

**Implicit Racial Bias in South Africa: How Far Have Manager-Employee
Relations Come in “The Rainbow Nation?”**

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Abstract

This article examines manager-employee relations in democratic South Africa, using an unobtrusive, implicit measure of managers' racial bias. We test the link between manager automatically activated evaluations of race labels with positive/negative words (implicit racial bias), and employees' judgement of their manager's effectiveness, their satisfaction with their manager and their willingness to engage in extra-role workplace behavior. Results indicated that Indian and white managers were similar in their negative automatic evaluation of African blacks, and that employees of white managers report higher manager satisfaction, higher manager effectiveness, and a greater likelihood of engaging in extra effort, compared to employees of African black managers. From these results we infer that racial bias has gone "underground" and continues to play a pivotal role in manager-employee relations in "the Rainbow Nation."

Keywords: implicit racial bias, IAT, discrimination, leadership, South Africa

.... Races will live and travel separately. Education will be separate for all groups at all levels
 ... Work fitting for the White man will be reserved for him and him alone. Apartheid rests on
 ... Scientific Proof that the White man is a superior being ...
 - South African Prime Minister, D.F. Malan, 1948 (Werner, n.d.)

I. Introduction

For decades, Apartheid fostered the exploitation of black workers in South Africa. It kept them poor, limited equal job opportunities and hindered their overall advancement. During Apartheid, South African industry, in particular mining and manufacturing, depended extensively on black¹ people, for its output and progress. Moreover, black people were pegged to servitude. A system of cheap, directed labor was maintained by repressing the rights of black people in the workplace (Hepple, 1969). The ideology of white superiority meant that no white person would work under black supervisors—that black people worked in subservience to whites. This prompted tenuous race relations in the workplace, where a large power distance was inherent to especially mixed race manager-employee dyadic relationships.

Today, racism and racial bias are still deeply ingrained in the South African workplace and the assumption that white people are superior to black people still prevails—not just on the part of white people, but these perceptions are held by some blacks as well (Motsei, 2015). Racism, at its root, can be defined as an “ideology of racial domination” (Wilson, 1999: 14). It has been described as a belief that race is the primary determinant of human traits and ability, and that racial differences relate to the intrinsic superiority of a particular race (Turner, 2016). Implicit bias is an automatic positive or negative judgment that operates at an unconscious level of awareness and without intentional control, resulting from cognitive processes. For example, implicit attitudes and implicit stereotypes “are

¹ In harmony with the South African Employment Equity Act, Act 55 of 1998, the term “black” will be used throughout this article as a general depiction of three racial categories: Africans blacks, coloreds and Indians. African blacks are people of African descent, speaking Tsonga, Pedi, Venda, Sotho, Tswana, Swati, Xhosa, Zulu and Ndebele, colored people are people of mixed descent, and Indians are people whose ancestors came to South Africa from the South Asian, Indian subcontinent (Adams, Van de Vijver & De Bruin, 2012).

automatically activated by the mere presence (actual or symbolic) of the attitude object” (Dovidio, Gaertner, Kawakami, & Hudson, 2002: 94). So, racial bias is an unconscious, automatically activated belief in the inferiority of, or negative attitude or stereotype toward, race group(s). In South Africa, the persistent white superiority assumption deems black people to be less competent than white people, resulting in blacks bearing the burden of proof to demonstrate their competence at work (Gumede, 2018). While racial bias and discrimination have evolved in some ways since the end of the Apartheid legislation in 1991, they continue to exist in the South African workplace (Legalbrief Today, 2016). In this study, we test hypotheses related to the idea that contemporary bias and discrimination have simply become more subtle and ambiguous—in colloquial terms, perhaps having “gone underground.”

The nature of discrimination and how it is expressed is shaped by historical, political and other contextual factors (Dovidio et al., 2002). Yet studying race-based discrimination has been difficult for researchers in that, across cultures, self-reporting of one’s bias is unreliable. Most measures of racial discrimination are subject to social desirability bias: Admitting to one’s racial bias or discrimination is socially taboo (Nadal, 2008). This is especially true in a country like South Africa where race is front and center, as the most salient social identity factor (Motsei & Nkomo, 2016). Therefore, results of self-report measures of racial bias or attitudes most likely yield an inaccurate, more positively-skewed version of the degree to which an individual holds bias. Hence, to study this in a South African context, that is, to obtain an accurate reflection of racial bias, we utilized implicit measures. That is, a methodological contribution of this study is that we employed Implicit Attitude Testing (IAT) in a sample of South African managers. IAT not only captures bias that people would knowingly underreport in a self-report questionnaire, but also captures the unexpected, unconscious biases of people who believe they are entirely unbiased (Frantz,

Cuddy, Burnett, Ray & Hart, 2004). IAT was first introduced as a research methodology in 1998 (Greenwald, McGhee & Schwartz, 1998) and is the most widely used test to measure automatic, implicit associations (Srivastava & Banaji, 2011). The IAT measures automatic associations between concepts (e.g., black people, overweight, gay) and evaluations (e.g., good, bad) or stereotypes (e.g., clever, lazy, clumsy). The IAT is based upon the simple principle that individuals will perform better in tasks—from a speed and accuracy perspective—when they rely on automatic cognitive associations, as opposed to tasks that conflict with their automatic associations (Rudman, 2011).

So, in exploratory style, we administered the race IAT and a few common measures of employee outcomes to a sample of 137 manager-employee dyads in the KwaZulu-Natal province of South Africa, to see how race relations in South African workplaces are faring, nearly three decades post-Apartheid. We called on social identity theory, status characteristics theory, and stereotype threat to test various hypotheses, and then employed various post hoc analyses based on our initial findings. In general, our study demonstrates the continued existence of manager racial bias, yet its subtle “subconscious” character as detected by IAT, and its detrimental outcomes for employees’ attitudes and behaviors. We conclude with thoughts on this study’s generalizability to other African nations, other developing nations, and the West.

