deeper level, they symbolize the need to re-draw boundaries and re-evaluate who has rights to social benefits.

It is almost ironic to note that Europe may be entering a period similar to the United States, of guaranteeing basic civil rights for minority immigrants and children of immigrants who have distinctive physical, religious, and behavioral characteristics that set them apart from the majority. Like America, the European Union (EU) is in the midst of devising a plan that guarantees its citizens

all rights stipulated by its governing bodies. One plan currently being discussed is the issuance of identity cards. While proponents of the identity card system, such as Britain's Prime Minister, John Major, argue that this method determines who has a right to a particular taxpayer-financed service, opponents state that "[S]uch arguments camouflage the real purpose of ID cards. They are intended to exclude, not include" (Rogaly, 1995).

The social, political and economic status of immigrant groups who have less rightful claims (in the eyes of many) to the resources of European nations will be sorely tested over the coming years. The growing anxiety in some member states regarding the legality of the freedom of movement of people EU has been reflected in more restrictive immigration laws throughout the EU and repeated expressions of anti-immigrant sentiments. For example, it is clear from recent events in Great Britain that rioting and open conflict with immigrant groups continues to be a major concern and tensions still run high. Racial attacks against ethnic minority groups have increased steadily over the last five years. This increase in racial attacks combines with a strong public outcry, from several segments of the British population, against immigrants. For example, during a recent speech, a conservative member of British Parliament called for a halt to a "relentless flow of immigrants lest the traditions of English life be lost" (Stevenson, 1993). Similarly, a member of the Neo-Nazi party won a local council seat in London with a campaign message stating "that if Britain is to be great again it must deport all nonwhites" (Stevenson, 1993). As we well know, these blatant expressions of anti-ethnic/racial sentiments are not solely characteristic of England. Similar events have occurred in Germany, France and the Netherlands.

Concern over the rise in racism and xenophobia throughout the EU continues to grow. Commissioner Hans Van Den Broek stated recently during an anti-discrimination symposium that, "Europe must actively combat discrimination, otherwise it faces social disintegration" (The European Commission, 1994). Furthermore, the position of third country nationals has become increasingly precarious. Crude identifying factors used to locate suspected immigrants are frequently based on race or nationality, which leads to people from a different racial or cultural background being suspect (Stanley, 1994). In this paper, we argue that lessons may be learned from political, legal, and economic experiences of the "new world" in developing coherent civil rights policies among politically and economically united but distinctly different geographical member states of Europe. We employ a multi-faceted approach to investigate the EU's policies, and structures and citizens attitudes related to the development of racial discrimination legislation. In the first section, we describe the governmental structures established within and outside the EU prohibiting discrimination and illegal immigration. Specifically, in this section we detail the effects of the creation of the Single European Market (SEA) on Black and ethnic minorities throughout the EU. In the second section, we present preliminary results from a study examining Black Briton's work place attitudes. And finally in the last section, we discuss within the context of existing stereotypes concerning ethnic/racial minorities the role that these images play in contributing to, and maintaining, institutionalized forms of racism in the EU.

The Impact of the Single European Market on Black and Ethnic Minorities

The aim of the EU, is to create an economy where labor, capital services and goods circulate freely in order to provide for greater economic prosperity. To accomplish this goal, several European nations, referred to as member states, joined their economies in a common market without internal barriers to trade and with common external barriers to trade. Benefits of the internal common market include costs savings as a result of cost-effective supply of labor and capital, reduction in barriers such as customs formalities and restrictions on services and manufacturing that hinder trade (Cecchini, 1988). Findings from an EU survey of European business during the first year of unification suggests that while the single market was not a panacea for all problems companies noticed positive effects particularly in reducing transport and administrative costs and introducing greater export potential (European Commission, 1994).

While additional benefits are expected to be achieved demographic trends indicate a sharp reduction in the number of non-immigrant, non-ethnic, non-racial EU nationals entering the labor force. Decreases in labor force participation of this segment of the EU population is due to the decrease in birthrates throughout the member states. Although the EU is experiencing decreases in its non-immigrant, non-ethnic, non-racial populous similar to the United States, employment statistics indicate that the labor force in the 1990's will be older, contain more married women and racial and ethnic

minorities. As a result of these demographic changes employers are faced with managing a more culturally diverse workforce.

Unlike the United States with its comprehensive anti-discrimination policies, legislation prohibiting discrimination and ensuring equal employment varies widely among the EU member states. For example, Britain has extensive legislation governing racial discrimination in the employment relationship, where as, in Ireland there exists no domestic legislation controlling racial discrimination. A study by the British Department of Employment states that outside of England legal protection against racial discrimination is non-existent (Forbes and Meade, 1992). Additional findings confirm that racial discrimination plays a significant role in the underemployment of racial/ethnic minorities especially in recruitment and selection procedures, where it has been found that half of the Dutch personnel officers interviewed admitted to using negative stereotypes when making employment decisions (Forbes and Mead, 1992:56). The lack of comparable legislation throughout member states means that Black and ethnic minorities have limited redress under the law against acts of discrimination and racism.

