

# The Impact of Diversity Promise Fulfillment on Professionals of Color Outcomes in the USA

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**ABSTRACT.** This paper explores the relationship between psychological contract violations (PCVs) related to diversity climate and professional employee outcomes. We found that for our sample of US professionals of color including US-born African Americans, Hispanics, Asians, and Native Americans, employee perceptions of breach in diversity promise fulfillment (DPF), after controlling for more general organizational promise fulfillment (OPF), led to lower reported organizational commitment (OC) and higher turnover intentions (TI). Interactional justice partially mediated the relationship between DPF and outcomes. Procedural justice and DPF interacted to influence OC of employees of color. For respondents who perceived a lack of DPF, moderate racial awareness was associated with greater PCV. We discuss the implications of the findings and provide directions for future research.

**KEY WORDS:** diversity, diversity climate, justice, psychological contract, commitment, turnover intentions

## **Introduction**

The globalization of business, accelerating organizational reliance on technology, and ethnic differences in birth rates are leading to an increasingly complex and competitive marketplace. As a result, the attraction, management, and retention of a diverse applicant pool of high-performing professional workers is emerging as a significant 21st-century staffing issue for US organizations (Ployhart, 2006). The escalating diversity of job applicants and consumer markets is highlighted by US Census Bureau (2002) projections that Americans of color will comprise 38% of the population by 2025.

In this study, we define employees of color to be US-born, self-identified, African Americans, Hispanics, Asians, and Native Americans. These individuals

comprise several minority ethnic groups in the USA. Historically in the USA, employees from these groups have been underrepresented in the workforce, particularly in the professional ranks of organizations. Effectively employing and managing members from these ethnic groups, especially at professional levels, is becoming increasingly important as the demographics in the USA shift toward greater ethnic diversity. Accordingly, we focus on professionals of color in the USA.

A critical organizational dimension for many employees of color is the diversity climate. According to Cox (1994), diversity climate is composed of three levels: individual, intergroup, and organizational factors. Of particular interest in this study are the individual and organizational factors. Individual-level factors include identity structures, comprised of both physical identity and cultural identity, the latter consisting of the world view, espoused norms, values, and goal priorities to which an individual may adhere. At the organizational level, structural and informal integration include such dimensions as the overall employment profile of various groups and participation in the power structure of the organization. Cox's model of the diversity climate recognizes the interplay between the individual and the organizational situation in which that individual is embedded. Dimensions of the diversity climate include diversity in the employee workforce, extent to which diverse input is valued in decision-making, and elimination of discrimination and bias. Much like the effects of organizational climate on the expectations and career experiences of most employees, diversity climate may be particularly salient for the expectations and career experiences of employees of color. These

experiences, which may include attributions about whether the firm has acted justly or not, influence organizational effectiveness dimensions including organizational commitment (OC) and turnover intentions (TI), two performance dimensions of concern to organizational leaders.

While organizational leaders often appear to recognize the importance of having a diverse workforce, many organizations struggle with the challenge of managing this diversity (Pless and Maak, 2004). Shurn-Hannah (2000) and Robinson and Dechant (1997) report that employee of color turnover is significantly higher than for White colleagues. While organizations may have successfully attracted employees of color, the mechanisms by which these employees are retained are a vexing and relatively unexplored issue. Thus, understanding what drives employee outcomes, both desirable (organizational commitment) and undesirable (e.g., turnover) among professionals of color, an especially scarce resource in the US workforce, is a particularly important issue for their managers and for human resource professionals. Our central research question speaks to this issue by exploring the extent to which diversity promise fulfillment (DPF) (or breach via lack of promise fulfillment) is associated with important employee outcomes such as OC and TI. Thus, we focus on the effect of dimensions of organizational diversity climate on these important professional employee of color outcomes.

We turn now to the literature on social exchange theory and psychological contracts to lay the theoretical foundation for our hypotheses.

#### *Social exchange theory and psychological contracts*

One aspect of human resource strategy involves managing the relationship between the organization and its employees. This relationship has been characterized as one of social exchange (Blau, 1964) in which the organization's commitment to its employees is demonstrated by its care and concern and, in turn, the employee reciprocates in a just way by engaging in behaviors that benefit the organization (Lo and Aryee, 2003). Social exchange theory predicts that these exchange relationships influence employee outcomes including job satisfaction, OC, and TI (Tekleab et al., 2005). The expected (anticipated) social exchange relationships between employees and

their organizations are operationalized through a construct termed the psychological contract.

Rousseau (1989) and Morrison and Robinson (1997) provided the theoretical foundation on which the construct is defined. They defined a psychological contract as the employee's belief about obligations or inferred promises between the employee and his/her employing organization (rather than between the employee and organizational agents). Psychological contracts are held by employees and are both perceptual and idiosyncratic in nature. Employee perceptions about the obligations of the organization, as exemplified by the psychological contract, may or may not be shared by organizational agents. Tangible dimensions of the psychological contract may include effort, experience, expertise, and commitment provided by the employee in exchange for compensation and benefits. Justice research results indicate that the psychological contract may also include employee expectations about intangible organizational dimensions regarding the organizational climate and the nature of treatment by organizational agents, particularly the employee's supervisor (Bies and Moag, 1986; Simons et al., 2007).

One potentially important dimension of the psychological contract for employees of color pertains to expectations about the diversity climate of the employing organization. For employees of color, fulfillment of the psychological contract on the part of the employer may include employer obligations and commitments to provide a positive and supportive diversity climate (McKay and Avery, 2005). Chrobot-Mason (2003) found that employee of color expectations regarding employer fulfillment of promises about the diversity climate, including diverse representation in the organization's workforce, consideration of minority input in decision-making, valuing of diverse opinions and perspectives, and elimination of racial bias, influenced employee outcomes including employee job satisfaction and cynicism. Other research suggests that African American employees exhibit heightened sensitivity to treatment by their supervisors (Jeanquart-Barone, 1996; Simons et al., 2007). Thus, African American employees in the USA may be particularly sensitive to diversity climate as a component of the psychological contract.

