

Effects of Police Agency Diversification on Officer Attitudes

Purpose: In light of recent calls to increase the diversity of America's police, this research examines the impact of agency and leadership diversification on officer job satisfaction and reported perceptions of fairness within the organization, factors known to influence retention and performance.

Methodology: A survey of 15,236 officers representing 88 agencies was used, as well as other agency- and community-level variables. Multi-level models were used to assess how these individual- and agency-level variables, including measures of diversification, affected job satisfaction and perceptions of fairness.

Findings: Diversification in agency leadership positions was found to improve perceptions of fairness among all officers, in addition to ameliorating some feelings of unfairness among African American officers. Diversification of the sworn ranks, in comparison to the population of the community, however, was not found to significantly affect the outcome measures.

Research limitations/implications: The study only examined the effects of diversification on officer perceptions. Future studies that link measures of diversification to citizen perceptions are needed to understand how members of the public respond to the image and characteristics of sworn personnel in their communities.

Practical implications: The results indicate the importance of retention and promotion of more diverse leadership in police agencies.

Originality/value: This study is one of the first to assess the effects of diversification in such a large sample of agencies of all types and sizes throughout the United States.

Keywords: diversity, police, community, job satisfaction, fairness

Article Classification: Research paper

Introduction

In the wake of recent deadly force incidents primarily involving communities of color, there are renewed questions about whether police administrators have done enough to increase the racial, ethnic and gender diversity of America's police. Diversification, or the process of becoming more inclusive, has long been suggested as a potential remedy to problems of perceived racial bias and citizen mistrust of the police. Diversification is anticipated to achieve numerous benefits including making police departments less insular, conveying a sense of equity to the public and developing a workforce that better understands a variety of community perspectives and experiences.

Of particular importance to the current research, diversification is also anticipated to affect the internal dynamics of police agencies, on the one hand increasing worker satisfaction and belief in the fairness of one's own organization and on the other hand potentially creating cultural divisions among officers of different racial and ethnic backgrounds and gender (Sklansky, 2006). As such, this study attempts to inform this discussion by using data from a national sample of police agencies to examine how two measures of diversification- community representativeness and agency leadership representativeness- affect job satisfaction and perceptions of fairness, two core factors shown to influence officer retention and performance.

Background

In 1967, the President's Commission on Law Enforcement and the Administration of Justice, also known as the President's Crime Commission, published a report on the status of crime and the criminal justice system's response in the U.S. It suggested that police agencies make more concerted efforts to recruit and retain minorities to improve community-relations. One year later the National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders, also known as the Kerner Commission, echoed the need for the recruitment and promotion of minorities in police agencies. That Commission again impressed the idea that police agencies needed to recruit, retain, and promote minority officers to be perceived as legitimate in minority communities and to improve cooperation between the police and the citizens they serve. Although the recruitment of females was not specifically addressed in either the President's Crime Commission or the Kerner Commission reports, it was included on a list of recommendations outlined in *A National Strategy to Reduce Crime* from the National Advisory Commission on Criminal Justice Standards and Goals (1973). Like the recruitment and hiring of minorities, the hiring of female police officers has been largely framed from the perspective of legitimacy and access; calls for hiring female officers have centered on making police agencies less aggressive or masculine and more community friendly (Walker, 1985).

Since the 1970s, police agencies around the nation have taken efforts to increase the number of racial and ethnic minorities and women in their ranks. For example, in 2008, 84% of police agencies with 500 or more officers and 61% of agencies with 100 to 499 police officers reported using recruitment efforts that specifically targeted women and racial and ethnic minorities (Reaves, 2012), and these efforts to recruit and retain racial and ethnic minorities and

women have increased their numbers among the rank and file. Racial and ethnic minorities represented 27.2% and women 12.2% of full time police officers in 2013 (Reaves, 2015), up from their respective percentages of 14.6% and 7.6 in 1987.