II. The South African Context

Across the world, racism, racial segregation and racial discrimination remain widespread (Seekings, 2008). What makes South Africa different in this regard, is the depth and breadth of Apartheid, which, from 1948-1991, gave governmental power to the ordering of South African society along racial lines. Political and economic discrimination against black South Africans was legislated by numerous acts and laws such as the Group Areas Act of 1950,

which forced different races into different residential areas, and the Population Registration Act of 1950, where a national register was developed to categorize every person into a race group, either black, colored, Asian or white. The term “colored” was used as a composite and diverse category to describe descendants of relations between black and white people, descendants of Malay slaves who originated from South-East Asia, and descendants of the indigenous Khoi and San who lived in the Western Cape. Indian people were included in the “Asian” category. And, more broadly, to enforce Apartheid, people were categorized as either “white” or “non-white” (Bowen, Edwards, Lingard & Cattell, 2013). This categorization occurred because of the three broad objectives of Apartheid: (1) to maintain racial purity by preventing the dilution of “white blood”—hence inter-racial sex and inter-racial marriages were prohibited, (2) to ensure and protect the privileged economic position of the white minority, reserving land ownership and better-paid jobs for white people only, and (3) to maintain the political dominance of the white minority (Seekings, 2008).

Through the Bantu Education Act of 1953, a Black Education Department was established in the Department of Native Affairs, with the aim of creating a curriculum that suited the “nature and requirements of the black people.” The author of this Act, Dr. Hendrik Verwoerd, explained that the purpose of the legislation was to ensure that black people were educated to work in manual labor jobs under white supervision. The Bantu Act was drafted in such a way that black learners were taught how to be “hewers of wood and drawers of water” for a white society and economy (Reuben & Bobat, 2014: 6). Dr. Verwoerd justified the new education policy in a notorious speech to parliament in 1954, proclaiming that “there is no space for him (the “native”) in the European² community above certain forms of labor. For this reason, it is of no avail for him to receive training which has its aim in the absorption

² White people consisted of two main subgroups based on home language, both from European descent. Therefore, white people at the time referred to themselves as Europeans. The two subgroups were Afrikaners (Afrikaans-speaking descendants of the Dutch, German, and French Huguenot settlers) and English (English-speaking descendants of Britain and Ireland) (Adams et al., 2012).

of the European Community, where he cannot be absorbed. Until now he has been subjected to a school system which drew him away from his community and misled him by showing him the greener pastures of European Society where he is not allowed to graze” (Verwoerd, 1954, cited in Soudien & Kallaway, 1999: 494)

Through the Bantu Building Workers Act of 1951, black men were allowed to be trained as artisans in the building industry, but it was a criminal offense for a black person to do any form of skilled work in urban settings, except in segregated black townships (Bantu Building Workers Act, 1951). Work was D.F. Malan’s primary maxim, and he held firmly to the Biblical principle “In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread” (Korf, 2010). However, this brought poor white Afrikaners³ into direct competition for jobs with black and colored people, who were willing to work and eager to learn, while the poor whites were sinking lower socioeconomically. Malan realized that if a finely-balanced racial order was not maintained, South Africa would no longer be a “white man’s country.” He firmly believed in the poor white’s inherent superiority and recommended a single measure to advance the white race: segregated workplaces, where employers forced to either employ white or black workers. In this way poor white workers’ sense of social superiority would not be threatened, and they would earn a living wage. By claiming the best part of the labor market for white people, Malan eradicated the poor white problem (Korf, 2010).

Despite the repeal of Apartheid-era racial legislation in 1991, and the adoption of a constitution that has been evaluated as “the most admirable constitution in the history of the world” by Harvard law scholar Cass Sunstein (Kende, 2003), post-Apartheid South African society continues to be profoundly impacted by Apartheid. Racism is considered endemic in South African society (Khumalo, 2013). South Africa remains racialized, where the

³ A subgroup of white people in South Africa who are Afrikaans speaking and descendants of the Dutch, German, and French Huguenot settlers (Adams et al., 2012)

distribution of income and opportunities remain deeply unequal (Seekings, 2008). In the workplace today, several laws protect employees from unfair discrimination. For example, the Labor Relations Act of 1995 and the Employment Equity Act of 1998 state that employers may not unfairly discriminate against an employee, directly or indirectly, on any arbitrary ground, including, but not limited to, race, gender, sex, ethnic or social origin, color, sexual orientation, age, disability, religion, conscience, belief, political opinion, culture, language, marital status or family responsibility. The Employment Equity Act goes on to say that employers must take steps to promote equal opportunity in the workplace by eliminating unfair discrimination in employment policies and practices. Yet, in post-Apartheid South Africa, despite these progressive policies and legislation, structural inequalities and discrimination continue to pervade the workplace (Bowen et al., 2013; David, Guilbert, Hino, Leibrandt, Potgieter, & Shifa, 2018). According to a report by Statistics South Africa (2015), black people experienced the highest growth in employment between 1994 and 2014 (95% for African black people, compared to 47% for Indian people, 45% for colored people, and 9% for white people) and the highest increase as a proportion of the labor force (from 63% to 73% for African black people, compared to a decline of 21% to 13% for white people, 13% to 11% for colored people and 4% to 3% for Indian people). Yet, workplace equality, according to South Africa's demographic makeup, remains unrealized (Nkomo, 2011). White people no longer hold political power, yet privilege and status, especially economic privilege, continues for white people (Verwey & Quayle, 2012). And while improvement has been made towards equity in the middle class, very little progress has been made at the economic extremes (Verwey & Quayle, 2012). For example, 27.9% of African black people in South Africa are unemployed, compared to just 4.6% of white South Africans (South African Institute of Race Relations, 2009). And white South Africans earn on average nearly five times the annual salary that African black people do (Statistics South Africa,

2015). Extremely distressing is that the Financial Mail (Johannesburg, 23 February 1968) reported that the average monthly wages of white South Africans in March 1962, was R161.73, compared to R32.39 for black people, precisely 5.03 times higher (Hepple, 1969). Despite extensive efforts to remedy racial wage gaps in South Africa that originated in Apartheid, no decline in economic inequality has occurred, and the wage gap is sadly still almost exactly the same as compared to 1962—in the Apartheid era.