Several studies have demonstrated that dimensions of organizational climate impact employee outcomes. The findings of Hicks-Clarke and Iles

(2000), that diversity climate perceptions affect employees' work outcomes including OC and job satisfaction, suggest that climate dimensions may have an important effect on retention of professional employees. However, these researchers did not examine the perceptions of participants of color. Only two studies have focused on and demonstrated that organizational diversity climate affects employee of color outcomes including job satisfaction, cynicism, and employee of color assessments of organizational attractiveness (Chrobot-Mason, 2003; Thomas and Wise, 1999). Thus, the relationship between psychological contracts of employees of color and their employing organizations, as well as the impact of contract violations such as lack of fulfillment of organizational diversity promises on employee outcomes, are relatively unexplored research issues requiring empirical examination.

In this study, we make two substantive contributions to the literature. First, we explore whether Chrobot-Mason's (2003) findings regarding a dimension of psychological contracts of employees of color, specifically DPF, generalize beyond a single organization. Second, we examine a dimension of organizational diversity climate, i.e., the effect of perceived breaches in diversity promises, on professional employee of color TI.

We also extend the literature in three significant ways. First, we examine competing hypotheses regarding the effect of interactional justice (IJ) as a moderator and as a mediator of the relationship between DPF and professional employees of color outcomes. Second, we examine the effect of the interaction of procedural justice (PJ) and breach of DPF on these outcome variables. Finally, building on social identity theory (Tajfel and Turner, 1986), we extend the literature by assessing whether professional employee of color racial awareness (RA) and breach of DPF interact to influence perceptions of psychological contract violation (PCV).

Our overview of the literature so far has identified that employees of color may attend to unique aspects of the psychological contract including the provision of a positive and supportive diversity climate. However, it may be that other organizational processes, such as those which ensure more global aspects of justice, will influence perceptions of psychological contract fulfillment. The need to account for general organizational promise fulfillment (OPF), when exploring the

attenuating or enhancing effects of DPF, is a point to which we will return in the development of our hypotheses. A more detailed review of the relevant literature and derivative hypotheses follow next.

## Hypotheses

### *Diversity promise breach and organizational commitment*

The effect of unfulfilled promises of diversity management on employees of color by organizational agents has received limited attention in the research literature. Chrobot-Mason (2003) found that participants perceived diversity promises such as the consideration of minority perspectives, elimination of racial bias, and support for the unique issues of employees of color to be distinct from general organizational promises. While employees of color valued diversity promises as highly as general organizational promises such as career development and long-term job security, they reported that, in their experience, diversity promises were less likely to be met than general promises. These perceived PCVs led to negative employment outcomes including lower OC and job satisfaction, and higher levels of cynicism for employees of color. When organizational trust or justice perceptions were high, employees who perceived a contract breach reported higher levels of cynicism. Participants in Chrobot-Mason's study came from one organization, so the ability to generalize her findings requires further empirical examination. Accordingly, based on Chrobot-Mason's findings regarding the effect of diversity contract breach on OC, we test the following hypothesis for professional employees of color across a sample of greater breadth:

- H1:* Perceptions of a breach in fulfillment of diversity promises will lead to lower organizational commitment after controlling for fulfillment of organizational promises.

### *Diversity promise breach and turnover intentions*

A number of scholars have examined the relationship between psychological contract breaches and employees' TI. Robinson and Rousseau (1994) and Turnley and Feldman (1999) reported that PCVs

resulted in various employee outcomes including loss of trust, dissatisfaction, and turnover. Other researchers have reported a similar pattern of results (Lo and Aryee, 2003; Robinson and Morrison, 2000; Tekleab et al., 2005). However, none of these studies addressed the effect of breaches in diversity promises. In addition, no studies examined the perceptions of employees of color nor did they study the effect of employees' perceptions of breaches of promises made about the diversity climate of the employing organization. Based on this review, we hypothesized that a perceived breach of diversity promises would lead to higher TI for employees of color:

*H2:* Perceptions of a breach in fulfillment of diversity promises will lead to higher turnover intentions after controlling for fulfillment of organizational promises.

#### *Organizational justice and diversity promise fulfillment*

Turnley and Feldman (1999) propose that individuals form psychological contracts based on their interactions with organizational agent(s) and on the employees' perceptions of the organization's climate. For example, organizational agents who convey impressions about the importance of diversity in the company's mission statements may lead employees of color to entertain consequent expectations about the diversity strategies and climate of the organization. If these expectations are unmet, the incongruence may lead to the perception of a PCV. Violations may involve issues of justice, including disrespectful behavior by organizational agents (interactional injustice) or unfair procedures (procedural injustice) (Rousseau, 1989). PCVs lead to employee emotional reactions, including anger, disappointment, and feelings of betrayal, and to loss of trust in the organization, dissatisfaction, voice, neglect, decreased loyalty to the employing organization, and higher levels of turnover (Robinson and Rousseau, 1994; Turnley and Feldman, 1999).

Bies and Moag (1986) described IJ as perceptions of fairness held by individuals regarding their treatment by their supervisor and other organizational agents. Bies and Moag identified several dimensions

of IJ including demonstration of sensitivity. Skarlicki and Folger (1997) highlighted the importance of managerial agents ensuring fairness in interactions with subordinates as a dimension of justice. Colquitt (2001) identified interpersonal (e.g., conveyance of dignity and respect by the supervisor) and informational (e.g., the manner in which information is conveyed by the supervisor) justice as facets of IJ. Previous research has shown a link between interactional (in)justice and various employee attitudes and behaviors. However, the literature on the relationship between IJ and outcomes suggests two possible modalities of influence in the relationship. One stream of literature suggests that IJ may interact with fulfillment of organizational promises in affecting employee outcomes, in essence a moderating effect. Other research suggests that IJ may play a mediating role between organizational promises made and their effect on employee outcomes. We summarize each stream of literature below and propose corresponding competing hypotheses.

Several studies suggest that IJ moderates OPF–employee outcome relationships. In their review of the justice literature, Turnley and Feldman (1999) propose that individuals' response to unfavorable organizational actions will be less severe when the aggrieved individuals perceive IJ. Kickul (2001) found that negative affect was high following a contract breach when interactional injustice was high. Similarly, Kickul et al. (2001) found that anticitizenship behaviors were higher after a breach when both IJ and PJ were low. Kickul et al. (2002) found that interactional (in)justice interacted with intrinsic contract breach to predict lower citizenship and job satisfaction and higher TI. In a study of professional workers, Thompson and Heron (2005) found that, following a perceived contract breach, high levels of interactional and PJ interactively affected positive worker commitment to their organizations. In a study of employees of color that examined the effect of behavioral integrity (the alignment between what a manager says and what (s)he does in treatment of subordinates), Simons et al. (2007) reported that Black employees were more sensitive to managerial behavioral integrity than were members of any other racial group. Based on these findings, we propose that fulfillment of diversity promises would be salient to employees of

color. Further, we predict that IJ and DPF would interactively affect OC and TI of professional employees of color. We propose two hypotheses to test these predictions for professional employees of color:

*H3a:* Interactional justice will moderate the positive relationship between diversity promise fulfillment and organizational commitment such that the positive relationship between diversity promise fulfillment and organizational commitment will be stronger (more positive) when interactional justice is high than when interactional justice is low.

