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Silence and Voice in America

In America, the quest for recognition and respect has often been hindered by the pervasive silencing experienced by individuals across diverse identities. Regardless of race, gender, or sexual orientation, the imposition of silence constitutes a denial of basic human rights, stifling the expression of individual truths and perpetuating systemic inequalities. Through this research, We aim to illuminate the mechanisms through which silence is enforced, examining its implications on personal agency, societal discourse, and collective empowerment. By acknowledging the interconnectedness of silence and power dynamics, we underscore the urgent need for inclusive spaces where every voice is valued, and every narrative is honored. It is through fostering such environments of openness and acceptance that we can strive towards a society in which all individuals feel empowered to share their perspectives and contribute to the tapestry of human experience.

First, let's talk about the importance of the insidious nature of silence extending its grip, particularly over communities of Hispanic descent, stemming from a rich tapestry of cultural backgrounds including Mexico, Puerto Rico, Colombia, the Dominican Republic, and Spain, among others. Despite their diverse origins and contributions to American society, individuals of Hispanic heritage often find themselves subjected to marginalization and discrimination, Tajfel says "The rejection-identification model says that when people experience discrimination

because of their ethnicity, it makes them more aware of their ethnic group. This awareness then leads them to form a stronger sense of belonging to their ethnic group.” When people feel left out or mistreated because of their ethnicity, they start to identify more with others who share their ethnicity., their voices stifled by the pervasive forces of racism and xenophobia. From derogatory remarks to overt hostility, the vitriol directed toward Spanish culture reflects a broader pattern of exclusionary rhetoric that seeks to invalidate the presence and contributions of Hispanic communities. Instances of being told to "go back to their country" or facing systemic barriers to social and economic advancement are stark reminders of the injustices faced by individuals simply due to their racial and ethnic identities.

Furthermore, research has shown that first-generation Hispanic individuals in the United States tend to have more positive views about the police, less distrust in the legal system, and perceive higher social costs associated with punishment compared to those who are second-generation (meaning they were born in the United States but have at least one parent who was born in a Hispanic country). On the other hand, second and third-generation Hispanics in the U.S. often find themselves in a complex situation. Vaughn explains “They try to balance the cultural traditions passed down by their immigrant parents while also navigating the influence of mainstream American values and societal expectations.” It is imperative to confront these manifestations of silence rooted in prejudice, advocating for a society where the voices of Hispanic individuals are not only heard but celebrated as integral threads in the rich tapestry of American diversity.

Next, despite extensive research into the mechanisms and consequences of gender discrimination in the workplace, little attention has been given to how third-party observers react

to such instances. A series of six experiments shed light on this issue, revealing that people tend to view organizational decisions that discriminate against individual male workers as more acceptable compared to those discriminating against females. Interestingly, this difference in perception is particularly pronounced among women. The disparity arises because women, more than men, According to Schurr & Fuchs “The latter stream of research focuses on gender discrimination against women at work and how it affects coworkers’ occupational well-being.” Consider the collective situation of both female and male workers when evaluating the legitimacy of gender-based discrimination in organizational decisions. These findings highlight the role of group-level considerations in shaping people's judgments of discrimination in the workplace, offering valuable insights for organizations and policymakers grappling with divergent opinions on this issue.

Moving on we can still observe that most studies have focused on ‘visible’ minorities in the workplace, such as gender or race, and have neglected researching the experiences of invisible minorities such as lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBTQ+) workers. According to Priola “Not only is sexuality an under-researched area within diversity at work but it is also one of the most difficult to research because LGBTQ+ must have to play an active role in their acknowledgment”. Transgender individuals, particularly, grapple with the pervasive silencing that permeates their existence, stemming from societal prejudices and systemic discrimination. From early experiences of rejection by families and peers to enduring exclusion in broader social discourse, transgender voices are frequently invalidated and marginalized. This silencing is exacerbated by systemic barriers, leading to disproportionate rates of homelessness, unemployment, and violence among transgender individuals. Even within LGBTQ+ spaces,

transgender voices may find themselves sidelined or overlooked. However, amidst these formidable challenges, transgender individuals and their allies persist in advocating for their rights with remarkable resilience and courage. By confronting societal norms, dismantling systemic barriers, and amplifying their voices, they courageously strive to demand recognition, respect, and equality, heralding a more inclusive and just society.

Staying on track as Americans, we must embrace and celebrate the rich tapestry of diversity that exists within our nation. We must recognize that inclusion extends beyond mere tolerance; it requires actively welcoming and valuing every race, every gender, and every person of sexual orientation. Embracing diversity not only enriches our communities but also strengthens the fabric of our society, fostering innovation, understanding, and empathy. When we acknowledge and honor the unique experiences and perspectives of individuals from all backgrounds, we create a more vibrant and dynamic society where everyone feels valued and respected. By dismantling barriers and fostering an environment of inclusion, we unlock the full potential of our nation, allowing every person to contribute their talents and insights to the collective tapestry of American culture. Together, let us build a future where diversity is celebrated as a source of strength, and where every American can thrive regardless of race, gender, or sexual orientation.

How do we go about finding a solution? Diving deeper into solutions, we look at making laws to help these individuals by strengthening and enforcing anti-discrimination laws at federal, state, and local levels. This includes laws protecting individuals from discrimination based on sexual orientation, gender identity, and race in areas such as employment, housing, education, and public accommodations. This way people can feel safe within themselves. Another way we

can help is by implementing comprehensive education programs in schools and workplaces to foster understanding, empathy, and respect for people of all sexual orientations, gender identities, and racial backgrounds. This includes promoting diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives. This is a good idea because as kids we learn from our parents if our parents don't like it usually, we as kids end up not liking it and we need to make a change for the better of America. One of the biggest things we could do in the 20th century is to encourage accurate and positive representation of diverse identities in media, including television, film, literature, and online platforms. This can help challenge stereotypes and combat harmful narratives. Most people are on social media these days so the world will get out and hopefully, we can see better inclusion for all genders, races, and sexual orientations.

To sum it all up, the intricate relationship between silence and voice reflects the broader struggle for equality and human rights across diverse identities. Regardless of gender, race, or sexual orientation, every individual deserves to be heard, respected, and empowered to express their truth. The silencing of marginalized communities, whether it be transgender individuals, people of color, or any other group, is a grave injustice that perpetuates systemic oppression and undermines the principles of equality and justice. It is imperative that we actively challenge societal norms, dismantle systemic barriers, and foster inclusive spaces where every voice is valued and affirmed. By championing the inherent worth and dignity of all individuals, we can cultivate a society that celebrates diversity, fosters empathy, and promotes solidarity. Only then can we truly honor the richness of human experience and create a world where everyone can thrive and contribute their unique perspective to the collective tapestry of humanity.

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