South Africa is a diverse and multifaceted society, with many social identities embedded in its people. Race has been found to be the most prominent of social identity groups in South Africa, together with gender, ethnicity⁴, and language (Booyesen, 2007). Race continues to be a salient component of workplace mistreatment (Cunniff & Mostert, 2012; Motsei, 2015; Marais-Steinman, 2003) and a complex social phenomenon in organizations (Proudfoot & Nkomo, 2006). Racial discrimination reports are well documented by the media (Bornman & Mynhardt, 1991; Khoury, 2018). In 2016 alone, there were more than 7,700 media reports of racist slurs made by whites, and 465 media reports of racist comments made by African blacks (Brink & Mulder, 2017). South African people continue to see our society and workplaces in racial terms. And, in support of social identity theory (discussed in the next section), members of various social identity groups in South Africa tend to seek out organizations, schools, residential neighbourhoods, and social clubs populated by members of their same racial groups; indeed, the workplace may be among the few heterogeneous places in the country where contact can be made across social identities (Nkomo & Stewart, 2006).

⁴ The term ethnicity refers to the cultural characteristics, such as the norms, values, behaviours and attitudes, of a specific group (Adams et al., 2012).

III. Theory & Hypotheses

Social identity theory argues that, as humans, our self-concepts are defined by our belonging to social groups (Tajfel, 1974). Social identification is the process an individual follows to define him or herself or others with reference to a specific social group, such as race, nationality, age, gender and/or sexual orientation (Turner, 1985). Identifying with a social group offers the individual a sense of belonging and security. Social identity is constructed through social comparisons between self and groups, and seeks to confirm the favoring of the ingroup or those who belong to the same social identity group (positive discrimination), versus evaluative distinctiveness between ingroup and outgroup (those who do not share the same social group). It is motivated by an underlying need for self-esteem (Turner, 1975). Social identity theory explains the psychological bases of group association and intergroup discrimination (Booyesen, 2007), and plays a critical role in influencing individuals' behavior and actions (Nel, Nel, Adams, & De Beer, 2015).

When there is great societal transformation and change, such as what has been experienced in South Africa since the dismantling of Apartheid, shifts in dominance, status and the power bases of different social groups occur (Selby & Sutherland, 2006). Social identity changes occur not only when individuals encounter loss of status and opportunity in their new societal position (Ivanova, 2005), but also when status and opportunity are acquired by members of groups (Herriot & Scott-Jackson, 2002). Booyesen (2007) showed that in the Rainbow Nation (South Africa), the majority of political power moved from white males to black males, and to some extent black females, post-Apartheid. Social power was transferred almost overnight from white people to black people (Booyesen, 2007). Yet whites still presumably hold the most status in South African workplaces, based on representation at senior management levels. Fifty-eight percent of senior management positions in South Africa are occupied by white people, whereas only 22.1% of senior management roles are

held by African black people, 10.6% by Indian people, and 7.7% by colored people (Department of Labour, 2017). Even when black managers do make it to management, that is, they are in hierarchical positions of power with these positions' associated legitimate power (power by virtue of structural position within an organization's hierarchy), coercive power (based on fear of punishment of others), and reward power (the ability to reward employees), black managers may not have referent power. Raven and French (1958) define referent power as the power derived from employees' identification with the manager, or a "feeling of oneness" (p.154). This lack of referent power may be based on a lack of respect and status of the manager in the workplace due to the historical pro-white leadership bias, where white managers are seen as stereotypically more competent (Gündemir, Homan, De Dreu, & Van Vugt, 2014; Rosette, Leonardelli & Phillips, 2008).

Said another way, status characteristics influence how people are evaluated in terms of competence (Bell & Nkomo, 2001). Status characteristics theory states that people belonging to specific groups or who have certain characteristics or attributes are believed to be then associated with greater competence (Berger, Fisek, Norman & Zelditch, 1977). Ridgeway (2001) said that although status is often related to technical expertise, general attributes such as race, gender, social class and education can lead to expectations of competence in various social situations. In a study in the manufacturing industry in the United States, Aquino and Bommer (2003) found that any referent power gained by African American people through their organizational citizenship behavior (defined as going "above and beyond" their required job tasks), was offset by negative social stereotypes associated with being African American.

Based on social identity theory, but also the historical context of South Africa and status characteristics theory, whites, and some may argue blacks as well, have been taught to devalue the workplace contributions of blacks (Reuben & Bobat, 2014). Under Apartheid,

numerous laws were devised to enforce the “White master–Black servant” system, for example, the previously mentioned Bantu Education Act which legislated an inferior education aimed at servitude for black children. Reuben and Bobat (2014) highlighted that this discourse is still embedded in South African society today, in the form of racist remarks around black incompetence. We suggest this everyday discourse and cognition spills over into the South African workplace, whereby stereotypes of white superiority in competence still linger. And, researchers have argued that because white people are overrepresented in senior management levels, this devaluation of black employees is reinforced (Aquino & Bommer, 2003).

Reflecting on social identity theory, identity has been found to be strengthened by the salience of outgroups (Ashforth & Mael, 1989), such that the increased presence or awareness of outgroups bolsters identification with the ingroup. Kanter (1977) wrote extensively about the criticality of understanding the impact of bringing in minority groups (i.e., in her research, women) on the behavior of the majority group (i.e., men) in organizations in which they were previously underrepresented. In her study on “skewed” groups, that is, groups in which there is a numeric majority of one type of person over another type (i.e., toward men’s representation), the presence of females in a previously male-dominated workplace resulted in males exaggerating their perceived masculine traits of aggression and potency, and the differences between the sexes (Kanter, 1977). During Apartheid, the South African workplace was homogenous in that jobs, and especially managerial jobs, were reserved for whites. Suddenly, upon the abolishment of Apartheid legislation in 1991, African black, Indian and colored people were included in all levels of organizations. This new awareness of the outgroup member in a previously homogenous context, we suggest, contributed to white people assuming greater ingroup identification. And we expect this to manifest in bias toward the outgroup—blacks. We hypothesize that:

Hypothesis 1. White managers will have higher negative race bias scores than black managers.

