

Research Report

PERCEIVED DISCRIMINATION IN THE CONTEXT OF MULTIPLE GROUP MEMBERSHIPS

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Abstract—This study examined the joint impact of gender and ethnicity on expectations of general discrimination against oneself and one's group. According to the double-jeopardy hypothesis, women of color will expect to experience more general discrimination than men of color, White women, and White men because they belong to both a low-status ethnic group and a low-status gender group. Alternatively, the ethnic-prominence hypothesis predicts that ethnic-minority women will not differ from ethnic-minority men in their expectations of general discrimination because these expectations will be influenced more by perceptions of ethnic discrimination, which they share with men of color, than by perceptions of gender discrimination. All results were consistent with the ethnic-prominence hypothesis rather than the double-jeopardy hypothesis.

Researchers have recently begun to investigate the causes and consequences of perceived discrimination among members of stigmatized groups (Swim & Stangor, 1998; for a review, see Crocker, Major, & Steele, 1998). The bulk of this research has examined perceptions of discrimination based on membership in a single group, such as a gender or ethnic group. For example, several studies have shown that women perceive more gender discrimination against their group than men perceive against their group (Gutek, Cohen, & Tsui, 1996; Kobrynowicz & Branscombe, 1997), a finding that is consistent with objective socioeconomic disparities between men and women in the United States (Benokraitis & Feagin, 1986). Similarly, objective ethnic disparities in the allocation of social rewards are reflected in greater perceptions of ethnic discrimination among ethnic minorities than Whites (Major et al., 2002). Empirical research examining the joint impact of gender and ethnicity on perceptions of discrimination, however, is severely limited, and relevant hypotheses are contradictory.

On one hand, the *double-jeopardy hypothesis* implies that because ethnic-minority women are targets of both gender and ethnic discrimination, they will expect to experience greater general disadvantage overall than ethnic-minority men and White women (who belong to only one lower-status group) and White men (who belong to two high-status groups; Beale, 1970; King, 1975; Klonoff, Landrine, & Scott, 1995; Landrine, Klonoff, Alcaraz, Scott, & Wilkins, 1995; Ransford, 1980; Reid, 1988; Reid & Comas-Diaz, 1990; Reid & Kelly, 1994). This hypothesis assumes that perceptions of ethnic and gender discrimination each make significant contributions to overall expectations of general discrimination. That is, if women perceive more gender discrimination than men, and people of color perceive more ethnic discrimination than Whites, then women of color should expect to experience the most discrimination overall if these two bases of perceived discrimination both contribute to overall expectations that one will be treated unfairly (Coleman, Jussim, & Isaac, 1991; Weber & Higginbotham, 1997).

Alternatively, it may be the case that the highly articulated role of ethnicity as a historical and contemporary basis of discrimination in the United States predisposes women of color to focus more on their ethnicity than on their gender when making judgments about expected discrimination. We refer to this position as the *ethnic-prominence hypothesis*. According to this position, women of color will expect to experience the same amount of general disadvantage as men in their ethnic group because their expectations of general discrimination are more closely linked to their perceptions of ethnic discrimination, which they share with their male counterparts, than to their perceptions of gender discrimination.

Two lines of research support the ethnic-prominence hypothesis. First, cognitive accessibility theorists have shown that individuals are more likely to think of themselves in terms of social group memberships that are numerical minorities rather than majorities (McGuire & McGuire, 1988). Because ethnic minorities represent a small portion of American society, whereas women are actually a numerical majority (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1998), membership in a stigmatized ethnic group may be a more salient basis of self-understanding than gender, and therefore may factor more heavily into expectations of general discrimination. Second, according to Jackman (1994), gender discrimination is characterized by attempts to control women without engendering negative feeling because men are motivated to maintain positive intimate relationships (e.g., romantic relationships, intergender friendships) with women (see also Fiske & Stevens, 1993; Glick & Fiske, 1996, 1997). Ethnic discrimination, in contrast, is characterized by a higher degree of conflict and antipathy because relations between different ethnic groups tend to involve a substantially lower degree of intimate contact. To the extent that ethnic discrimination is more conflictual and threatening than gender discrimination, it is likely that perceptions of ethnic discrimination will be more prominent than perceptions of gender discrimination for ethnic-minority women as they think about the amount of discrimination, in general, they expect to experience.