Despite these shifts in personnel characteristics, however, police agencies have not kept up with the changing demographics in most US cities. The percentage of non-white officers working in police agencies across the US lags behind the total non-white population by more than 10 percent (Reaves, 2015). National statistics mask large disparities that exist in local communities. For example, minority groups are underrepresented in police agencies by more than 30 percentage points in states with rapidly changing demographics such as California, New Jersey and Nevada. Diversity among police leaders is even starker. In 2013, only 1 in 10 front-line supervisors in local police departments and only 3% of local police chiefs were women (Reaves, 2015). Data on the racial breakdown of officers across rank is more difficult to obtain nationally, however, local studies suggest diversity challenges are magnified in command positions. For example, Sklansky (2006) notes in Los Angeles non-white officers comprise 59% of sworn officers, but only 31% of those at the rank of Lieutenant or above.

Expectations of Diversification

While these diversification efforts have proceeded with varying degrees of speed and success, there are three underlying assumptions about their implications: (1) female and minority officers will perform differently than their white male counterparts, (2) public perceptions of the police are intimately tied to the image and characteristics of the department overall and less so the actions of individual police officers, and (3) hiring a diversified workforce will weaken

traditional police culture (Walker, 1985) thereby changing the internal dynamics of police agencies and, in turn, affecting officers' views and perceptions. Specifically, and most relevant to the present research, increased diversity in the representation of workers, and particularly in the representation of decision makers and leaders, is anticipated to create environments that foster integration and learning that promote employee's satisfaction and belief that individuals are treated in a fair and equal manner (Ely and Thomas, 2001).

These attitudes are critically important, as low levels of job satisfaction among police officers can affect adversely the quantity and quality of services provided to the general public, undermining relations with the community, exacerbating stress, and increasing the likelihood of employee turnover (Ercikti, *et al.*, 2011). Perceptions of fair treatment, often grouped under the broad heading of organizational justice, are also important, as they can affect significantly how fairly officers treat citizens, as well as their overall attitudes towards serving the general public (Myhill and Bradford, 2013). In line with broader assumptions that inequalities or perceived inequalities, particularly those based on ascribed characteristics such as race or sex, engender interpersonal conflict (Blau, 1977), empirical studies with the police confirm that police engage in more misconduct in situations where officers perceive less organizational fairness (Wolfe and Piquero, 2011).

Research on organizational culture indicates that the characteristics of organizations and their management, including diversification, can affect individual workers' well-being, as captured in their levels of job satisfaction or beliefs that all employees are treated fairly, among other outcomes (Glisson and Durick, 1988; Schneider, 1990). Much of the research on

diversification has examined proportional representation and tests the assumptions that increased diversity will improve the effectiveness of workgroups by creating more contact between majority and traditionally underrepresented groups. Increased contact is anticipated to result in decreased real or perceived discrimination (i.e. greater perceptions of fair treatment) and more effective communication among workers, leading to maximally productive workgroups and higher levels of job satisfaction (Cox, 1993).

On the other hand, diversification can create stress and dissatisfaction, particularly when minority group members are perceived as threatening the status of majority group members (Blalock, 1967). As a result of the perceived threat, majority group workers may experience less individual job satisfaction and may lash out at minority group members with increased discrimination and intolerance, creating negative work environments that offset the potential gains of diversification for minority group members and heighten overall perceptions of unfair treatment. As a result, increasing diversity alone is insufficient without attending to the status and power relationships within workgroups that may be disrupted by diversification.

Empirical research on how diversity actually relates to workgroup functioning or employee attitudes and perceptions is more limited and the findings from management literature generally (see Milken and Martins, 1996 for review) and within criminal justice more specifically are mixed. Outside of criminal justice, mixed race and sex workgroups have been found to perform better in some studies and worse in others (See Ely and Thomas, 2001 for review). Research on racial differences in professional orientation generally finds that occupational role, political ideology and professional goals are stronger predictors of criminal

justice system outcomes than the racial characteristics of criminal justice system workers (Jacobs and Cohen, 1978; Raganella and White, 2004). But other research finds that minorities bring distinct perspectives to the practice of justice (Bennett and Johnson, 2000; Cullen *et al.*, 1989), which may affect the professional environment positively, and improve attitudes of employees working therein.