Hypothesis 2. White managers will report automatic positive bias toward whites.

In the context of implicit bias, the social identity literature clearly suggests that groups automatically/implicitly receive more positive affective evaluations when they are linked to the self (Devos, Huynh, & Banaji, 2012), and the unconscious and implicit reliance on stereotypes often results in unfavourable bias against outgroup members (Martin and Krahnke, 2012). Researchers have argued that according to the Contact Hypothesis, intergroup contact should improve intergroup attitudes and relations (Bornman & Mynhardt, 1991). So some may argue that the post-Apartheid integration of the workforce, for blacks, may have reduced their outgroup biases in recent years. However, in support of social identity theory, Tajfel (1982) argued that contact must take the social environment, including the underlying structure of social divisions and power or status differences, into account to determine whether it will reduce outgroup bias. In general, blacks still hold less power and status as compared to whites in the South African workplace. Therefore, based on social identity theory and the “equal playing field” tenets of the contact hypothesis not being met, we argue that the African black managers of today will largely be negatively biased against white people.

Hypothesis 3. African black managers will report automatic negative bias toward white people.

Race discrimination in managers negatively affects their employees (Chou & Choi, 2011; Deitch, Barsky, Butz, Chan, Brief, & Bradley, 2003; Dovidio & Gaertner, 2000; Regmi, Naidoo & Regmi, 2009; Vasconcelas, 2011). As expected, race-based discrimination impacts employees who are of a different race from their manager, but, moreover, can negatively impact employees who are of the same race as the manager—those who may feel

a sense of vicarious injustice (Truong, Museus, & McGuire, 2016). This is because actions that devalue one's ingroup, for example, one's coworkers, are also personally devaluing (Tajfel & Turner, 1986 in Dhanani, Beus & Joseph, 2018). Both other- and same-race employees have been found to report increased psychological distress and behavioural outcomes, suggesting that the universal experience of discrimination and injustice leads to psychological distress, regardless of racial similarity/dissimilarity in manager-employee dyadic relationships (Williams, John, Oyserman, Sonnega, Mohammed, & Jackson, 2012). Therefore, despite the racial composition of the manager-employee dyad, racial bias and discrimination are likely to result in negative employee outcomes. To test this, we picked common, broad-based employee outcomes from the management literature: attitudes/judgments about the manager (specifically, employees' satisfaction with their respective manager and employees' evaluation of manager effectiveness) as well as the employee's willingness to engage in extra workplace behavior as needed (extra effort).

Hypothesis 4a. When managers report higher automatic negative race bias scores, their employees will report lower manager satisfaction.

Hypothesis 4b. When managers report higher automatic negative race bias scores, their employees will report lower manager effectiveness.

Hypothesis 4c. When managers report higher automatic negative race bias scores, their employees will report lower intentions to engage in extra effort.

On the basis of status characteristics theory, we argue that all employees will report more favorable outcomes when they have a white manager. As evidence of this stereotyping, Rosette et al. (2008) found that student subjects viewed white leaders as more central to the "business leader" category and less central to the "employee" (non-business leader) category. This finding persisted even when experimentally manipulating the non-white headcount in the organization to be the majority, and regardless of industry setting. They further found

that white leaders were evaluated as more effective leaders and more likely to be successful than non-white leaders, regardless of experimental subjects' race group or level of work experience. In a study investigating possible antecedents of the underrepresentation of ethnic minorities in leadership positions, Gündemir et al. (2014) found, using IAT, an implicit pro-white leadership bias. Both white and ethnic minority participants automatically and implicitly associated white leaders with higher status words such as “boss,” “supervisor,” “leader,” “executive,” and “authority.” Racioethnic minority leaders were automatically and implicitly associated with words such as “helper,” “assistant,” “subordinate,” “aid,” and “follower.”

In work done in post-Apartheid South Africa, Marais-Steinman (2003) found that African black employees openly expressed their lack of racial preference in managers, but further voiced that having a black manager did not meet with their approval. This contradiction is puzzling, but black employees' disapproval of having black managers was further explained by the former not considering their managers as being entitled to being “bosses,” as they were their equals—their “brothers and sisters”—during the Apartheid struggle. In the Rainbow Nation, this presents a unique challenge for black managers, as they can be accused of poor leadership even by their ingroup when they are merely exercising legitimate authority. This may be explained in the context of stereotype threat, which is defined as distracting pressure experienced by people when in situations where they could conform to negative stereotypes associated with their own group membership, which results in weaker performance, thus reinforcing the negative stereotypes (Steele, 1997). As a result of being subjected to long-term oppression during Apartheid and experiencing long-term exposure to negative stereotypes of their group (Steele, 1977), black people may have internalized the negative stereotypes, and the subsequent sense of inferiority or inadequacy, as part of their identities. Stereotype threat impacts self-perceptions and performance, and

continuously trying to respond to this threat is resource-depleting, which has been found to divert critical cognitive and motivational resources from the task at hand (Kulik, Perera & Cregan, 2016). Steele (1997) suggested that the acute experience of stereotype threat generates substantial short-term performance deficits. Linking stereotype threat to social identity theory, it can be said that favoring an ingroup would offer no status benefit to black managers, as identifying with and favoring black employees would reinforce their membership in a low-status group (Goldberg, Riordan & Zhang, 2008). Therefore, black managers may attempt to dissociate from their ingroup, by withholding ingroup favoritism from black employees, resulting in employees' dissatisfaction with their black managers.