The official position of the European Commission is that it can not competently introduce primary legislation on racial equality because the Treaty of Rome does not take up racial issues. For example, the Council of Ministers (one of the governing bodies of the EU) agreed that the responsibility for taking action against racial discrimination, racism and xenophobia lies in the domain of each member state rather than the Community. Investigation by the British Home Office, into employment in a single market, identifies the move towards completing the Single European Market as one of the 'key international developments (which) underline the importance of developing Britain's human resources' (Wrench, 1991). Economic constraints due to implementation of the Single European Act (SEA) and demographic changes make it increasingly important that managers working in Great Britain clearly articulate a human resource policy which 1) takes into account the social context (i.e., xenophobia sentiments and ethnic minorities' increase in the labor force) and, 2) seeks to develop and create employment opportunities for all groups of people. Simply stated, the EU can not disregard the non-existence of Community-wide legislation against racial discrimination given the predicted rises in ethnic minorities entering the work force.

An interesting note to this lack of analogous legislation prohibiting racial discrimination is the fact that each member state has legislation guaranteeing equal treatment between men and women in employment. Equality in law between men and women is an integral part of the EU's social policy and crucial to its economic and social cohesion (European Communities Publications Office, 1994). While occupational segregation based on gender continues to exist in all EU labor markets the distinguishing factor between this legislation and policies prohibiting racial discrimination is that equal treatment between men and women is a significant part of the EU legal framework on equal opportunities. When asked why similar legislation regarding racial discrimination has not been introduced officials state that racial discrimination is covered by the Constitution. While this is accurate, it must be noted that gender discrimination is also covered by the Constitution. Forbes and Mead (1992:14)...[suggest] that the constitutional guarantee of equal treatment between people of different races is somewhat lacking in specificity and practical force, as compared to the legislative provisions on gender equality.

In an attempt to address this lack of comparable legislation the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (CRED) a prominent provision on racial discrimination in employment was developed. This convention is important because it places pressure on member states' governments to introduce domestic legislation to prohibit discrimination in employment. While some governments responded to this pressure and developed appropriate measures to decrease discrimination others have failed to implement racial discrimination initiatives. Direct reliance on the provisions in these conventions is not necessarily an effective means of guaranteeing an end to racial discrimination.

Schengen Treaty -- Border Controls and Immigration

In addition to the weak legislative controls prohibiting racial discrimination ethnic/racial minorities EU nationals also endure the tightening of immigration controls. For example, in an effort to stem the tide of illegal immigrants, in 1985, Germany, France, Belgium, the Netherlands and Luxembourg signed the Schengen agreement to harmonize policies on immigration, coordinate crime prevention and monitor drug trafficking and terrorism. Supplementary agreements signed in 1990 and 1995 provide for the exchange between member states information concerning all aspects of their

immigration polices, information such as an individual asylum seeker's application and results. The Schengen Convention remedies problems in distinguishing between EU and non-EU national by establishing a common policy with respect to the non-EU nationals¹. Two factors distinguish these two groups of people. First, third country nationals are required to obtain a visa prior to travel and secondly, there is an agreement between the member states on a joint list of third countries whose nationals must be in possession of a visa when crossing the external borders of the Schengen territory². This common visa allows non-EU nationals to move without any restrictions in the Schengen area for a period not exceeding three months. Visas are only renewable in exceptional circumstances, and non-citizens are required to register with the authorities within three days of their arrival at destination. Failure to fulfill these conditions can result in removal from the whole Schengen area (Bunyan, 1991).

It is important to note that while the Schengen Agreements lie outside the democratic framework of the European Community they are an experiment that can be used at the Community level (European Commission, 1995). A unanimous agreement between the member states on issues concerning non-EU nationals could achieve a progressive implementation of the Schengen convention into Community Law (European Commission, 1995). While these agreements provide monitoring of external borders the border personnel's lack of specialist training in handling immigration issues suggests that visible minorities would routinely be subject to differential treatment regardless of their citizenship status (Forbes and Mead, 1992). "In effect, a Black person's face is their passport. Spot checks and questioning by customs officers is contentious because it upsets many genuine travelers, who are mainly Black, who feel demeaned by interrogation and are sometimes wronged by rejection" (The 1990 Trust, 1993:9). Besides controlling freedom of movement the Schengen group also deals with terrorism, drug trafficking and illegal immigration. This pooling together of such undesirable elements links Black and ethnic minorities with such activities, and as a result, perpetuates negative stereotypes of Black and ethnic minorities. Though one of the major provisions of the SEA is freedom of movement numerous examples describe incidents where Black EU nationals have been unduly prevented from crossing the borders which affects their employability in the new Europe. For example, the prevalence of these negative stereotypes can result in a Black truck driver constantly being stopped for surveillance checks. These stoppages considerably slows down delivery of cargo, and subsequently, portrays Black workers as a potential commercial risk to employers. If the single market is to mean anything, it must mean that workers are able to move freely between member states (Moxon-Browne, 1993:156). By hindering black and ethnic minority residents movement across internal borders European governments are preventing these residents from taking full advantage of the mobility promoted for EU workers. Consequently, we have the creation of a Fortress Europe which locks in some captives not wanting to lose their labor and the services they provide but limiting their freedom of movement (Wa Goro, 1991).