Recently researchers have shifted focus from examination of the differences in attitudes and outcomes of individual justice workers of various races and instead have examined the impact of representation among groups of justice workers on justice workgroup functioning (Ward *et al.*, 2009). This research finds that racial disparities in criminal justice outcomes are reduced in more racially balanced justice workgroups. Although the specific processes by which increased minority group representation among justice workers may improve justice system outcomes are unknown, researchers suggest that increased minority group representation increases contacts among racial groups and attenuates automatic racial stereotyping that can negatively influence a range of behaviors (Greenwald *et al.*, 2009) which compound over time to produce substantial racial inequality (Rachlinski *et al.*, 2009; see Correll *et al.*, 2007 for a review of implicit racial bias in police work).

Research on diversification suggests that the form and function of diversity is critical to the success of these efforts. Ely and Thomas (2001, pp. 240-243) argue that employees in workgroups where diversity is valued and evident throughout all the operational levels of an organization, they term this perspective as “integration-and-learning perspective,” feel more valued and express more satisfaction with their job and feelings of fair treatment than employees

who are in workplaces characterized by less diversity or importantly by workplaces that diversified to meet quotas or gain access to new markets. This research calls attention to the importance and challenges of measuring integration of representation throughout an organization and the potential pitfalls of tokenism or limiting diversification to one unit or only a few units within an organization.

As law enforcement is a profession historically dominated by white males, racial and gender diversification may be anticipated to have differential effects on the satisfaction and feelings of fair treatment of majority and minority group members. For majority group members, diversification may create additional stress due to minority group threat. As an example, in a broad review of the literature, Williams and O'Reilly (1998) found that men working in fields that are dominated by females are less satisfied and report less commitment in comparison to similarly situated women. The evidence associated with racial-ethnic minority diversity and job satisfaction was found to be less conclusive.

For minority group members, more diverse workforces may be especially beneficial, as research confirms the importance of social support and mentoring from coworkers and supervisors in helping officers understand their role within the organization and buffering the effect of job related stress (Greller *et al.*, 1992). Peer and supervisor support may be particularly important for women and racial minority group members because they must adapt to work roles traditionally dominated by white men (Martin, 1990). Support of minority group officers would be anticipated to increase as more of their peer officers or supervisors were from the same group or potentially more importantly, as their group were represented in all levels of the organization.

Current Study

While diversification of law enforcement agencies, in the form of greater representation of minorities and women in the sworn ranks and in leadership positions, is expected to improve levels of job satisfaction and perceptions of fair treatment, the empirical research is mixed with some researchers finding support for the positive effects on diversification and others finding neutral, or even negative effects on employee attitudes or workgroup functioning. Furthermore, the effects of greater representation may not be universal, but instead be felt differently by minority or majority employees. The current study is one of the largest ever conducted on the effects of diversification on officer perceptions of the workplace. We first test the hypothesis that officers working in agencies that are more representative of the community they serve will be more satisfied with their job and perceive their agency as more fair. Additionally, to assess if these effects are felt differently by various groups of officers, we examine whether the impact of agency representativeness on job satisfaction and perceptions of agency fairness varies across officer race and gender. Secondly, we test the hypothesis that officers working in agencies with more diverse leadership will be more satisfied with their job and perceive their agency as more fair. Again, we examine any group differences in the role representativeness of police leadership plays in influencing officer perceptions of their agency. The data and methods used to test the hypotheses and examine those issues are discussed in the following sections.

Methods

Participants

The participants in this study included 15,236 sworn personnel representing 88 law enforcement agencies throughout the United States. Descriptive statistics for the sworn personnel and agencies are presented in Table 1. Among the officers, approximately 11% were female, and roughly 58% had attained an associate's degree, or higher. A large majority of the sworn personnel were White, with approximately 7% African American, 6% Hispanic, and 4% self-identifying in an "other" category. The average sworn officer was approximately 42 years of age, and almost 30% were in a supervisory position. As far as the agencies, 69 were municipal police departments and 19 were full-service county sheriff's offices. On average, an agency had 471 full-time sworn personnel. The average level of concentrated disadvantage for the city, town, or county was 10.95. Table 1 also presents the descriptive statistics for the officer- and agency-level continuous measures used in this study, including the dependent variables. Those measures will be discussed later in this report.