The current study examined the joint effects of ethnicity and gender on expectations of general discrimination, and measured the degree to which perceived ethnic and gender discrimination contribute to expectations of general discrimination, in order to test the competing predictions of the double-jeopardy and ethnic-prominence hypotheses. We tested these predictions with data from two low-status ethnic groups (Latinos and African Americans), and examined perceptions and expectations of discrimination both against oneself (personal discrimination) and against other members of one's group (group discrimination). We were therefore able to replicate our findings across ethnic groups and across types of discrimination.

METHOD

Participants

Participants were surveyed in the fall of 1996 and winter of 1997 on the campus of the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA).

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Perceived Discrimination

They were approached on campus and asked to complete an anonymous survey on social and political attitudes. In exchange for their participation, respondents could choose to have their names entered into a lottery to win one of four \$50 prizes. Only African American ($n = 179$), Latino ($n = 260$), and White ($n = 248$) respondents were included in the study. The majority of the respondents (55% of the African Americans, 52% of the Latinos, and 54% of the Whites) were women. Respondents were between 18 and 59 years of age ($M = 21.34$, $SD = 3.82$). When people chose not to participate in the study, the main reason they gave was insufficient time, especially around exam periods.

Measures

The survey instrument consisted of a series of questions about perceptions of discrimination and general group attitudes. There is a wide body of literature indicating that people perceive greater discrimination against other members of their group than against themselves personally (e.g., Crosby, Cordova, & Jaskar, 1993; Taylor, Wright, & Porter, 1994). Therefore, we measured three types of discrimination at both the personal and group levels: general, gender, and ethnic. The general discrimination items appeared at the beginning of the questionnaire, before any items referring to a specific group membership. The gender discrimination items were embedded in a section of the questionnaire regarding gender attitudes, and the ethnic discrimination items were embedded in a section of the questionnaire regarding ethnic attitudes; the order of these gender and ethnic sections was counterbalanced. All items were measured on 7-point scales ranging from 1 (*not at all/strongly disagree*) to 7 (*very much/strongly agree*). Higher ratings indicate greater discrimination.

General discrimination

Expected personal general discrimination was measured by the item "To what extent will prejudice and discrimination against you impose barriers to your future outcomes?" Expected group general discrimination was measured by the item "To what extent will prejudice and discrimination against others like you impose barriers to their future outcomes?"

Gender discrimination

Perceived personal gender discrimination was measured by the item "I experience discrimination because of my gender." Perceived group gender discrimination was measured for women by the item "Women experience discrimination because of their gender," and for men by the item "Men experience discrimination because of their gender."

Ethnic discrimination

Perceived personal ethnic discrimination was measured by the item "I experience discrimination because of my ethnicity." Perceived group ethnic discrimination was measured by the item "Other members of my ethnic group experience discrimination."

RESULTS

The descriptive statistics for perceived gender, ethnic, and general discrimination at the personal and group levels, broken down by gender and ethnicity, are shown in Table 1. As in previous research, two-way analyses of variance (ANOVAs) revealed main effects of gender

on gender discrimination and ethnicity on ethnic discrimination: Women perceived more gender discrimination than men, $F(1, 674) = 241.68$, $p < .001$, and $F(1, 674) = 509.13$, $p < .001$, for personal and group discrimination, respectively. Also, African Americans perceived the greatest ethnic discrimination, followed by Latinos and Whites, $F(2, 669) = 149.18$, $p < .001$, and $F(2, 671) = 329.05$, $p < .001$, for personal and group discrimination, respectively (all pair-wise comparisons were significant at the .05 level). Paired-samples t tests also revealed that perceptions of group discrimination were significantly higher than perceptions of personal discrimination for all three types of discrimination, $t(676) = 12.02$, $p < .001$; $t(673) = 14.74$, $p < .001$; and $t(673) = 5.87$, $p < .001$, for gender, ethnic, and general discrimination, respectively.