*H3b:* Interactional justice will moderate the negative relationship between diversity promise fulfillment and turnover intentions such that the negative relationship between diversity promise fulfillment and turnover intentions will be stronger (more negative) when interactional justice is low than when interactional justice is high.

In contrast to literature supporting the moderation hypotheses above, other literature examining IJ and outcomes suggests that this relationship is dependent on treatment of the employee by his/her supervisor. This perspective in the literature suggests that IJ can be characterized as mediating the relationship between DPF and employee outcomes. Several studies have examined a specific context involving IJ, that of abusive supervision. Aryee et al. (2007) and Tepper (2000) found that IJ mediated the relationship between abusive supervision and employee outcomes. Extending this finding to our study, we posit that IJ may operate in a similar way, mediating rather than moderating the relationship between DPF and employee outcomes. We view mediation effects as plausible because treatment by the supervisor is more proximal to the employee and may serve to ameliorate the effects of a lack of DPF at the organizational level. IJ, or trust and respect conveyed by the supervisor toward the subordinate, may serve as a buffer between treatment at the organizational level in the form of diversity promises and employee outcomes. Thus, we also predict that IJ will have a mediating influence on the relationship between DPF and employee outcomes. We propose two hypotheses to test these predictions:

*H3c:* Interactional justice will mediate the relationship between diversity promise fulfillment and organizational commitment for professional employees of color.

*H3d:* Interactional justice will mediate the relationship between diversity promise fulfillment and employee turnover intentions for professional employees of color.

While IJ pertains to an individual's reaction to treatment by organizational agents, including the supervisor, PJ refers to an individual's information processing with respect to the fairness of organizational decision-making systems, such as job assignment or resource allocation processes. Several studies have reported on the robust relationship between PJ and OC (Grubb, 2006; Viswesvaran and Ones, 2002). Other research has documented the relationship between PJ and TI (Flood et al., 2001; Hemdi and Azzat Mohd, 2008). Turnley (1999) proposed that the relationship between PCV and (negative) employee outcomes would be attenuated by PJ when PJ is high. In a follow-up study, Turnley and Feldman (1999) reported that PJ moderated the relationship between PCV and employee TI. They found that, following violations, the managers in their study were most likely to be engaging in job search behaviors when the reported violation was high and the manager's perception of PJ was low, that is, the manager felt the decision-making process was unfair. In an organizational case study, Pate et al. (2003) found that PCVs involving procedural injustice led to lower OC. In a study of information technology professionals, Pare and Tremblay (2007) found that PJ was negatively related to TI. Other research suggests that employees from underrepresented groups are highly attuned to the presence or absence of PJ (Jeanquart-Barone, 1996). Based on this literature, we predict that PJ and DPF would interactively affect OC and TI of employees of color. We test these predictions for professionals of color with the following hypotheses:

*H4a:* Procedural justice will moderate the positive relationship between diversity promise fulfillment and organizational commitment such that the positive relationship between diversity promise fulfillment and organizational commitment

will be stronger (more positive) when procedural justice is high than when procedural justice is low.

*H4b:* Procedural justice will moderate the negative relationship between diversity promise fulfillment and turnover intentions such that the negative relationship between diversity promise fulfillment and turnover intentions will be stronger (more negative) when procedural justice is low than when procedural justice is high.

#### *Racial awareness and diversity promise fulfillment*

Cox (1994), in his model of the impact of diversity, recognizes that diversity includes both physical and cultural identities of organizational members. Cultural identity refers to the extent to which the individual places value on the cultural traditions of the group to which (s)he belongs. An individual's identity is derived from membership in groups comprised from various social categories. One such social category is ethnic or racial identity (Tajfel and Turner, 1986). Bernal et al. (1990) defined ethnic identity as the set of ideals, values, attitudes, and behaviors that an individual possesses as a member of a distinguishable social group. Phinney (1992) showed that ethnic identity was more salient for members of minority groups in the USA than it was for White participants. Utsey et al. (2002) found that participants from minority groups experienced race-related stress. These results suggest that professionals of color might be sensitive to racial concerns. Further, there may be varying awareness of racial concerns; that is, some professionals of color might be more sensitive than others.

Tajfel and Turner (1986) argue that, to the extent that members of lower-status groups espouse the ideal of individual mobility, those individuals may have weaker ethnic identity. Utsey et al. (2002) found that members of underrepresented groups had different levels of ethnic identity awareness; African American participants had significantly higher ethnic identity scores on the Multigroup Ethnic Identity Measure (MEIM, Phinney, 1992), a measure of ethnic identity awareness, than did Asian American or Latino American participants. Phinney (1993)

developed a three-stage model of ethnic identity development, proposing that individuals within and between ethnic groups may vary in their racial or ethnic awareness. Thus, there may be variance in the level of ethnic identity among members of minority groups and this difference may influence their sensitivity to dimensions of the psychological contract that pertain to diversity issues in the workplace.