- Table 1 goes about here -

Data and Measures

All officer-level data and measures for this study were drawn from a roughly 65-item omnibus online survey conducted as part of Phase II of the National Police Research Platform, and funded by the National Institute of Justice. Three surveys were fielded, although this report focuses only on 88 agencies that responded to the first of those, hereafter referred to as Law Enforcement Organizational Survey A, or LEO A.

Random sampling was used to select the agencies for inclusion. This random sampling approach began with a frame built from the 2007 LEMAS data prepared by the Bureau of Justice

Statistics. Agencies with 100-3000 sworn police personnel were eligible for random selection. The upper boundary of 3,000 sworn encompassed the vast majority of police departments, including all large sheriffs' offices. The lower size bound reflected the analytic and administrative needs of the project, including having agencies large enough to accommodate multi-level analyses and protect the identity of officers. Consideration was also given to the geographic location of the agencies, with a desire to include organizations in the Northeastern, Midwestern, Southern, and Western parts of the United States. Furthermore, the number of municipal police and sheriff agencies in the sample closely reflected their representation within the total population of law enforcement agencies. In line with our agreement with the organizations, their identities are not revealed in this report.

Additional agency-level data and measures were drawn from two sources. First, data from the 2010 United States Census was collected for the city, town, or county that each agency served. These data were used to calculate concentrated disadvantage, as well as the percentage of African Americans and Hispanics in the community, variables that served as the denominators for the community representation variables. Second, administrative data were contributed by each agency that included the number of sworn employees, sub-categorized by rank, race and gender. Sheriffs were asked to do this only for employees with law enforcement functions. These data were used to calculate the community and agency leadership representativeness variables, as well as the agency total sworn population.

Procedures. LEO A was conducted online using software hosted by Qualtrics, Inc© between August, 2013, and November, 2013. Working through participating agencies,

invitations from agency leaders were e-mailed to all employees that included a web link to their survey's home page. There they were presented an informed consent statement and could choose to proceed with the survey. All employees received occasional e-mail reminders concerning the survey, and announcements were distributed at their place of work. Almost all potential respondents who clicked to the human subjects and consent page agreed to continue on to the survey. The survey took an average of about twelve minutes to complete. The average agency response rate for the survey was 45.12%.

Dependent variables. Two dependent variables were analyzed. First, job satisfaction was measured using a three-item composite scale ($\alpha = .73$). Given the need to limit the length of the online survey, the items used in this study are facet-free (i.e. global) indicators of job satisfaction, similar to those outlined by Dantzker and Surrence (1996). All three items were reverse coded so that higher scores on the composite measure correspond to greater levels of job satisfaction. Second, fair treatment of employees was measured using a two-item composite scale ($\alpha = .87$). The items capture whether respondents felt employees were treated the same regardless of gender or race, which are important dimensions of organizational justice (see Leventhal, 1980). Both items were reverse coded so that higher scores on the composite measure correspond to greater levels of perceived fairness. A full list of the survey questions used to construct the scales can be found in an Appendix.

Individual-level independent variables. In addition to a primary focus on representativeness, the current study also examines a core group of three job-related or organizational factors, derived from the officer survey, that have been found to influence job

satisfaction and perceptions of fair treatment. First, similar to Johnson (2012), a three-item scale ($\alpha = .86$) was utilized to capture perceptions of discipline. The scale taps into officer concerns about the level of respect they receive during the disciplinary process as well as concerns about its fairness and impartiality. The three items were reverse coded so that higher scores on the measure equate to more agreement that the disciplinary process is fair and respectful. Second, perceptions of the quality of supervision was measured using a four-item scale ($\alpha = .90$). The scale was modified from Johnson's (2012) work, and included items that measured how well officers felt their supervisors made clear what was expected and encouraged input in the decision-making process. The four items were reverse coded so that higher scores on the measure correspond to more positive impressions of supervision. Third, similar to Ercikti *et al.* (2011), this study utilized a measure of officer autonomy. This single-item measure asked respondents about how restricted they feel by department rules and regulations when performing daily work. The item was measured using a four-point Likert scale from very restricted to not at all restricted. As such, higher scores on the item represent greater feelings of autonomy.