While the above accounts document the existence of stereotypes and the role that these images play in contributing to, and maintaining, institutionalized forms of racism little empirical research, to our knowledge, has investigated these perceptions among racial and ethnic group members in the EU. Evidence from our previous research suggests that levels of individual racism and the pluralistic ignorance phenomenon is related to the views held by dominant groups toward government interventions for racial and ethnic groups members in Western Europe (Jackson, Kirby, Barnes, Shepard, 1993)³. Findings suggest that individuals who are themselves positive toward having a ethnic or racial minority as their boss, tend to be more positive toward government policies to aid racial and ethnic minorities than those who are themselves negative and see everyone one else as negative. Our findings coupled with an increase in anti-immigrant sentiments confirms that ethnic and racial minorities living in the EU are subject to discrimination, in general and in the workplace. In next section, we present preliminary results from a study that we conducted investigating perceptions of racial inequities among, one group of ethnic and racial minorities living in the EU, Black Briton's. Examination of these perceptions among the ethnic/immigrant populous can complement organizational level data which details rises in racial incidents and obstacles to immigration. Our primary goal was to describe and analyze how Black Briton's perceptions of racial inequities in the workplace translate into human resource policies (i.e., equal opportunity policies and hiring practices). Moreover, since Britain has the most extensive governmental legislation prohibiting racial discrimination in comparison to the other member states, data which suggests that Black British respondents perceive obstacles and barriers to their full access to the single market can potentially

provide lawmakers with additional evidence for the necessity of Community-wide racial discrimination legislation.

Black British Workplace Attitudes Study

In investigating Black Britons perceptions of racial discrimination in the workplace we wanted to assess whether or not the subtle and blatant racial discrimination constructs developed in an African American sample had currency in a cross-national context³. This is especially important since the United States Civil Rights laws served as a model for the development of the British Race Relations Act and subsequent equal opportunity legislation. Although significant differences existed between the British and American race relations the Home Secretary and the Select Committee on Race Relations and Immigration drew on American Civil Rights laws as a prototype for the development of British race relations legislation. Our previous research examining perceptions of attitudes in the workplace indicates that racial inequities can be assessed by examining both subtle and blatant discrimination (Kirby and Jackson, 1995). The measure of subtle discrimination reflected the respondents' beliefs that African Americans tend to get certain types of jobs and that African Americans disproportionately tended to get the job they currently held. The measure of blatant discrimination reflected African American's perception of unfairness in hiring decisions and maltreatment as a result of their race.

Sample

During the summer and fall of 1994 an employment survey was administered to a convenience sample of Black Britons living in London, England (n=188). This survey examined a variety of work attitudes focusing primarily on issues related to racial discrimination in the workplace⁴. Analysis of respondent demographic information indicated that 82% were European Union citizens and 56.8% were women. Additionally, 64.8% of the respondents were currently working and 54.6% held working class jobs⁵.

Measures

The items used in this study asked respondents to compare the job they currently held with jobs that Whites and East Asians traditionally held; measured respondents' beliefs that they disproportionately tended to get the job they currently held in comparison to Whites and East Asians; and their perception of unfairness in hiring decisions and maltreatment as a result of their race. We included East Asians as a comparison group since Black Britons and East Asians compete for jobs.

Analysis

The items representing perceived racial discrimination were included in a principal components factor analysis, followed by a varimax rotation. Three factors with eigenvalues greater than 1 accounted for 73.2% of the variance. Similar to the results with the African American sample respondents' perception that they were turned down for a job and treated unfairly loaded on the same factor.

The results also indicated that the rest of the items loaded on two separate factors. The perception that Blacks tend to get certain types of jobs more than Whites and East Asians loaded on Factor 2 and that they disproportionately tended to get the job they currently held more than White or East Asians loaded on Factor 3. The items loading on Factor 2 suggest that Black Britons notice differences in jobs assigned to Whites or Asians and their jobs. Likewise, the loadings on Factor 3 appear to suggest that respondents in this sample perceived that Black Britons are segregated in certain jobs.