Morrison and Robinson (1997) argue that inconsistency between expectations or understandings held by the employee and organizational agent(s) about the obligations of the employer can lead to unmet expectations or incongruence in perceptions about the psychological contract, leading to a PCV. Incongruence or violation can occur because the employee and the agent(s) have different cognitive schema or understandings about the organization's promises. These different schemas may develop from the different values, assumptions, and beliefs of employees and organizational agents. The different schemas also may lead to different expectations regarding the employment relationship and the employer's obligations. Since US organizations have historically been run by White male executives, organizational schemas may disproportionately reflect the norms of that group. Employees of color with greater RA are more attuned to differences in these schemas and therefore may experience greater schematic distance from the norms of historically White-managed organizations. Morrison and Robinson identify the salience of a promise and its fulfillment for an employee as a criterion for whether an unmet promise will be perceived. Jeanquart-Barone's (1996) findings suggest that African American employees are more sensitive to racial issues in the workplace. African American subordinates with White American supervisors reported lower levels of supervisory support, fewer developmental opportunities, lower PJ, less assimilation, and higher levels of discrimination than did their colleagues of color with African American supervisors. Professional employees of color who have greater RA may be more concerned about and sensitive to (lack of) DPF and more likely to perceive a violation than those employees with lesser RA. Morrison and Robinson's (1997) proposition suggests that divergent schema contribute to differences in the interpretation of the psychological contract by employees of color. The present study also examines

the interactive effect of RA with perceptions of DPF on reports of PCV. We test this interactive effect for professional employees of color with the following hypothesis:

*H5:* The effect of diversity promise fulfillment on perceptions of psychological contract violation will be moderated by racial awareness such that the (negative) relationship between diversity promise fulfillment and psychological contract violation will be stronger (more negative) for more racially aware professionals of color.

The hypothesized effects are shown in Figure 1.

An area where professionals of color continue to be underrepresented is higher education, an industry that provides the context for our research. The number of US-born faculty of color in US business schools has increased from 294 in 1994 to 691 in 2004 (Jackson, 2004). According to the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business International (AACSB, 2005), of faculty who are US citizens or permanent residents, Whites comprise 82% and faculty of color 18%. Over the last 50 years the US higher-education industry including the business school faculty labor market has experienced a fivefold increase in demand, one of the most rapid demand increases faced by any industry (Kowka and Snyder, 2003). The higher-education industry employs significant numbers of highly trained professionals. The business school segment of the US higher-education industry served as the setting for this study of knowledge workers.

## Methods

### *Sample*

Professionals of color in the business school labor market were sampled for this study. To increase the comprehensiveness and participation of our target sample we contacted the main offices of the PhD Project, a US-based network of professionals of color. We explained the purpose of our study, obtained their sanction to conduct the study, and requested that we be able to communicate that sanction to their membership. Business school faculty who were members of the PhD Project were solicited by email to voluntarily

participate in the study. Of the 662 faculty professionals of color in the database with valid email addresses, 182 (27.5%) completed the survey. Average age of the respondents was 45.5 years (standard deviation, SD = 9.4 years). Sixty-two percent of the sample were male and 38% were female. Sixty-four percent of the participants self-identified as African American, 21% Hispanic, 4% Asian American, 5% Native American, 5% were White non-Hispanic, and 1% were in the “other” category in the survey section pertaining to ethnic identity. In terms of position, 21% indicated they were professors, 22% were associate professors, 52% were assistant professors, 2% were administrators, 2% were lecturers/instructors, and 1% classified themselves as fitting into the “other” category. Forty-one percent indicated they were employed at doctoral-granting institutions, 13% were at non-doctoral-granting universities, and 46% were at 4-year colleges. Twelve percent were at historically Black colleges or universities (HBCUs) and 88% were at historically White institutions. Participants had been in their current position an average of 6.9 years (SD = 6.5 years) when they completed the survey. Among the respondents, 24% were in accounting, 10% in finance, 11% in information services, 35% in management, and 20% were in marketing. In the PhD Project population of faculty of color, 28% were accountants, 9% were in finance, 13% in information services, 31% in management, and 19% in marketing. The sample was slightly overrepresented in management (35% in the sample versus 31% in the population) and slightly underrepresented in accounting (24% in the sample versus 28% in the population).

### *Procedure*

Institutional Review Board approval for studies involving human subjects was obtained prior to survey administration. Approximately 1 week before sending out the online survey, we emailed potential participants announcing the survey and indicating that the research was sanctioned by the PhD Project. We then sent the survey from a university server to the email address for each prospective participant that was provided to us by the PhD Project. We designed our administration strategy to verify the accuracy of the email addresses. Of the 685 email

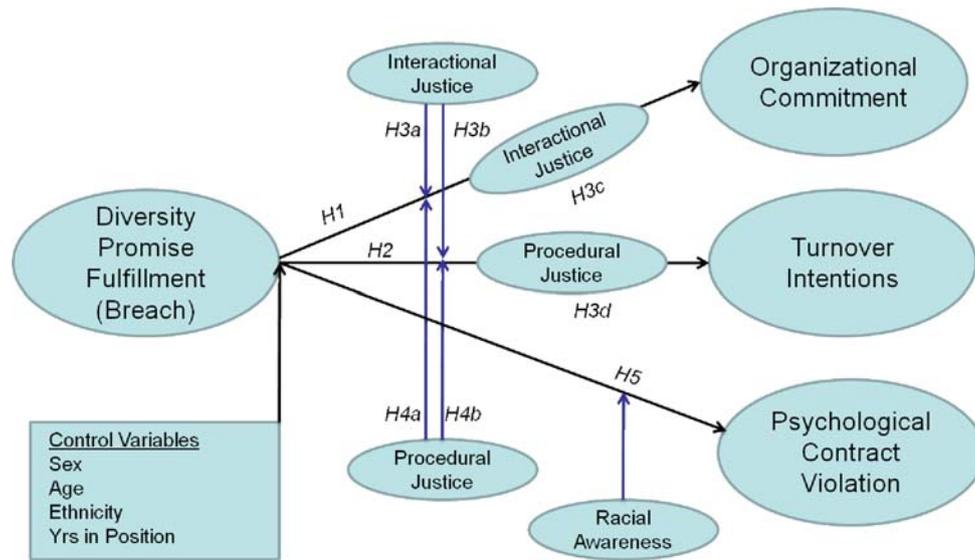


Figure 1. Hypothesized model relationships.

addresses of faculty at US institutions of higher education on the list, 677 were valid addresses. Additionally, 15 individuals emailed to indicate they were not employed in the higher-education industry and we excluded them from the study. Approximately 2 weeks after the initial mailing, we sent a follow-up email and survey to nonrespondents, again inviting them to complete the survey. The survey was completed online with data entered by participants stored on a secure university server. Identifying information was stripped from the responses prior to storage in the database.