Based on status characteristics theory for white employees, and stereotype threat for black employees, we suggest that all employees want to be associated with a manager belonging to a higher status group. Therefore, we tested the idea that having a manager who does not fit the stereotypical white leadership prototype should prompt more negative employee outcomes, even if employees are black. We also wanted to test whether those who had the lowest status under Apartheid (black people) would still wield the least status in the workplace, that is, whether black and manager would be misaligned terms via social role theory ("think leader, think White;" Gündemir et al. 2014). We tested whether employees of white managers would report higher manager satisfaction, manager effectiveness, and intentions to engage in extra effort, as compared to employees of black managers.

Hypothesis 5a. Employees of white managers will report higher manager satisfaction as compared to employees of black managers.

Hypothesis 5b. Employees of white managers will report higher manager effectiveness as compared to employees of black managers.

Hypothesis 5c. Employees of white managers will report higher intentions to engage in extra effort as compared to employees of black managers.

IV. Methodology

Sample

Our sample consisted of diverse manager-employee dyads from two manufacturing organizations in KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa. Both organizations produce chemicals for agricultural and industrial applications, and both are headquartered in Norway. Except for one manager who was Dutch, all respondents were South Africans. The managers in our sample had broad managerial responsibilities in their specific function, including prioritizing and scheduling the work activities of employees, monitoring their performance, organizing resources, preparing reports, and performing human resource-related tasks such as recruitment, training, and development of their staff. The employees in our sample worked in various functions such as production, engineering, supply chain, human resources, finance, customer service roles, health and safety, and agronomic services.

The response rate for employees was 98%, and, for managers, 98%. Both organizations allowed employees to complete their surveys during working hours which accounted for the high response rate. We assigned codes to each participant, which we used to link manager and employee data. In total, 137 dyads were matched and used in our study.

We collected demographic information from managers and employees. Managers and employees were asked which race, religious, and gender groups they identified with most. Participants were also asked to report their age group, education, and home language. Among the managers, 80% were male, and 84% were older than 40 years. The majority of employees were male (77%), and nearly two-thirds (65%) were between 30-49 years old. From a race group perspective, nearly half (48%) identified as white, 33% identified as Indian and 19% identified as African black. Unfortunately, the colored race group was not represented in our sample. The employee sample consisted of 40% African black employees, a minority of employees were colored (5%), 35% were Indian employees, and 20% were

white. As for education level, 5% of managers completed Grade 10, 28% of managers completed high school, 6% completed technical trade/vocational training, 41% had either a National Diploma or Bachelor's degree, and 20% held postgraduate degrees. Of the employees, 12% completed Grade 10, 34% completed high school, 13% completed technical trade/vocational training, 34% had either a National Diploma or Bachelor's degree, and 6% held postgraduate degrees. With regards to managers' religion, the majority identified as Christian (69%), 20% as Hindu, 2% as Muslim and 9% as not being religious. For the employees, 65% described themselves as Christian, 20% were Hindu, 3% Muslim, 6% followed African religions, and 6% were either not religious or did not wish to report their religion. Half of the managers (50%) reported English as their first language, 28% were Afrikaans, 4% spoke isiXhosa, 9% isiZulu, 4% Sesotho, and 5% chose either "other language" or did not specify their first language. For the employees, 51% spoke English as their primary language, 32% reported isiZulu as their home language, 10% spoke Afrikaans, and the other 6% reported other African languages as their first language.

Measures

Leadership outcomes. We measured three leadership outcomes using the revised Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (Bass & Avolio, 2004). The outcomes measured included employee perceptions of their managers motivating the former's extra effort (extra effort), employee perceptions of managers' effectiveness, and employee perceptions of satisfaction with their managers. Employees responded to three items for extra effort and effectiveness, respectively, and two items for satisfaction, all using a five-point Likert scale ranging from 0 (not at all) to 4 (frequently, if not always). A sample item is: "My manager is effective in meeting organizational requirements" (effectiveness). The items were averaged to form overall scores for extra effort ($\alpha = .78$), effectiveness ($\alpha = .86$), and satisfaction ($\alpha = .85$).

Implicit racial bias. We measured managers' implicit racial bias using the Multicategory IAT. The IAT measured the automatic associations of managers with the four most prevalent racial groups in South Africa (African black, Indian, colored, and white). Managers were asked to categorize the racial group category name (African black, Indian, colored, and white) with either positive words (e.g., love, pleasant, great, and wonderful) or "anything else" (e.g., hate, unpleasant, awful and terrible). The IAT is based upon the simple principle that individuals will perform better in tasks—from a speed and accuracy perspective—when they rely on automatic cognitive associations, as opposed to tasks that conflict with automatic associations (Rudman, 2011). When automatic or implicitly associated concepts share the same response key, response times are expected to be shorter and more accurate compared to when highly associated concepts are assigned to different response keys (Hall et al., 2015). Nosek, Bar-Anan, Sriram, Axt, and Greenwald (2014) provided guidelines for the scoring of the IAT by calculating a *D*-score for each racial category. This analysis strategy provided an interdependent evaluation of each group in comparison with each other, based on the aggregate *D*-score for each race group (e.g., the white score was the average of three *D* scores, i.e., white compared to African black, Indian and colored people) (Axt, Ebersole, & Nosek, 2014). The four aggregate scores are interdependent, and the mean of the four scores will necessarily be 0. Positive scores indicate favorable implicit associations, and negative scores indicate more unfavorable evaluations than the average across the four groups (Axt et al., 2014).

V. Results

In Hypothesis 1 we proposed that white managers will have more unfavorable bias scores against other race groups, as compared to black managers. To do this, we tested the automatic positive or negative associations of each manager race group in respect to all four

South African race categories. As predicted, we found that white managers exhibited the most potent negative bias (average $D = -.47$) in the form of automatic negative associations with African black people, as revealed by an automatic association between “African black” and negatively valenced words. An independent samples t-test not assuming equal variances was conducted to compare the average D -scores by manager’s race group $t(49.43) = 2.67, p = .01$. There was a significant difference in the average of both white ($M = -.47, SD = 1.94$) and Indian managers ($M = -.19, SD = .29$) Black D -score, compared to Black managers’ Black D -score ($M = .28, SD = .22$). On average, white managers had a moderate negative association with African black people while Indian managers had a slight negative association with African blacks. African black managers’ implicit association with African blacks was positive and of moderate strength.

