INTRODUCTION

Nan Weiner, Ph.D., has been in Canada working on workplace equity – employment equity, diversity, pay equity, human rights and harassment-prevention – since 1983. Nan has almost 40 years of human resources experience including working within public sector organizations, teaching at the university level and consulting. Nan was written three books related to workplace equity: Employment Equity: Making It Work (1993), Making Cultural Diversity Work (1997) and Pay Equity: Issues, Options and Experiences (1990, with Morley Gunderson). She has a Ph.D. in Industrial Relations (Human Resources) from the University of Minnesota. She grew up in Minneapolis, Minnesota before moving south to Toronto.

This issue of *Canadian Diversity* offers a series of articles focusing on issues related to racism and discrimination in the workplace.

The labour force is changing to include more people of colour, woman, and persons with disabilities than has been true historically. Still, today's Canadian workplace has only marginally changed from its design to fit the traditional majority of workers—white, able-bodied, married men. Not recognizing the degree to which our employment systems have been designed for one fairly homogeneous group means that when "others" join the workforce, they are often perceived not to "fit in." Since the only way the Canadian labour force is going to grow is through immigration, Canadian workplaces need to be able to incorporate the "other." To be clear, new workplace systems need to be designed to take into account the needs of all workers—traditional and "other." A major barrier is racism faced by people of colour.

Before summarizing the articles it is necessary to clarify two sets of terms. First, some of the articles in this issue discuss racism in the context of visible minorities while others refer to immigrants. Visible minorities are defined in the employment equity context as non-white by colour or non-Caucasian by race. This definition thus covers the three main visible minority groups currently found in Canada: East Asians (e.g., Chinese, Japanese), Blacks and South Asians (e.g., Indians, Sri Lankans). Immigrants are those who were not born in Canada and are permanent residents. Obviously, the circumstances of immigrants who arrive in Canada as adults ready to enter the labour force are different than those who come as children and go through the Canadian education (and socialization) system. The relationship between visible minorities and immigrants is that the majority of recent immigrants are visible minorities; while among visible minorities are both Canadian-born and immigrants. Some of the statistics provided in various articles in this issue are:

- 20% of Canadians are immigrants (Galabuzi)
- One third of Canadians are comprised of immigrants and their children (Galabuzi)
- 16% of Canadians are visible minorities (Galabuzi); 49.5% of Torontonians are visible minorities (Linehan)
- Between 2001 and 2006 the racialized population of Canada grew by 27% compared to 5.4% in the rest of the population (Galabuzi)
- 67.3% of racialized Canadians are in the labour force about the same as the 66.7% of non-racialized Canadians (Galabuzi)

Second, some of the articles refer to employment equity (see Galabuzi's article) while others refer to diversity. Employment equity is a legislated process to redress the systemic discrimination against four groups: visible minorities, Aboriginal peoples, persons with disabilities, and women. Diversity is a voluntary organizational program which tends to go beyond employment equity both in terms of groups (e.g., white men, gays and lesbians are also included) and activities but it is not as formalized (i.e., does not involve goal setting) as employment equity.

DEFINITION OF RACISM

One article (Stanley) discusses the meaning of racism. He spends a great deal of time highlighting that racism is not just individual prejudice. Stanley highlights that viewing racism as an individual wrong often allows Canadians to discount racism as "an exception" (i.e., "a few bad apples"). Further, this limited view obstructs the appropriate kinds of solutions. Stanley defines racism as racializations which lead to exclusions that have significant negative consequences for the excluded. Stanley uses racisms in the plural because racism differs toward different groups.

Evidence of racism is discussed in a number of articles. Eid's article provides evidence of discrimination. He describes a "testing" where résumés describing equivalently qualified applicants were sent to employers, one with a "majority" sounding name and one with an "ethnic" sounding name. Discrimination was found among the employers tested in the private and non-profit sectors but not the public sector. Yap and Everett's article looks at the heterogeneity among visible minority groups. They held separate focus groups with Blacks, Koreans and Latin Americans finding both similarities and differences in the labour market experiences of these different groups.

Long term impacts of racism are discussed in Picot and Hou's article which considers the descendents of visible minority immigrants who arrived before the 1980s. Picot and Hou looked at the children of immigrants (second-generation), and their children (third-generation). The second-generation visible minorities have higher levels of education than the third and later generations. But second-generation visible minorities experience greater employment difficulties than whites even though both were born in Canada.

Racism is a key barrier, but for some it is combined with other barriers resulting in double or in some cases triple jeopardy. Chicha's article discusses the de-skilling experienced by many immigrant women. De-skilling is the gap between a woman's qualifications and the qualifications of the job she is employed in. Other obstacles which lead to de-skilling for immigrant women are: discrimination, difficulty integrating into Canadian professional associations, lack of child care facilities and the availability of most jobs in low-skilled, service sector positions. Choiniere and MacDonnell's article discusses the combination of racism and sexism for nurses who face violence in the workplace.