### Measures

Diversity promise fulfillment and OPF were assessed with two scales developed by Chrobot-Mason (2003). Confirmatory factor analysis confirmed the two-subscale structure of the measure. DPF constituted a five-item scale with an eigenvalue of 5.04, explaining 48% of the variance. DPF items included: “Diverse representation in the workforce” and “Minority input is considered at all levels.” OPF was a five-item measure with an eigenvalue of 1.40, explaining an additional 3% of the variance. Sample items included: “High pay based on performance” and “Career development.” The reliability of DPF

(Cronbach alpha = 0.89) and OPF scales (alpha = 0.85) were acceptable.

### Interactional and procedural justice

We were interested in IJ in a context which would be salient to participants: the performance review process. Accordingly, consistent with the work of Tekleab et al. (2005) who measured IJ in a similar context, we measured IJ with three items (alpha = 0.94) developed by Folger and Konovsky (1989). A sample item was: “During my last performance evaluation, my department chair was honest in dealing with me.” We used a two-item scale (alpha = 0.94) to measure PJ developed by Tyler and Lind (1992). The items were: “The performance evaluation system at this university is a fair one.” and “I am satisfied with the way performance evaluations are done at the university.”

### Awareness of racial issues

The Colorblind Racial Attitude Scale (CoBRAS) (Neville et al., 2000) is a three-subscale measure assessing the cognitive aspects of an individual’s racial attitude. For this study the Awareness of Racial Privilege subscale (denoted racial awareness and abbreviated as RA), the most appropriate to measure participant’s awareness of racial prejudice (Neville et al., 2000), was assessed on a Likert scale from 1

(disagree) to 5 (agree). Sample statements included, “White people in the U.S. have certain advantages because of the color of their skin” and “Racial and ethnic minorities do not have the same opportunities as white people in the U.S.” The reliability of RA was acceptable (Cronbach alpha = 0.83).

#### *Organizational commitment and turnover intentions*

We measured OC with a seven-item scale from Mowday et al.’s (1979) OC questionnaire (alpha = 0.92). The items were slightly altered to better fit the university setting. Sample items included: “I really care about the future of this university.” and “I am proud to tell others that I am part of this university.” TI were measured with a two-item scale (alpha = 0.85): “It is likely that I will leave my employment with this university within a year.” And “I intend to keep working for the university for at least the next 3 years” (reverse scored) (Cammann et al., 1979, as cited in Cook et al., 1981). PCV was measured with Tekleab et al.’s (2005) three-item measure (alpha = 0.86). A sample item was: “The university has repeatedly failed to meet its obligation to me.”

#### *Control variables*

Participant demographic variables of sex, age, ethnicity, and time in position were included in this study as control variables. Participant sex was coded as a dummy variable, where 0 = male and 1 = female. Respondent ethnicity was recorded by respondents on the survey in six categories. Time in position was recorded by asking the respondents to enter the number of years that they had been in their current position.

#### *Analysis*

Study hypotheses were tested with correlation and hierarchical regression analyses. One concern in regression analysis when interaction effects are tested is the possibility of multicollinearity that may occur because the interaction term may correlate with the variables from which it was derived. Accordingly, for the tests of Hypotheses 3a, 3b, 4a, 4b, and 5 we followed Aiken and West’s (1991) recommendations

to center the independent variables around zero by subtracting the mean from each value of the variables and then determining the interaction effects by calculating the simple slopes for one standard deviation above and below the mean for the predictor variables. To assess the mediating effect of IJ on the relationship between DPF and the outcome variables for Hypotheses 3c and 3d, we followed Baron and Kenny’s (1986) analytical process. There are three steps to demonstrate full or partial mediation. The first condition to show mediation is that the independent variable (DPF) must relate to the dependent variable(s) (OC and TI). The second requirement is that the independent variable (DPF) must be significantly related to the mediator (IJ). The third condition for mediation is that, when both the independent variable (DPF) and the mediator (IJ) are included, the direct relationship between DPF and the dependent variables should be smaller (indicating partial mediation) or insignificant (indicating full mediation). Finally, we conducted Sobel’s (1982) test for significance of the indirect effect of the independent variable (DPF) on the dependent variables (OC and TI) by way of the mediator (IJ).

## **Results**

The correlations among the study variables are shown in Table I.

The first hypothesis predicted that perceptions of a breach in fulfillment of diversity promises will lead to lower OC for professional employees of color after controlling for fulfillment of organizational promises. To test the first hypothesis, we conducted two hierarchical regression analyses to assess the incremental value of DPF beyond OPF on the outcome variable, OC. In the first regression analysis, we entered the demographic variables of sex, age, ethnicity, and time in position in the first block as controls and regressed the demographic variables and OPF on OC. In the analysis of the first hypothesis and in the analyses of Hypotheses 2, 3a, 3b, 4a, and 4b, the demographic controls did not influence the dependent variables. After controlling for the demographic variables, OPF significantly influenced OC ( $F = 68.03, p < 0.0001$ ). We then entered DPF into the equation to determine its effect beyond the

TABLE I  
Means, standard deviations, and intercorrelations among the study variables

|  | Mean  | SD   | (1)   | (2)    | (3)   | (4)   | (5)     | (6)     | (7)    | (8)     | (9)     | (10)    | (11)  | (12) |
|--|-------|------|-------|--------|-------|-------|---------|---------|--------|---------|---------|---------|-------|------|
| (1) Sex                                | 0.38  | 0.49 |       |        |       |       |         |         |        |         |         |         |       |      |
| (2) Age                                | 45.50 | 9.39 | -0.23 |        |       |       |         |         |        |         |         |         |       |      |
| (3) Ethnicity                          | 1.97  | 1.10 | -0.00 | 0.06   |       |       |         |         |        |         |         |         |       |      |
| (4) Years in position                  | 6.91  | 6.48 | -0.13 | 0.52** | -0.02 |       |         |         |        |         |         |         |       |      |
| (5) Organizational promise fulfillment | 3.07  | 0.86 | -0.02 | -0.13  | 0.01  | -0.05 |         |         |        |         |         |         |       |      |
| (6) Diversity promise fulfillment      | 2.77  | 1.01 | -0.06 | -0.08  | -0.08 | -0.09 | 0.58**  |         |        |         |         |         |       |      |
| (7) Racial awareness                   | 3.89  | 0.75 | -0.05 | 0.13   | 0.05  | 0.11  | -0.14   | -0.27*  |        |         |         |         |       |      |
| (8) Interactional justice              | 3.67  | 1.22 | -0.02 | -0.08  | -0.06 | 0.02  | 0.45**  | 0.61**  | -0.23* |         |         |         |       |      |
| (9) Procedural justice                 | 2.81  | 1.15 | -0.01 | -0.10  | -0.09 | -0.01 | 0.58**  | 0.61**  | -0.14  | 0.61**  |         |         |       |      |
| (10) Organizational commitment         | 3.45  | 1.00 | -0.01 | -0.03  | -0.15 | 0.09  | 0.58**  | 0.61**  | -0.19* | 0.58**  | 0.59**  |         |       |      |
| (11) Turnover intentions               | 2.50  | 1.38 | 0.02  | 0.04   | 0.10  | -0.01 | -0.39** | -0.46** | 0.05   | -0.41** | -0.30** | -0.60** |       |      |
| (12) Psychological contract violation  | 2.63  | 1.17 | -0.04 | 0.15   | 0.07  | -0.01 | -0.15   | -0.16*  | 0.14   | -0.24*  | -0.22*  | -0.22*  | 0.18* |      |