The mean D scores for each race group by managers’ race are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. *Descriptive Statistics: Implicit Racial Bias by Manager Race*

<i>Manager’s Race</i>	African black			Colored		Indian		White	
	<i>D</i> -score			<i>D</i> -score		<i>D</i> -score		<i>D</i> -score	
	N	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
White	26	-.47	1.94	-.08	.20	-.06	.23	.23	.26
African black	10	.28	.22	-.09	.15	-.09	.19	-.11	.19
Indian	18	-.19	.29	-.11	.25	.08	.29	.21	.22

Note. This table presents mean D -scores (Greenwald, Nosek, & Banaji, 2003) from the Multicategory Implicit Association Test; more positive values indicate greater preference for members of the target group. And negative values indicate more negative, automatic associations with the target group.

To test Hypotheses 2 and 3, which were foundational ideas to this paper, we wanted to test whether managers would report automatic bias along the lines of old Apartheid era hierarchical racial evaluations of people. In this vein, we tested whether white managers would report automatic positive bias toward whites (Hypothesis 2) and whether African black managers would report negative automatic bias toward whites (Hypothesis 3). Surprisingly,

for Hypothesis 2, we found that *both* white and Indian managers were similar in their automatic positive evaluation of white people (white managers' $D = .23$; Indian managers' $D = .21$), as revealed by an automatic association between "White" and positive words. We also tested Hypothesis 3, that—based on historical discrimination and South Africa's Apartheid past—African black managers would report automatic negative bias against Whites. This finding was supported ($D = -.11$).

We further hypothesized that when managers report stronger race bias scores, their employees will report lower manager satisfaction (Hypothesis 4a), manager effectiveness (4b), and intentions to engage in extra effort (4c), for all employees regardless of which race group they identify with. When controlling for employees nested in managers, and managers nested in organisations, the correlations between the managers' IAT D -scores and the respective employee outcomes lend support for hypotheses 4a, 4b and 4c. We found that despite the demographic composition of the manager-employee dyad, the stronger the manager's automatic negative bias toward the race category of his or her employee, the less likely the employee will be to find the manager's leadership approach as satisfactory ($r = -.20, p < .05$), the less likely the employee is to evaluate the manager as effective ($r = -.21, p < .05$) and the less likely the employee is to do more than what he or she is required to do ($r = -.19, p < .05$).

Hypothesis 5 predicted that employees of white managers would report higher manager satisfaction (5a), manager effectiveness (5b), and intentions to engage in extra effort (5c), as compared to employees of black managers. The results show that, controlling for employees nested in managers, and managers nested in organisations, when employees of all race groups report to white managers, they are more likely to be satisfied with their manager ($r = .23, p < .01$), more likely to evaluate their manager as effective ($r = .29, p < .01$), and

more likely to engage in extra-role behaviours ($r = .22, p < .05$). Hypothesis 5 was supported. These results are reported in Table 2.

Table 2. *Correlations Among Having an African Black, Indian or White Manager and Employee Outcomes*

	<i>M (SD)</i>	African Black Managers	Indian Managers	White Managers
Extra Effort	2.28 (1.09)	-.23**	-.02	.22*
Effectiveness	2.44 (1.06)	-.27**	-.07	.29**
Satisfaction	2.39 (1.17)	-.18*	-.08	.23**

Note.

* $p < .05$

** $p < .01$

VI. Post-hoc Analyses

While there were many ways we could split our data to look at racial group differences in perceptions and outcomes, we focused our above hypotheses on the central ideas of manager racial bias based on manager racial group membership, manager racial bias negatively affecting all employees (not just lower status employees), and employee perceptions of the status of their manager affecting their attitudes and behaviours. But our data also allowed us to test some other ideas that are also based in social identity theory, status characteristics theory, and stereotype threat. Some of these relations would be specific to the unique South African workplace racial context, but others may be generalizable to other cultures and could serve as fodder for future research endeavors on dyadic race relations.

First, we were interested in whether the dyadic “racial context” of the respective dyad would influence a manager’s racial bias score. That is, would the racial group of the employee he or she currently supervises influence a manager’s racial bias score such that racial bias would almost be “activated” in mixed race dyads as opposed to same-race dyads?

So, in exploratory research question 1, we tested the idea that managers' racial bias scores would be more favorable in same-race dyads and less favorable in mixed race dyads. Using correlations, we found that when white managers supervise white employees, this dyadic combination was negatively associated with implicit bias ($r = -.33, p < .01$). But, when white managers supervise black employees, this dyadic combination was positively associated with managers' negative implicit bias ($r = .18, p < .05$). See Table 3. An independent-samples t-test was conducted to compare the implicit racial bias in white managers with white employees, compared to white managers with black employees. A Levene's Test for Equality of Variances confirmed that the data did not violate the homogeneity of variance assumptions, and therefore equal variances are assumed. Results showed that implicit bias differs significantly between white managers with white employees ($M = .26, SD = .30, n = 18$) and white managers with black employees ($M = -.08, SD = .26, n = 34$) ($t = -4.14, df = 50, p < .001, 95\% \text{ CI for mean difference: } -.50 \text{ to } -.17$). On average, white managers with white employees tended to have automatic positive bias, and white managers with black employees tended to have automatic negative bias.