While mixed findings exist on the influence of demographics on job satisfaction and perceptions of fair treatment, researchers often examine how these attitudes vary by gender, education, race, and supervisory status (see Johnson, 2012; Silva and Caetano, 2016). In addition, age is another often studied demographic correlate, with Rathi and Barath (2013), for example, finding that as officer age increases, job satisfaction decreases. As such, those five demographic factors were included in the analysis. Education was measured dichotomously,

with those respondents with a two year degree (i.e. junior college, AA, tech school) or higher being compared to those with some college experience or lower. Race/ethnicity was measured using three dummy variables, which captured sworn officers self-identifying as African American, Hispanic, respectively, plus those who placed themselves in Asian, Native American, or multi-racial categories. Self-identifying Whites served as the reference group. Finally, age was measured continuously.

Agency-level variables. Representativeness, the primary focus of this research and a key indicator of diversification, was measured two ways. First, community representativeness variables were calculated for African American, Hispanic, and female officers, respectively. The numerator of this variable, representing the percentage of sworn employees per agency that were African American, Hispanic, and female, respectively, was based on the administrative data submitted by each of those agencies. These percentages were then divided by the percentage of African Americans and Hispanics in each of those places, respectively, in an effort to ascertain how representative the organization was of the city, county, or town at large. The data in this denominator were based on the 2010 United States Census. Given that a gender composition variable does not exist in the Census, the denominator in that community representativeness variable was 50 for each of the agencies, to reflect a generally even split between males and females in the population. Ultimately then, values of “1” on any of the community representativeness variables reflect an agency that had a population of one of those groups equal to what existed in the population at large.

Second, agency leadership representativeness variables were calculated for African American, Hispanic, and female officers, respectively. The numerator of this variable, representing the percentage of African Americans, Hispanics, and females, respectively, per agency who occupied ranks of lieutenant, captain, major, or above was based on the administrative data submitted by each agency. These percentages were then divided by the overall percentage of sworn employees per agency that were African American, Hispanic, and female, respectively, also based on the administrative data submitted by the organization. Ultimately then, values of “1” on any of the agency leadership representativeness variables reflect an agency that had an equal percentage of one of those groups in command positions as to what existed in the entire organization.

Additional control variables were also included in the analysis, as studies of job satisfaction and fairness have found that these perceptions can be conditioned by the broader contexts in which employees live and work (see Silva and Caetano, 2016; Yim and Schafer, 2009). First, a measure of concentrated disadvantage was included, as persistent poverty is linked closely with high crime rates, which can affect the nature of police work and subsequently the attitudes that officers feel towards their work environments (Parker *et al.*, 2005). Concentrated disadvantage was operationalized as a composite measure of percent poverty, percent who receive public assistance, percent female headed households, and percent unemployment, variables calculated from the 2010 Census. Second, the number of sworn officers per agency was included in the analysis to control for size, as some researchers have argued that larger organizations are more likely to provide better pay and working conditions,

which could in turn affect levels of job satisfaction or perceptions of fair treatment (Johnson, 2012). This variable was based on the administrative data submitted by each agency. Finally, agency type was examined through a dichotomous variable that compared sheriff's offices with municipal police departments, in an effort to assess whether the different functions and organizational features that characterize sheriff's offices will affect significantly perceptions of job satisfaction and fair treatment of employees.

Analytic approach. To test the two hypotheses, multi-level models assessed the effects of the two measures of representativeness, separately, on job satisfaction and fair treatment of employees, while also controlling for the effects of the other individual- and agency-level variables. The models then included tests of cross-level interaction effects that sought to determine whether the measures of representativeness affect specific groups of racial/ethnic minorities, as well as female officers, in significant ways. All models were assessed using HLM 7.