PERCEPTIONS OF RACISM

While the above set of articles involved more objective measures of discrimination, a number of articles look at perceptions of discrimination, noting that such perceptions are powerful motivators of behaviour which affect organizational outcomes. The Banerjee article makes the case that objective measures of discrimination (i.e., being paid less than others with the same level of education) and perceptions of discrimination can differ. Her study looks at perceptions of discrimination among visible minorities who are (a) recent immigrants (in Canada for 10 years or less), (b) earlier immigrants and (c) Canadian-born visible minorities. Banerjee finds that both recent and earlier immigrants are more likely to perceive discrimination than Canadian-born visible minorities. Earlier immigrants (more than 10 years in Canada) are slightly more likely to perceive discrimination than more recent immigrants. Interestingly, Banerjee did not find any relationship between objective income inequality (i.e., being paid less than others with the same education) and perceived discrimination. This may be because of a reference group effect where immigrants compare themselves to other immigrants rather than to the mainstream.

James' article also looked at perceptions of discrimination but used a very different methodology than Banerjee. Over 22 years, James interviewed seven African Canadians on three different occasions. In the first interviews his respondents were 17 to 22 years of age; they were interviewed again 7 years later and then 15 years after that. The last set of interviews focused on optimism, self-confidence and working harder. Over time the respondents optimism "waned somewhat, suggesting that the hurdles of racism and discrimination were not as easy to overcome as they had indicated earlier." With respect to self-confidence, in their youth the interviewees focused solely on their individual efforts but as they matured they became aware that understanding "the system" was also key. With respect to hard work, the title of James' article says it all: "Making it: Still Working Twice as Hard to Get Half as Far".

Like James' article, Este *et. al.*'s article also focused on perceptions of discrimination and African Canadians. For this research three parts of the African Canadian community were studied: indigenous African Canadians, Caribbean Canadians and African immigrants. Institutional racism is defined as "when established policies and practices of a particular organization reflect and produce differential treatment towards and outcomes for various groups", and experiences of institutional racism were examined using both quantitative and qualitative methodologies. The perceptions of racism among respondents included: being devalued (efforts minimized, not being given credit for work or ideas, being assumed to be a non-professional), being held to unknown and higher standards than whites, and having to fight against the negative stereotypes of being Black. Immigrants had additional issues such as lack of recognition of their credentials.

Two other articles look at immigrant issues—Augustine's focuses on a government activity to provide fair assessment of foreign credentials. Manning's article looks at the unintended systemic (institutional) racism which results because of employment practices designed for the majority cultural group but used with all cultural groups. Specifically, she looks at talent management. Groups of managers, human resource professionals and skilled immigrants were interviewed. The irony is that talent management programs are designed to foster better employee performance; however, because of differing cultural norms these practices may result in suboptimal outcomes. Two aspects of talent management were explored: employee engagement and performance appraisal. These have been designed and used for decades "as a matter of course." However, with an ethnically diverse workforce, particularly one including immigrants, "culture-bound behaviours and expectations of the manager, the organization, and the immigrant employee jointly create unwanted outcomes." Differences between the majority Canadian culture and minority cultures with respect to showing initiative, role of managers, and self-promotion versus self-effacing behaviours lead to differing outcomes when these practices were used in their traditional way with minority employees.

Galabuzi's article suggests that positive perceptions need to be examined. "Felt Fairness" is a measure of the absence of racism and means that those who have been excluded "feel supported and included." A conclusion which can be drawn from this work on perceptions is that it is important to really listen to those who are feeling excluded and experiencing racism.

REDRESSING WORKPLACE RACISM

Many of the articles refer to ways of redressing racism, but only a few actually discuss them in detail. Such redress can take place at the government, organizational or individual levels.

At the government level the following mechanisms were discussed:

- Employment Employment Equity legislation (Galabuzi, Rasouli, Este et al.). Rasouli proposes framing employment equity implementation as a change management issue rather than as a set of steps to go through. This approach comprises the following components (1) context of change (i.e., learning culture), (2) phases of change (*i.e.,* collecting information), (3) targets of change (i.e., employment systems and individuals), (4) strategies for implementing change and (5) process of change (steps 4 and 5 include key change strategies of information, communication, participation, reward and feedback).
- Federal Racism Free Workplace Program (Galabuzi)
- Fair assessment of foreign credentials (Augustine; Galabuzi). Augustine's article discusses the Ontario Office of the Fairness Commissioner, of which she is Commissioner. A major frustration for new immigrants is that having demonstrated all their credentials to the federal government to be admitted to Canada, upon arrival they find that it is provincial regulatory bodies that make the critical decision about permission to practice in one's profession. To be clear, no one is advocating that anything other than the same standards be applied to all applicants to a regulated profession. However, "fair" assessment needs to take into consideration the particular circumstances of the foreign-trained. Ontario1 created the Office of the Fairness Commissioner in 2007 as part of the Fair Access to Regulated Professions Act (FARPA), 2006. Augustine identifies three significant barriers: requirement for Canadian experience, involvement of third-party agencies that assess qualifications, and the challenge for applicants in finding accurate information. The approach taken by her Office is one of continuous improvement and monitoring of changes to regulations. Augustine's article provides numerous examples of how improvements are being made using the Office's criteria that practices should be transparent, objective, impartial and fair. The scope of the issue is demonstrated by recognizing that 23 percent of applications for new licences were from foreign-trained individuals. The Office of the Fairness Commissioner gets involved in influencing law (changes in legislation regulating various professions) and sharing information among regulatory bodies.[1] As Augustine notes, progress is slow, but there is and will continue to be progress.