So white managers supervising white employees reported less negative racial bias than white managers supervising black employees. Yet, for black managers, the race of their employee did not seem to play a role in their racial bias. This finding for white managers is concerning: Perhaps white managers can control or mask their racial bias as long as they are not confronted with it in the form of supervising an employee of another race. One limitation of testing this idea in our sample is that from one of our sample sites we only have data on one of each manager's subordinates, so it may be incorrect to assume that the one employee is representative of the race of all employees these managers actually supervise, that is, that this one employee selected for the study represents the entirety of the manager's supervision context. Nevertheless, future research in South African workplaces may wish to explore the

idea that when white managers supervise black employees, this cognitively reinforces old Apartheid-era scripts for power dynamics, reinforcing stereotypes and increasing manager implicit bias.

Table 3. *Correlations Among Racial Dyad Composition and Implicit Bias*

	Negative Implicit Bias
White Manager and Black Employee	.18*
Black Manager and White Employee	.11
Black Manager and Black Employee	.01
White Manager and White Employee	-.33**

Note.

* $p < .05$

** $p < .01$

In exploratory research question 2 we wished to go beyond Hypothesis 5. Hypothesis 5 was supported in that employees of black managers reported lower manager satisfaction, effectiveness, and intentions to engage in extra effort than those employees with white managers. But we were curious to explore whether this held true for African black employees. On the one hand, ingroup positive bias (e.g., the similarity-attraction paradigm; Byrne, 1971) would suggest African black employees should positively identify with and think more positively of their African black managers. On the other hand, stereotype threat could come into play: Because African black South Africans are quite familiar with the biases against African black persons in their society, they may internalize these negative assumptions about their own group, as argued above. We posited that, based on stereotype threat, of white, Indian, colored and African black employees, African black employees might be the group to report the lowest mean manager satisfaction, manager effectiveness, and intentions to engage in extra effort, as employees of African black managers. The stereotype threat predictions did not hold: white, Indian and colored employees of African black managers reported the lowest manager effectiveness ($r = -.20, p < .05$) and intentions to

engage in extra effort ($r = -.22, p < .05$) scores, when controlling for employees nested in managers, and managers nested in organisations. There were no significant relations with manager satisfaction. Again these findings aligned closely with lingering Apartheid-era status valuations of racial groups. And, interestingly, like in exploratory research question 1, Indian perceptions of African blacks seemed to be aligned closely with whites'. There was a significant difference between groups as determined by a one-way ANOVA ($F(2,51) = 8.024, p < .001, \eta p^2 = .24$). A Tukey post hoc test revealed that the mean implicit racial bias toward whites for African black managers ($M = -.11, SD = .19$) was significantly different than *both* the mean racial bias for white managers ($M = .23, SD = .26$) and Indian managers ($M = .21, SD = .22$). There were no differences in racial bias towards white people between Indian and white managers ($p = .957$). In fact, we found that when white and Indian employees had white/Indian managers, they reported higher manager satisfaction ($r = .23, p < .01$), manager effectiveness ($r = .25, p < .01$), and intentions to engage in extra effort ($r = .21, p < .05$), as compared to when they had African black managers.

VII. Discussion

In Hypothesis 1 we found that white managers had higher race bias scores than black managers, suggesting that old Apartheid value systems may still exist in white managers' mindsets today. Some South Africans argue that the end of Apartheid has marked a gradual transformation of society whereby little racism, or perhaps racism just in pockets of society, exists on the part of the historically dominant group (Whites). Moreover, some suggest that due to contemporary Affirmative Action policies and the like, the group that holds power has flipped such that reverse discrimination *against* Whites is now the rule (Mbembe, 2008). As Mbembe (2008) argues, and our finding would suggest, the charge that reverse discrimination is now the rule of order in South African society seems to be unjustified.

More surprising were our results for Hypothesis 2. We predicted that white managers would have positive automatic bias toward other whites. This was supported. But what we did not expect was that Indian managers would share a positive automatic bias toward whites. Indian South Africans seem to be convinced of the high status of whites. The sample for this study was collected in the Province of Kwazulu-Natal (KZN), the province where Indians are best represented. Many Indians are descendants of slaves who served Dutch settlers beginning in the 1600s, or later, indentured servants or merchants, who came to KZN in the 1800s (kzn.org.za). And the majority of Indian South Africans continue to live in this Province, making it the largest concentration of Indians anywhere outside of India (Mukerji, 2011). Due to Indian persons being well-represented in KZN, perhaps they have higher status in the workplace there, as compared to other parts of South Africa. Hence, they may see themselves as having climbed the status hierarchy in KZN. Sociology research has documented such phenomena in other geographies. For example, Ignatiev (1995) documented how “the Irish became white” in 19th century America. That is, as “last-in” white European immigrants, they wielded less status in America than, e.g., Germans and Brits. “Help wanted” signs stating, “Irish Need Not Apply,” common to the 1800s, attest to their low status in the US (Scalia, 1979). Perhaps what our finding underscores is a similar process of valuation of the status of Indians in the workplaces of South Africa. To put it bluntly, are Indians “becoming white?” And is this their perception of their growing status in South Africa; or is this a perception that is shared among race groups? Or, more bleakly, is Indian managers’ concession to the high status of whites in South Africa akin to an agreement/buy-in with old Apartheid-era values. While it was not surprising that white managers would have positive automatic bias toward their ingroup, that same pro-white bias from Indian managers was an unexpected, and perhaps troubling, finding.

Hypothesis 3 was also supported—that African black managers would report automatic negative bias against whites. While this finding was not unexpected, it does document a lingering distrust of the dominant group (whites), despite the country being greater than a decade past “freedom” for subordinated racial groups.

In Hypothesis 4 we predicted and supported the contention that managers who hold more racial bias will negatively impact the attitudes and behaviors of all—not just other-race—employees. We found that managers higher in implicit racial bias, as indicated by implicit attitude testing, had employees who reported lower manager satisfaction, lower manager effectiveness, and lower intentions toward extra effort, that is, organizational citizenship behavior—going above and beyond the behavior required in their job descriptions. So not only does having a manager who is higher in racial bias seem to impact attitudes of employees, but also it would seem to impact work performance. The tie from racial bias to individual performance would seem to be observed, which suggests the potential for an emergent effect to exist on higher-level performance (team, unit, firm) which may be observed in the future. Stated a different way, racial bias is of course bad for supervision (Creary, Caza, & Roberts, 2015), but also potentially bad for business (Brief, Dietz, Cohen, Pugh, & Vaslow, 2000). And even if employees are not the ones directly victimized, vicarious racism, or observed racism, still seems to impact bystander employees negatively (e.g., Truong et al., 2016).