Results

Table 1 indicates that, on a four-point scale, the average level of job satisfaction was 2.89 and the average score on the fair treatment of employees scale was 3.00. Overall, the mean for job satisfaction indicates that the sworn officers in the sample were somewhat more satisfied than not with their jobs. Furthermore, the mean for fair treatment of employees indicates that the average officer agreed that employees were treated the same regardless of gender and race. As far as the individual-level independent variables, the average score on the discipline scale was 2.55 on a four-point scale, meaning that officers were almost exactly between disagree and agree

as far as their beliefs about whether the discipline process was fair and respectful. Officers averaged 3.79 on the five-point supervision scale, indicating that they were often satisfied with their supervisor. Finally, the average score of 2.51 on a four-point scale for the autonomy variable suggests that the average officer felt neutral about the level of autonomy he or she was given when performing daily work.

Table 1 also includes the average community and leadership representative ratios for the 88 agencies in the sample. As far as community representativeness, average ratios were all below one, indicating that the average agency under-represented African Americans, Hispanics, and women in its sworn ranks, in comparison to the overall population, respectively, of those groups in the city, county, or town in which the agency was situated. For agency leadership representativeness, the average ratios for Hispanics and women were below one, indicating that the average agency under-represented those groups, respectively, in the ranks of lieutenant, captain, major, or above, in comparison to their overall numbers in the agency. In contrast, the average ratio for African Americans was over 1, suggesting that in the average agency the number of African Americans in those leadership positions was actually slightly higher than their overall numbers in the agency.

Table 2 contains the results of the HLM analyses of the effects of community representativeness on job satisfaction and fair treatment of employees. Most importantly for the current study, none of the community representativeness variables had a statistically significant effect on job satisfaction or fair treatment of employees, meaning the first hypothesis was not supported. Furthermore, none of the cross-level interactions reached the level of statistical

significance. These findings indicate that increasing the representativeness of women, African Americans, or Hispanics, respectively, does not affect significantly job satisfaction or perceptions of fair treatment of officers among all employees, nor does it affect those perceptions among those specific sub-groups groups of officers. As far as the other agency-level variables, only concentrated disadvantage had a statistically significant effect on perceptions of fair treatment of employees. The negative direction of the coefficient suggests that as concentrated disadvantage in a city, county, or town increases, perceptions of fair treatment of decrease.

--Table 2 goes about here--

Multiple statistically significant relationships were found for the individual-level variables. Perceptions of discipline was a positive and statistically significant predictor of job satisfaction and fair treatment of employees. This finding indicates that officers who felt the discipline process was fair and respectful were more likely to have higher levels of job satisfaction and a greater belief that employees were treated fairly. Perceptions of supervision was also a positive and statistically significant predictor of job satisfaction and fair treatment of employees, indicating that those officers who felt their supervisors were clear and consistent were more likely to be satisfied in their jobs and believe that employees were being treated fairly. Perceptions of autonomy was also a positive and statistically significant predictor of both outcome measures, indicating that officers who felt more freedom were more likely to be satisfied and believe that employees were being treated fairly, regardless of gender or race.

Several demographic variables were also statistically significant predictors of these dependent variables. Female officers were significantly less likely than male officers to believe

that employees were treated fairly. Supervisors had significantly higher levels of job satisfaction than non-supervisors. Supervisors were also more likely to believe that employees were treated fairly than non-supervisors. Those officers with higher levels of education were less likely to believe that employees were treated the same regardless of gender or race. Interestingly, African American officers were significantly more satisfied than White officers, yet they were significantly less likely than White officers to believe that employees of all types were treated fairly. Hispanic officers were also significantly more satisfied than White officers. Finally, as age increased, job satisfaction decreased, indicating that older officers were less satisfied than younger officers.

Table 3 contains the results of the HLM analysis of the effects of agency leadership representativeness on job satisfaction and fair treatment of employees. The models and results are virtually identical to the ones presented in Table 2, with the only exceptions being the substitution of the agency representativeness variables and the corresponding cross-level interactions in place of the community representativeness variables and their cross-level interactions. As the results indicate, the second hypothesis was partially supported as the variable measuring the representativeness of African Americans in leadership positions did have a statistically significant effect on perceptions of fair treatment of minorities, but not on job satisfaction. The positive direction of the coefficient indicates that as African Americans increasingly occupied leadership positions, relative to their overall numbers in the agency, all officers were more likely to perceive that employees were treated fairly.