\* $p < 0.05$ ; \*\* $p < 0.001$ ; \*\*\* $p < 0.001$ ; sample size for correlations ranged from 153 to 181.

influence of OPF. After controlling for demographic variables and OPF, DPF significantly influenced OC ( $F = 26.96, p < 0.0001$ ). We conducted a second, post hoc regression analysis to determine whether OPF influenced OC beyond the effect of DPF. Accordingly, in the second regression analysis, we entered the demographic variables and DPF in the first block and OPF in the second block and examined their effects on OC. In the second regression analysis, results showed that OPF affected OC beyond the effect of the demographic variables and DPF ( $F = 20.79, p < 0.0001$ ). The results of the analyses indicated that DPF had a relatively greater effect on OC than the more general OPF, thus supporting Hypothesis 1, as shown in Table II.

The second hypothesis predicted that perceptions of a breach in DPF would lead to higher TI after controlling for OPF. To test this hypothesis, we regressed demographic variables in the first block and OPF in the second block on TI. Results suggest that OPF significantly influenced TI ( $F = 21.78, p < 0.001$ ). We then entered the demographic variables and OPF in the first block and DPF in the second block and examined their effect on TI. After controlling for demographic variables and OPF, DPF significantly influenced TI ( $F = 12.77, p < 0.001$ ). In this second regression, the results for OPF were no longer significant. Thus, the findings suggest that DPF influenced TI above and beyond OPF for the professionals of color as proposed by the second hypothesis, and shown in Table II.

Hypothesis 3a predicted that IJ would moderate the relationship between DPF and OC. To test the hypothesis, the demographic variables and OPF, in the first step as controls, and DPF and IJ in the second step were each regressed on OC. In a second regression analysis, an interaction term was added to the model to test for the interactive effect of DPF and IJ on OC. In the final model, OPF influenced OC ( $F = 18.09, p < 0.0001$ ) and DPF influenced OC ( $F = 10.63, p < 0.0001$ ) after controlling for OPF. IJ also significantly affected OC after controlling for OPF ( $F = 7.85, p < 0.01$ ). However the interaction of DPF and IJ did not influence OC. Thus, although the main effects of IJ and DPF on OC were significant, Hypothesis 3a was not supported because the interaction between IJ and DPF was not significant for this professional of color sample.

Hypothesis 3b predicted that IJ would moderate the relationship between DPF and TI. To begin the analysis, we entered the demographic variables and OPF in the first step as controls. To test the hypothesis, the demographic variables and OPF, in the first step, and IJ and DPF in the second block were each regressed on TI. In a second regression, we added an interaction term to the model to test for the interactive effect of IJ and DPF on TI. Again, OPF was significant ( $F = 21.15, p < 0.0001$ ). After controlling for the demographic variables and OPF, IJ significantly affected TI ( $F = 5.60, p < 0.001$ ). DPF failed to significantly influence TI ( $F = 3.84, p = 0.052$ ) when OPF and IJ were in the model. The interaction was not significant. Thus, Hypothesis 3b was not supported.

Hypothesis 3c predicted that IJ would mediate the relationship between DPF and OC. To test this hypothesis, we ran regression analyses to test for mediation. The first condition was met; DPF significantly predicted OC ( $F = 92.78, p < 0.0001$ ). The second condition was also met; DPF influenced IJ ( $F = 91.16, p < 0.0001$ ). To test for the third condition for mediation, we ran a third regression in which we forced DPF to enter first, followed by IJ. The overall  $F$  was significant ( $F = 59.82, p < 0.0001$ ), but smaller due to the mediating effect of IJ. Finally, the Sobel (1982) test statistic ( $z = 3.63, p < 0.001$ ) for the indirect effect of the independent variable (DPF) on the dependent variable, OC, by way of the mediator (IJ) was significant, suggesting that IJ partially mediated the relationship between DPF and OC and supporting Hypothesis 3c.

Hypothesis 3d predicted that IJ would mediate the relationship between DPF and TI. To test this hypothesis, we followed the same test for mediation procedure employed in the test of Hypothesis 3c. The first condition for mediation was met; DPF significantly predicted TI ( $F = 40.71, p < 0.0001$ ). The second condition was also met; DPF influenced IJ ( $F = 91.16, p < 0.0001$ ). To test for the third condition for mediation, we ran a third regression in which we forced DPF to enter first, followed by IJ. The overall  $F$  was significant ( $F = 23.41, p < 0.0001$ ), but smaller due to the mediating effect of IJ, indicating partial mediation. Finally, the Sobel (1982) test statistic ( $z = 2.34, p < 0.01$ ) for the indirect effect of the independent variable (DPF) on the dependent variable, TI, by way of the mediator