Our exploratory, post-hoc analyses together served to confirm that Apartheid era values about the ordering of the status of various racial groups remain entrenched today. And the context of whom the manager is supervising may serve to activate or strengthen these beliefs. But perhaps a more encouraging finding is that stereotype threat predictions for African black employees did not hold. African black employees were not the ones, under African black managers, to judge these managers’ effectiveness most harshly and to report

the lowest intentions to engage in extra effort. Those beliefs were held by white and Indian employees—again in line with traditional South African status hierarchies.

Practical Implications

In general, our IAT method allowed us to observe what we perhaps would not have uncovered by using more traditional, self-report bias measures. We discovered much evidence of continued racist beliefs in South African managers. Yet these beliefs were implicit, that is, most managers know that being more explicit about the racial status ordering of people is not socially acceptable (Ziegert & Hanges, 2005), and therefore these beliefs seem to have “gone underground.” The workplaces of the Rainbow Nation have yet to realize the vision for equality espoused by President Nelson Mandela in the 1990s. The Contact Hypothesis (Allport, 1954) argues that frequent interactions with people who are unlike us, yet somewhat equal in power and status, that is, those at similar hierarchical positions in the workplace, should enable people to understand and empathize with people unlike themselves. The South African workplace has been in some ways “integrated,” and contact between races has been experienced since the mid-1990s. Yet status differences between races remain in the form of hierarchical position in organizations and societal power. So, confirming an important tenet of the Contact Hypothesis, simple contact between races alone appears insufficient for inhibiting racial bias, absent equalization of status differences.

How then do we continue the unfinished journey toward workplace equality in South Africa? Can organizations, for example, use training to stem racial bias or perhaps at least the behavioral manifestation of bias—race discrimination? In short, the evidence for whether racial bias can be “trained away” or not, is mixed. Some studies find that forcing members of a privileged group to participate in such training can actually increase their bias (Kulik, Pepper, Roberson, & Parker, 2007). On the positive side, other research finds that simply making managers aware of their potential to hold such biases makes them more vigilant in

ensuring anti-discrimination (Meyerson & Fletcher, 2000). A practice example comes from Starbucks', the coffee giant's, recent race relations woes. In response to public instances of racial discrimination against customers in the United States, Starbucks recently closed most of its stores globally, including those in South Africa, to provide its baristas with a one-day racial bias intervention. Closing 8,000 stores for one day amounts to 12 million USD in lost revenue (Rock, Smith, & Grant, 2018), so Starbucks seems to either think that racial anti-bias training works, or, from a more cynical viewpoint, hopes the effort will win back public relations marks.

Limitations and Future Research

One limitation of this study is the question of its generalizability, given that it was conducted in the “racial laboratory” that is South Africa (Tilley, 2011). That is, South Africa's racial history is unique in many ways, but also similar to other geographies in various ways. South Africa's Apartheid system made race inequality more legitimate and structured than the inequality experienced in many other nations. But this system shares much with systems of racial dominance in other post-colonial African nations (Hook, 2012). So our findings may generalize to other lingering post-colonial status distinctions between racial groups. In countries where the white colonizers are no longer present in great number, other distinctions between non-white races still exist. And, in more developed nations, race relations have certainly not been solved, as evidenced by the “black lives matter” protest movement in the United States and immigration discrimination and violence in Europe and elsewhere. The degree to which these societal race-based problems transfer to workplace manager-employee relationships may vary.

Another limitation of the study is our relatively small sample size. The overall sample size was 137 manager-employee dyads, which is similar to many other published

studies. However, when examining between-group differences, the sample size dropped drastically. For example, in exploratory research question 1 we compared the racial bias scores for white managers supervising white employees ($n = 18$) to white managers supervising black employees ($n = 36$). These subgroup sample sizes are very small, and some may argue insufficient in power to detect true effects. So perhaps the subgroup differences we found were artefactual in nature, or perhaps they could be seen as indicative of a larger population effect, if a larger sample was to be collected in the future.

Future research should also examine the behavioral forms racial bias may take. From our study we know that bias results in negative outcomes for employees, but what behaviors are these managers actually engaging in that employees “detect,” and which seem to prompt their negative attitudes and behaviors? These could be overt acts of discrimination akin to aggression and bullying, but also perhaps more subtle forms of discrimination such as incivility and inattention. This literature is becoming quite developed as scholars explore the employee consequences of physical abuse (e.g., Richman, Rospenda, Nawyn, Flaherty, Fendrich, Drum, & Johnson, 1999) and nonphysical mistreatment from managers in the workplace (e.g., Tepper, 2000). Perhaps the racial bias and aggression literatures in management research should do more to combine their shared learnings in the future.

In conclusion, we are not optimistic about how far mixed race manager-employee relations have come in the Rainbow Nation since the democratic elections of 1994. Marks and Trapido (2014) still describe South Africa as a “racial divided social order” (p. 1). Its world-renowned, liberal Constitution and popular rhetoric boast of multiculturalism, but the reality is less sanguine. For the most part, whites, Indians, coloreds and African blacks remain segregated geographically, as well as socioeconomically (Christopher, 2001; Musterd, & Ostendorf, 2013). And, as our study shows, while psychological bias has perhaps “gone underground,” that is, become less explicit, manager implicit racial bias seems to be an

unfortunate, enduring feature of the modern South African workplace. Lest organizational decision-makers become complacent in thinking that issues surrounding race have been solved, we advocate for continued research to fully document, understand, and hopefully begin to eradicate this vexing, insidious social problem in South Africa and beyond.

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