Furthermore, tests of cross-level interactions show that agency leadership representativeness of African Americans had a statistically significant and positive effect on the African American individual-level variable. The positive direction of this coefficient suggests that as African Americans were more represented in leadership positions in the agency, relative to their overall numbers, African American officers had significantly more favorable perceptions that employees were treated fairly regardless of gender or race, thereby providing some support for the idea that there are group differences in how diversification affects perceptions. The implications of these findings for research and practice are discussed in the next section.

Discussion

Racial group and gender diversification are commonly suggested as necessary steps in police agency efforts to build community trust and regain legitimacy among communities of color in the wake of rising concern about race and police use of force. Despite the laudable goal of diversification, research on group representation in policing is mixed, especially with regards to how it affects the views and actions of police officers. Utilizing data from a sample of over 15,000 officers representing 88 police agencies in the United States, we assessed the effects of two measures of diversification- community representativeness and agency leadership representativeness- on job satisfaction and perceptions of fairness, two core factors that affect police behavior, performance, and retention.

Multi-level modeling finds the effects of racial/ethnic and gender group representation to be neutral to positive. Increasing the sworn ranks of African Americans, Hispanics, and women, in comparison to their populations, respectively, in the community did not significantly affect,

positively or negatively, officer job satisfaction or perceptions of fair treatment by their agency. Increasing the representation of African Americans in leadership positions, relative to their numbers in the overall organization, however, was found to be a net positive, as it increased perceptions of fair treatment not only among African American officers, but also for all officers in the organization.

Ultimately, then, these findings indicate that while African American officers have significantly lower, or less favorable, perceptions that employees are treated fairly, these perceptions may be improved if they are better represented in the upper ranks of the organization, which we see as consistent with other research that finds diversification, particularly diversification that advances the process of integration and learning across groups, improves the effectiveness of workgroups by creating more contact between majority and traditionally underrepresented groups and fostering group learning (Ely and Thomas, 2001). It is also possible that agencies that promote a greater proportion of African Americans into leadership positions are more generally better places but work. In this case, it is the effort to promote diversity, rather than the diversity itself that improves officer perception of their workplace.

Because increasing the representativeness of police leadership has clear impacts on officer perceptions about their fairness of their agency, it may be important to rethink police reform efforts that focus primarily on increasing the diversity of new officers joining law enforcement agencies, as opposed to the retention and promotion of a more diverse leadership team. Although more research is needed to determine the downstream impacts of more

representative police leadership on officer enforcement actions, particularly racial disparities in enforcement and use of force, the findings discussed here provide support for the value of diversification at the upper command level.

In this same vein, it is interesting to note that increased leadership representativeness of Hispanics and women does not significantly affect, positively or negatively, perceptions of fairness among all officers or even among those specific groups. In other words, increased representation of Hispanics and women in leadership positions does not seem to result in any improvement in the belief among Hispanics and women, respectively, that employees are treated fairly regardless of race or gender. This finding may have something to do with how far behind agencies are, on average, in having greater representation of Hispanics and women, both relative to the community population and in leadership positions. Looking back at the data in Table 1, the community and leadership representativeness of Hispanics and women lag far behind those measures for African Americans. It could be, then, that the promotion of Hispanics and women are still viewed as examples of tokenism, as opposed to legitimate changes in how fairly they are treated.

An obvious next step in this line of research would be to examine how diversification affects measures of officer productivity and force incidents, for example. If increasing diversity improves workgroup functioning by creating more contact between majority and traditionally underrepresented groups, it may be reflected in more pro-active behavior and less force incidents with the public. Furthermore, research that links measures of agency diversification to citizen

perceptions would help elucidate whether members of the public truly respond to the image and characteristics of the department, or if their viewpoints of the police are shaped by other factors.

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