This research tests the hypothesis that the presence (vs. absence) of organizational diversity structures causes high-status group members (Whites, men) to perceive organizations with diversity structures as procedurally fairer environments for underrepresented groups (racial minorities, women), even when it is clear that underrepresented groups have been unfairly disadvantaged within these organizations. Furthermore, this illusory sense of fairness derived from the mere presence of diversity structures causes high-status group members to legitimize the status quo by becoming less sensitive to discrimination targeted at underrepresented groups and reacting more harshly toward underrepresented group members who claim discrimination. Six experiments support these hypotheses in designs using 4 types of diversity structures (diversity policies, diversity training, diversity awards, idiosyncratically generated diversity structures from participants’ own organizations) among 2 high-status groups in tests involving several types of discrimination (discriminatory promotion practices, adverse impact in hiring, wage discrimination). Implications of these experiments for organizational diversity and employment discrimination law are discussed.

De aanwezigheid van diversiteitsbeleid kan een illusie van eerlijke en gelijke behandeling veroorzaken. Medewerkers merken bestaande discriminatie minder snel op en reageren negatiever op iemand die discriminatie in de organisatie aankaart.