In order to test the main hypotheses of the study, we entered the data into two additional 2×3 ANOVAs with gender and ethnicity as between-subjects factors. In one analysis, expected personal general discrimination was the dependent measure, and in the other analysis, expected group general discrimination was the dependent measure.

Effects of Gender and Ethnicity on Expected Personal General Discrimination

Results indicated significant main effects of both gender, $F(1, 674) = 10.47$, $p < .001$, and ethnicity, $F(2, 674) = 101.80$, $p < .001$, on expectations of personal general discrimination. There was also a significant interaction between gender and ethnicity, $F(2, 674) = 3.55$, $p < .05$. Tests for simple effects indicated that White women expected more personal general discrimination than did White men, $F(1, 674) = 17.29$, $p < .001$, but that male and female African Americans, $F(1, 674) < 1$, and male and female Latinos, $F(1, 674) = 2.45$, $p > .05$, expected similar levels of personal general discrimination. These results are consistent with the ethnic-prominence hypothesis.

Effects of Gender and Ethnicity on Expected Group General Discrimination

The results for expected group general discrimination paralleled those found for expected personal general discrimination. There were significant main effects of both gender, $F(1, 673) = 7.97$, $p < .01$, and ethnicity, $F(2, 673) = 119.92$, $p < .001$. These main effects were qualified by a significant interaction between gender and ethnicity, $F(2, 673) = 5.73$, $p < .01$. Tests for simple effects indicated higher levels of expected group general discrimination among White women compared with White men, $F(1, 673) = 20.22$, $p < .001$, but similar levels of expected group general discrimination among male and female African Americans, $F(1, 673) < 1$, and male and female Latinos, $F(1, 673) = 1.42$, $p > .05$.

Effects of Perceived Gender and Ethnic Discrimination on Expected General Discrimination

As predicted by the ethnic-prominence hypothesis, ethnic-minority women and men expected to experience similar amounts of general discrimination, at both the personal and the group level. This pattern should occur, according to the hypothesis, because ethnic-minority women's expectations of general discrimination are more closely linked to their perceptions of ethnic discrimination, which they share with their male counterparts, than to their perceptions of gender discrimination. In order to determine the degree to which perceptions of gender and ethnic discrimination contribute to expected general dis-

Table 1. Descriptive statistics for gender, ethnic, and general discrimination at the personal and group levels

Group or subgroup	n	Gender discrimination				Ethnic discrimination				General discrimination			
		Personal		Group		Personal		Group		Personal		Group	
		M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
Group													
Gender													
Men	320	2.46	1.67	2.71	1.69	4.49	2.02	5.12	2.05	3.82	1.82	4.11	1.92
Women	367	4.46	1.70	5.41	1.45	4.22	2.07	5.16	2.09	4.23	1.55	4.48	1.60
Ethnic													
Whites	248	3.32	1.81	4.03	1.88	2.95	1.84	3.20	1.84	2.99	1.43	3.17	1.50
Blacks	179	3.84	2.07	4.28	2.19	5.79	1.46	6.48	1.07	4.83	1.67	5.26	1.50
Latinos	260	3.51	2.00	4.19	2.15	4.68	1.74	6.05	1.30	4.50	1.43	4.75	1.57
Subgroup													
Men													
White men	115	2.50	1.60	2.94	1.65	3.02	1.76	3.26	1.83	2.57	1.40	2.70	1.46
Black men	81	2.64	1.86	2.60	1.73	5.95	1.40	6.35	1.36	4.80	1.71	5.31	1.52
Latino men	124	2.29	1.60	2.58	1.69	4.89	1.70	6.02	1.24	4.35	1.58	4.63	1.73
Women													
White women	133	4.02	1.69	4.96	1.53	2.89	1.90	3.15	1.85	3.36	1.36	3.57	1.42
Black women	98	4.87	1.64	5.67	1.42	5.66	1.50	6.58	0.74	4.85	1.64	5.22	1.49
Latina women	136	4.61	1.66	5.67	1.29	4.49	1.77	6.07	1.36	4.64	1.26	4.86	1.40
Overall sample	687	3.53	1.96	4.15	2.07	4.34	2.05	5.14	2.07	4.04	1.69	4.31	1.76

crimination in ethnic-minority women, we regressed measures of expected general discrimination (personal general discrimination in one analysis and group general discrimination in a second analysis) on measures of perceived gender and ethnic discrimination (the personal levels in the first analysis and the group levels in the second), for African American women and Latinas (and White women as a comparison group). The predictors were entered simultaneously into the regression equation to control for the influence of one while examining the impact of the other.