TABLE II

Results of regression of organizational promises fulfillment, diversity promises fulfillment, and interactional and procedural justice on employee commitment and turnover intentions

|  | Organizational commitment |         |                |         | Turnover intentions |                    |                    |                    |
|--|---------------------------|---------|----------------|---------|---------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
|  | H1                        | H3a     | H4a            | H4b     | H2                  | H3b                | H3c                | H4b                |
| Sex  | -0.03                     | -0.02   | -0.01          | -0.00   | -0.03               | -0.04              | -0.04              | -0.02              |
| Age  | 0.00                      | 0.00    | 0.00           | -0.00   | -0.00               | -0.00              | 0.00               | 0.00               |
| Ethnicity                                  | -0.13                     | -0.07   | -0.08          | -0.08   | 0.05                | 0.05               | 0.05               | 0.06               |
| Years in position                          | 0.00                      | 0.01    | 0.01           | 0.01    | -0.01               | -0.01              | -0.01              | -0.01              |
| Organizational promises fulfillment        | 0.68***                   | 0.41*** | 0.38***        | 0.33*** | -0.28**             | -0.23              | -0.28 <sup>†</sup> | -0.26 <sup>†</sup> |
| Diversity promises fulfillment             | -                         | 0.42*** | 0.29***        | 0.32*** | -0.46***            | -0.29 <sup>†</sup> | -0.46***           | -0.47***           |
| Interactional justice                      | -                         | -       | 0.19**         | -       | -                   | -0.26**            | -                  | -                  |
| Diversity promises × interactional justice | -                         | -       | - <sup>a</sup> | -       | -                   | - <sup>a</sup>     | -                  | -                  |
| Procedural justice                         | -                         | -       | -              | 0.21**  | -                   | -                  | -                  | - <sup>a</sup>     |
| Diversity promises × procedural justice    | -                         | -       | -              | -0.11*  | -                   | -                  | -                  | 0.17 <sup>†</sup>  |
| F  | 14.5***                   | 19.9*** | 19.1***        | 19.1*** | 6.3***              | 6.3***             | 6.3***             | 6.0***             |
| R <sup>2</sup>                             | 0.38                      | 0.49    | 0.52           | 0.52    | 0.23                | 0.27               | 0.23               | 0.25               |

<sup>†</sup>  $p < 0.10$ ; \*  $p < 0.05$ ; \*\*  $p < 0.01$ ; \*\*\*  $p < 0.001$ .

<sup>a</sup> Did not enter the stepwise regression at the  $p < 0.05$  level of significance.

(IJ) was significant, suggesting that IJ partially mediated the relationship between DPF and TI, providing support for Hypothesis 3d.

Hypothesis 4a predicted that PJ would moderate the relationship between DPF and OC. To test this hypothesis, the demographic variables and OPF, in the first block, and PJ and DPF in the second block were each regressed on OC. In a second regression, an interaction term was added to the model to test for the interactive effect of PJ and DPF on OC. In the first block, OPF was significant ( $F = 71.44$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). After controlling for the demographic variables and OPF, DPF ( $F = 14.71$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ) and PJ ( $F = 8.07$ ,  $p < 0.005$ ) significantly influenced OC. We then added an interaction term for DPF and PJ. In the final model, the main effects remained significant and the interaction term for DPF and PJ had an interactive effect on OC ( $F = 4.31$ ,  $p < 0.04$ ); thus the results supported Hypothesis 4a, as shown in Figure 2. When interaction effects are significant, Aiken and West (1991) recommend determination of the simple slopes for one standard deviation above and below the mean for the independent variable, DPF, and calculation of the significance of  $t$ -test results for each. The  $t$  tests were significant both one standard deviation above ( $p < 0.05$ ) and one standard deviation ( $p < 0.01$ ) below the mean. Several observations can be made from a review of Figure 2. First, (higher) DPF is associated with higher OC under conditions of both higher and lower PJ. Second, DPF (and lack thereof) has a stronger association with organization commitment under the low PJ condition as evidenced by the steeper simple slope. Third, when diversity

promises are not fulfilled, the (negative) impact on OC appears to be much greater (mean difference = 0.79) than when diversity promises are fulfilled (mean difference = 0.27).

Hypothesis 4b predicted that PJ would moderate the relationship between DPF and TI. To test this hypothesis, the demographic variables and OPF, in the first step, and PJ and DPF in the second block were each regressed on TI. In a second regression, we added an interaction term to the model to test for the interactive effect of PJ and DPF on TI. OPF influenced TI ( $F = 21.41$ ,  $p < 0.0001$ ). In the final model, after controlling for the demographic variables and OPF, the effect of DPF ( $F = 13.34$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ) on TI was significant, but the effect of PJ on TI failed to reach significance. The effect of the interaction of the two independent variables, DPF and PJ, failed to reach the conventional level of significance for a direct effect ( $F = 3.64$ ,  $p = 0.059$ ) on TI; thus Hypothesis 4b was not supported.

Hypothesis 5 tested whether, after controlling for OPF, DPF and RA had an interactive effect on perceptions of PCV. To test this hypothesis OPF was entered in the first block as a control and DPF and RA each were entered in the second block and regressed on PCV. In a second regression equation, we entered the interactive term to the model. OPF did not significantly affect PCV ( $F = 3.78$ ,  $p = 0.054$ ); nor did RA or DPF. After controlling for OPF and with the interaction term in the model, neither DPF nor RA was individually associated with PCV. However, in the second regression, the two variables, DPF and RA, had an interactive effect on PCV ( $F = 4.02$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ), thus providing support for Hypothesis 5, as shown in Figure 3. To further investigate this interaction effect, we followed Aiken and West's (1991) procedure for determining the significance of the simple slopes at the mean, one standard deviation above and one below the mean. The results of these analyses are that the simple slopes for high RA and low RA were not significant due primarily to large standard errors. However, the simple slope for moderate (at the mean) RA was significant ( $B = -0.06$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ) and in the expected direction of increased DPF fulfillment associated with decreasing perceptions of PCV.

In summary, the results provided empirical support for the first and second hypotheses as well as 3c, 3d, 4a and 5, as shown in Table II.

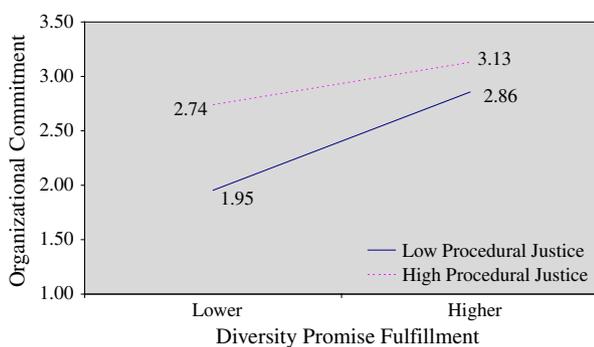


Figure 2. Interactive effect of diversity promise fulfillment and procedural justice on organizational commitment.