TABLE 1 -- FACTOR LOADING FOR RACIAL DISCRIMINATION IN THE WORKPLACE MEASURES

ITEMS	FACTOR 1	FACTOR 2	FACTOR 3
At your workplace, are Black people treated unfairly or badly in any ways?		.88	.06 .09
At the place you work now,		.84	.11 -.14

have you ever been turned down for a job you wanted because you are Black? Are the jobs that Black people get better, or worse or the same as the jobs that White people get?	.25	.82	.02
Are the jobs that Black people get better, or worse or the same as the jobs that Asian people get?	-.06	.88	.11
Is your job one that Black people tend to get more than Whites?	.13	.03	.84
Is your job one that Black people tend to get more than Asians?	-.17	.08	.77
Percentage of Variance Explained	30.8	24.5	17.9

Discussion and Conclusion

In this paper we use a multifaceted approach to gain further understanding of racial discrimination issues in the EU. There is especially a need for cross-national approaches that seek to find commonalities and differences. Thus, we can come to understand how different socio-historical contexts and types of subordinate groups are treated by dominant members. We examined the effects of the single market on ethnic/racial minorities in the EU at both the macro and at the micro levels. On the macro level, we described the relationship between the rights of Black European citizens and the creation of the single market by examining the organizational and policy developments.

On the micro level, we examined data from a survey of Black Britons work attitudes. Specifically, we investigated Black Briton's perceptions of racial inequities in the workplace. Findings replicate the construct validation findings from previous work done in the United States. Both British and American respondents perception that they were turned down for a job and treated unfairly, which we labeled blatant discrimination, loaded on the same factor. Thus, we conclude that the blatant discrimination in the workplace construct has cross-national validity.

There is one notable exception, where items previously labeled as subtle discrimination in the American sample loaded on separate factors in the British sample. This difference suggests that Black Britons conceptualize barriers surrounding job type and assignment as independent factors. While these results are not a perfect match with our previous subtle discrimination findings they indicate two important points. First, they suggest that for Black Britons subtle discrimination may revolve around issues of labor market barriers, such as occupational segregation. Secondly, these findings suggest that Black Britons perceive Whites and Asians somewhat similarly in the workplace.

Data generated by this research can be used in basic advances in science and public policy planning. First, investigation of the experiences and perceptions of Black Britons indicates that the models of racial discrimination developed on African Americans have currency in European settings. Secondly, these findings though preliminary indicate that Black Britons perceive racial discrimination

in their workplaces. One remedy to this situation is the development of a EU-wide policy prohibiting racial discrimination. Though some doubt the viability of a national anti-discrimination policy, at the very least these efforts can provide member states with avenues for dialogue based on inclusion as opposed to exclusion.

In an attempt to signal to the EU the necessity of a community-wide policy against racial discrimination an independent group of race relations experts developed *The Starting Line* a proposal for a council directive concerning the elimination of racial discrimination.⁶ The authors of this document present two key arguments in support of community wide legislation. First, they assert that while national legislation in the member states has a vital role to play, due to extreme variations in the racial discrimination policies it has not succeeded in tackling the problem (*The Starting Line*, 1993). Secondly, they argue that community action against racism and xenophobia is now necessary due to the fact that unjust discrimination interferes with the free movement of persons, and that variations between national levels of protection will discourage persons likely to suffer discrimination from moving to those states where protection is small or non-existent (*The Starting Line*, 1993).

We realize that the development of social policies that are politically acceptable to the constituents in the EU will not be an easy chore. As European governments promote harmonization of their economic policies our empirical findings though exploratory in nature suggest that there are problems on the individual level. Given the common thread between US Civil Rights legislation and British racial discrimination laws this finding is particularly encouraging. Moreover, we assert that US based equal opportunity laws and legislation can serve as a prototype for the development of a community-wide racial discrimination policy. While the general idea is that Europe is "open for business" our results seem to suggest that this statement may not hold true for Black Britons. This simple piece of information could serve as the impetus that motivates human resource professionals to modify their personnel practices and procedures to ensure equality in the workplace. It is vital that managers understand their ethnic/racial citizens job related attitudes can influence the success of the economic restructuring occurring throughout the EU.

While the findings discussed above are preliminary they provide us with clear indications that future research is needed. Future research endeavors should further examine racial and ethnic minorities perceptions or workplace inequities, as well as, investigate the relationship between these perceptions and workplace attitudes such as job satisfaction. This type of information can increase our understanding of workplace attitudes among racial and ethnic EU minorities, as well as, highlight areas for policy development. In order for the goals of the SEA to be fully realized there must be a union between political and economic forces to guarantee equitable and fair treatment for all European Community citizens and immigrants.

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Coupled with changes in the demographic make-up of the EU labor force are increases in the hostile attitudes toward immigrants and ethnic minorities throughout the member states.