Organizational redress to discrimination:

- Diversity training (Banerjee; Galabuzi; Linehan; Manning; Rasouli). Training for managers or employees accounted for 20% higher scores in perceived advancement compared to companies that do not have these practices (Linehan)
- Councils and networks (Banerjee; Manning; Linehan). "Managers who help employees develop social capital ... make a major contribution to their performance potential and sense of belonging." (Manning); "Lack of access to social networks in the organization affect immigrant employees (because their) ... performance is limited by their inability to draw on resources embedded in other employees. And they are likely to be overlooked for training and promotion in favour of someone who is better connected." (Manning); organizations with effective employee networks had an increase of 24% with perceived satisfaction of career advancement (Linehan)
- Mentoring (Banerjee; Choiniere and MacDonnell; Froy; Galabuzi; Linehan). Mentoring programs create 22% higher satisfaction level in perceived opportunity for career advancement than in those companies without programs (Linehan)
- Rewarding managers for having a greater range of behaviours to work with a diverse workforce (Manning; Rasouli)
- Best practices (Galabuzi): demonstrated leadership, clear organizational commitment, accountability of human resources, communication (training), supportive client, and union involvement.
- Intercultural leadership (Linehan). Linehan's article discusses perceptions of leaders and the negative impact such perceptions have on visible minorities. Like women, visible minorities do not fit the western stereotype of "leader." This prevents organizations from promoting visible minorities into leadership positions and may even result in minorities buying into the stereotypes about leaders and about themselves, thus preventing them from pursuing leadership positions. Organizations are missing out on the creativity and

intercultural competency which comes from diversity since bi-cultural people are more likely to see unique ways to deal with problems (opportunities).
- The role of unions (Galabuzi). Bargain for employment equity provisions and organize in sectors of the economy where racialized workers are disproportionately represented.

When redressing racism, Manning notes that social justice arguments tend not to be effective. It is better (Manning; Banerjee) to emphasize the need for change "to retain and develop employees to maximize organizational capacity."

INTERNATIONAL

Four of the articles are concerned with racism in other countries. Froy's article deals with immigrants in OECD countries; Froy notes that the barriers are similar to those in Canada, e.g., language, limited networks, lack of understanding of employment systems. Froy proposes a three-pronged integration model: (1) building contacts and networks, (2) supporting the recognition and validation of skills gained overseas and making labour markets more transparent, and (3) providing flexible and modular training so that immigrants can quickly adapt their skills to new demands. Using this model, Froy feels that local solutions are best and provides a number of examples of efforts being made around the world.

Wrench's article looks at how things have changed in the European Union (EU) since the mid-1990s, since now all 27 of the EU countries have implemented legislation prohibiting racial/ethnic discrimination in employment. Further, the EU Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) has helped to bring about change and helps assess the impact of legislation in the various countries. The FRA has looked at (a) official and semi-official statistics and surveys, (2) complaints data and legal cases and (3) research evidence. There have been some improvements, such as that the denial of racial discrimination is no longer acceptable. However, those covered by the legislation are often unaware of it. Further, newer members of the EU are less aware or sympathetic to the spirit of the legislation which is problematic because these states often have a significant Roma population who are discriminated against.

Two articles focus on one of the EU countries, Germany. Choi looks at the German General Act on Equal Treatment which came into effect five years ago, and the anti-racism environment. She concludes that having good laws are not enough. While the law improved legal remedies for victims it has a number of deficiencies such as a short two month period in which to file a complaint, no opportunity for class action suits, and low penalties. Fathi's article provides a case study of a German woman with Turkish roots who experienced discrimination and was unable to get satisfaction from the system. Fathi supports Choi's critique, finding implementation of the 2006 German law wanting.

What is disturbing about these articles is that anti-discrimination legislation in North America has developed over a long time and thus can provide experience on effective legislation, rather than each country having to re-discover effective legislative approaches for themselves.

NOTES

[1] Ontario has about 35 regulated professions. Similar offices are found in Manitoba, Quebec, and Nova Scotia.

[2] This information will be made available to regulatory bodies, governments, immigrant-serving organizations and academics in late 2012 and to a wider audience after that.