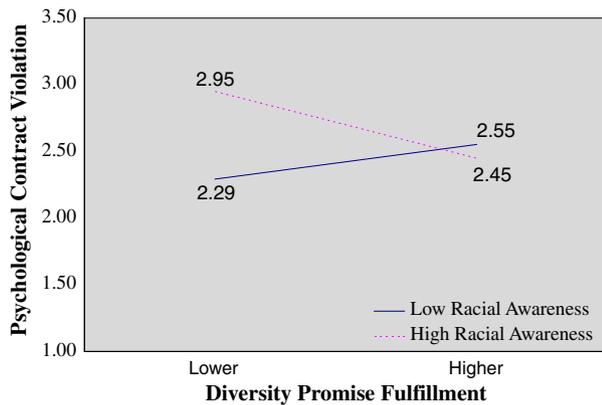


Figure 3. Interactive effect of diversity promise fulfillment and racial awareness on psychological contract violation.

## Discussion

The results of our study provide one of the first glimpses into the “black box” of process variables that intervene between a precious input (professionals of color) and a desirable outcome (professional employee of color commitment) or undesirable outcome (professional employee of color TI). The results for the first hypothesis suggest that employees of color across organizations are sensitive to general organizational promises. Further, professional employees of color also appear sensitive to diversity promises above and beyond the more general organizational promises made by company agents. We examined professionals of color in a similar context (schools of business) across a large number of organizations, thus extending the generalizability of Chrobot-Mason’s (2003) findings. Though relative awareness (as compared with White employees) was not examined here, other research suggests White employees are less aware of the significance of diversity promises (Kossek and Zonia, 1993; Thomas and Wise, 1999). Future research could test this premise directly by collecting paired samples of majority and nonmajority members across multiple organizations.

Participants in the present study were highly educated professionals of color employed in a knowledge industry, namely business schools in US universities. It may be that professionals of color in similar knowledge industries, e.g., law, accounting, technology, and consulting, where they are still underrepresented, are also sensitive to the effects of

fulfillment of diversity promises and organizational justice. Future research could test this possibility.<sup>1</sup>

Chrobot-Mason found that (low) organizational DPF led to low employee commitment and job satisfaction and higher levels of cynicism. We replicated the OC finding and extended those results by adding an additional employee outcome, TI, to the range of potential consequences of lack of DPF for employees of color. The results of the test of the second hypothesis indicate that a perceived breach of DPF is associated with (potentially) organizationally costly behavioral intentions for professional employee of color participants, specifically greater intent to leave the organization. Though we did not measure actual turnover, there is robust literature supporting a positive linkage between TI and actual turnover (Griffeth et al., 2000). Future research could determine whether TI are actualized at comparable rates for professionals of color.

Our findings extend the literature regarding the impact of justice in several ways. For PJ, the interaction of PJ with DPF was significant for OC such that participants who perceived greater PJ and greater DPF indicated greater levels of commitment to their organizations.

Collectively, these results with respect to separate effects for PJ, DPF, and their interaction have important implications for both practitioners and researchers of organizational justice. First, these results suggest that, to generate high levels of OC for professional employees of color, organizational agents such as managers should pay attention to both the fairness of procedures and to ensuring that diversity climate promises are honored. Second, these results suggest more broadly that future research on organizational justice might include closer attention to the *dimensionality* of promise fulfillment and the extent to which different promise dimensions are fulfilled. In contrast to considering dimensional aspects of promise fulfillment, much of the extant research uses global and nonspecific measures of psychological contract. For example Tekleab et al. (2005) identify the focus of the psychological contract construct as being on promises “made and kept” (p. 148), in essence a unidimensional measure. It may be that the promise construct has facets deserving closer scrutiny in research connecting organizational justice with PCV. Whether the unmet promises were in the dimensions of pay, job recognition, forming relationships, variety,

skill development or career training (Lambert et al., 2003), or in dimensions of diversity climate as our findings suggest, the consequences are likely to be important in determining employee cognitive and behavioral reactions. Along these lines, our finding that the mean differences across high- and low-PJ groups were smaller when DPF was higher suggests that DPF may dampen the effects of PJ on OC. Whether this dampening effect is unique to the fulfillment of diversity promises for professionals of color or might be applicable to a wide range of promise dimensions for employee groups is an empirical question that we believe warrants further attention by organizational scholars.

When considering the impact of the interactional dimension of justice alone, the results indicate that IJ is positively associated with OC and TI. However, when testing IJ with DPF for interaction effects, this justice dimension is not significant for either outcome variable. This is an important finding because it suggests that treating professionals of color with respect is ineffective when basic climate promises go unfulfilled. It is worth noting that the items measuring the effect of fulfillment of diversity promises speak more generally to how professionals of color are treated by the organization whereas IJ pertains to more proximal treatment at the supervisor-subordinate level. It may be that the different organizational levels assessed by these independent variables do not have an interactive effect on the employee outcome variables we assessed in this study. Our results clearly indicate that PJ, which is more easily observed and cognitively connected to beneficial initiatives at the organizational level, has more impact on attitudinal outcomes than IJ, which is less easily observed across organizational actors and thus may be regarded as more idiosyncratic in nature by these employees.

We also found that RA appears to operate interactively with DPF in affecting perceptions of PCV. These results are consistent with those of Simons et al. (2007), who showed that employees of color are sensitive to the behavioral integrity of their supervisors. Professionals of color with moderate RA who perceived lower DPF were more likely to perceive a violation.

While we had representation of African American, Hispanic, Native American, and Asian American professionals in our sample, the number of participants in

the latter two categories was relatively low. Our results did not indicate any significant differences in the effect of the predictors on outcomes between members from different ethnic groups. Research assessing possible differences in attitudinal differences among ethnic groups has been limited. As the US workforce becomes increasingly diverse, knowledge about the unique concerns of different groups, if any, will facilitate effective organizational diversity management strategies.

Taken together, the results suggest that members of underrepresented groups in the USA, particularly African Americans, are highly attuned to the diversity climate of their employing organizations. It also appears that there are attitudinal and perhaps behavioral consequences to organizations' (lack of) fulfillment of diversity promises. Organizations that seek the competitive advantage of the most highly competent and qualified workforce should pay attention to the organizational climate experienced by the diverse members of their workforces. Our findings clearly suggest that the explicit consideration of creating and maintaining a positive diversity climate as a component of organizational climate will be especially important for retaining committed professionals from underrepresented groups.

## Note

<sup>1</sup> We thank an anonymous reviewer for suggesting this possibility.

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