In support of the ethnic-prominence hypothesis, results indicated that for Black women and Latinas, perceived ethnic discrimination explained a significant portion of the variance in expectations of general discrimination, on both a personal level (Black women: $\beta = .34, p < .01$; Latinas: $\beta = .36, p < .001$) and a group level (Black women: $\beta = .43, p < .001$; Latinas: $\beta = .38, p < .001$). Perceived gender discrimina-

tion, however, did not significantly contribute to the general discrimination expected by women of color, except for the personal discrimination expected by Latinas (for personal discrimination, $\beta = .06, p > .05$, for Black women and $\beta = .23, p < .05$, for Latinas; for group discrimination, $\beta = .08, p > .05$, for Black women and $\beta = .13, p > .05$, for Latinas). Not surprisingly, for White women we found that perceived gender discrimination explained a significant portion of the variance in expectations of general discrimination, on both a personal level ($\beta = .31, p < .001$) and a group level ($\beta = .32, p < .001$). Perceived ethnic discrimination, however, did not significantly contribute to the general discrimination expected by White women, on either a personal level ($\beta = .04, p > .05$) or a group level ($\beta = -.01, p > .05$). Table 2 shows the zero-order, partial, and part correlations of perceived ethnic and gender discrimination with expected general discrimination at the personal and group levels.

Table 2. Zero-order, partial, and part correlations of ethnic and gender discrimination with general discrimination (personal and group) among Black, Latina, and White women

Type of discrimination	Black women			Latina women			White women		
	r	Partial r	Part r	r	Partial r	Part r	r	Partial r	Part r
Personal									
Ethnic	.38***	.27**	.26**	.48***	.34***	.31***	.11	.04	.04
Gender	.28**	.05	.05	.42***	.22*	.20*	.32***	.30***	.30***
Group									
Ethnic	.47***	.38***	.36***	.44***	.35***	.34***	-.04	-.01	-.01
Gender	.31***	.07	.07	.30***	.13	.11	.32***	.31***	.31***

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$.

DISCUSSION

All results were consistent with the ethnic-prominence, rather than the double-jeopardy, hypothesis. Latinas and African American women did not differ from their male counterparts in expectations of general discrimination (personal and group), because these expectations were informed more by the women's perceptions of ethnic discrimination, which they share with men of color, than by their perceptions of gender discrimination. In contrast, perceived gender discrimination contributed to expectations of general discrimination among White women, but perceived ethnic discrimination did not. Because White women's expectations of general discrimination are based exclusively on their perceptions of gender discrimination, which men in their ethnic group do not face, it is not surprising that White women expected more general discrimination than White men.

The finding that double jeopardy does not exist in expected general discrimination corroborates other work suggesting that double jeopardy also does not exist in actual discrimination (Sidanius & Veniegas, 2000). In fact, there is substantial evidence that men of color actually experience more discrimination than women of color across several different domains, including the criminal justice system, the labor market, the educational system, and the retail sales market (see also Sidanius & Pratto, 1999).

As Smith and Stewart (1983) recommended, future research should examine the relative prominence of gender and ethnicity in multiple contexts. Undoubtedly, there are conditions under which ethnic-minority women's expectations of discrimination will be driven more by gender than by ethnicity or equally by gender and ethnicity. Evidence for double jeopardy may be found under these various conditions. For example, double jeopardy may occur when gender and ethnicity are equally prominent (McGuire & McGuire, 1988), or when women of color are asked whether they expect to feel discriminated against as "Black women" or "Latina women." Furthermore, the types of discrimination perceived by various ethnic and gender groups may be qualitatively different and may not necessarily "add up" or "interact" in a statistical, quantitative sense. Therefore, future research should also examine both qualitative and quantitative differences in perceived discrimination among ethnic and gender groups.

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