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Author(s)

Hofhuis, Joep; Vietze, Jana

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Diversity Perspectives and Intercultural Communication in the Workplace

Joep Hofhuis ^{1,2} & Jana Vietze ²

¹. Amsterdam University of Applied Sciences, the Netherlands

². Erasmus University Rotterdam, the Netherlands

Introduction

In today's globalized world, the management of workplace diversity has emerged as a critical topic in both social science research and organizational practice (Plaut, 2010). Scholars and practitioners alike recognize the importance of fostering inclusive workplaces and the potential benefits that this inclusion may bring for organizational productivity (Homan, 2019). There is growing evidence that the success of diversity management is a function of not only the willingness of organizations to hire and include employees with different backgrounds, or the implementation of diversity policies, but also of the underlying motivations and rationale for organizations to focus on enhancing diversity, termed diversity perspectives (Dwertmann et al., 2016; Leslie & Flynn, 2022). This chapter provides an overview of different frameworks that describe organizational diversity perspectives, and it explores their relationship with intercultural communication and diversity outcomes in the workplace.

The study of diversity perspectives has been shaped by the recognition that organizations encompass diverse social, cultural, and demographic attributes, and that individuals possess multifaceted identities. This chapter focuses specifically on diversity perspectives regarding culture, ethnicity, and race, but it is important to state that many of the insights described below may also be applicable to other dimensions of workplace diversity, such as gender, age, religion, or sexual orientation.

One of the key areas where the study of diversity perspectives intersects with organizational practice is in the field of intercultural communication, which focuses on ways in which individuals with different cultural backgrounds interact and exchange information. Intercultural communication serves as a bridge between diversity perspectives and workplace outcomes by providing strategies to enhance communication, foster intercultural competence, and build inclusive work environments. Over the past decades, scholars have provided evidence for these relationships through empirical work in many

different organizational and national contexts (e.g., Ely & Thomas, 2001; Podsiaclowski et al., 2013). We provide an overview of such work below.

Within the realm of diversity perspectives, several theoretical frameworks have emerged, each offering a unique lens to examine diversity in organizational settings. In the following chapter, we discuss some of the most widely used frameworks and provide examples of empirical work that has used them. We first focus on simple one-dimensional frameworks that place diversity perspectives on a continuum, for example, ranging from positive to negative attitudes. Next, we focus on two-dimensional frameworks that examine diversity perspectives as independent but interacting constructs. Finally, we describe the development of more complex multidimensional frameworks that provide a more fine-grained taxonomy of different types of diversity perspectives that have emerged from practice, as well as from inductive studies. For each framework, we provide a brief overview of its theoretical underpinnings, and some of the main findings that outline how diversity perspectives may relate to workplace behavior and inclusion. We end the chapter by identifying a number of existing gaps in current knowledge and suggesting avenues for future exploration.

Defining Diversity Perspectives

In organizational science, the term diversity perspective can refer to approaches, strategies, motivations, or rationales that organizations use to understand and manage workplace diversity. Organizations may adopt one or more of these perspectives depending on their goals, values, and the broader societal context. A common denominator is that diversity perspectives recognize the importance of diversity in shaping organizational dynamics, practices, and outcomes. However, established theoretical and empirical frameworks diverge widely in their focus, and they may include personal or organizational perspectives (see Leslie & Flynn, 2022 for an overview). For example, the study of diversity attitudes focuses on the affective and cognitive psychological responses that individuals have toward workplace diversity, usually formulated as liking versus not-liking diversity (e.g., Montei et al., 1996; Nakui et al., 2011). The study of diversity beliefs or diversity mindsets encompasses a broader range of cognitions including the belief by individuals, teams, or organizations that diversity may be beneficial for workgroup outcomes (Van Knippenberg et al., 2013; Van Knippenberg & Haslam, 2007). Diversity ideologies are used to describe more complex beliefs about how to approach diversity and its effects on society (Leslie & Flynn, 2022). Diversity climates are usually defined as the degree to which the general atmosphere of an organization supports diversity, such as whether all individuals are treated fairly, feel included, and are valued in the work context (e.g., Hofhuis et al., 2012).

The study of diversity perspectives has also given rise to more inductive frameworks that provide insights in the different specific motivations or rationales that organizations may have for initiating diversity management practices. These are often linked to observed or expected outcomes of diversity by asking questions such as “Why does our organization aim to diversify its workforce?” or “What is the added value of diversity in our organization?” Most of these complex frameworks mention potential positive outcomes of workplace diversity, such as increased innovation or a better organizational reputation (e.g., Ely & Thomas, 2001), but they may also include negative diversity outcomes (Hofhuis et al., 2015). For example, organizations may resist diversity because of perceived threats to productivity, or because of employees' anxiety of having to work with colleagues with a different cultural background (Podsiadlowski et al., 2013; Thomas & Plaut, 2008). Finally, although the different frameworks presented in this chapter may have different theoretical underpinnings, in practice they are closely connected and thus often conflated. In this chapter, we recognize the substantial overlap between the perspectives, but we identify key empirical findings that have been related to each framework and examine their effects on intercultural communication and diversity outcomes separately.

One-Dimensional Frameworks

The simplest and most straightforward way to examine diversity perspectives in the organizational context is through one-dimensional frameworks, which place individuals, teams, or organizations on a spectrum, usually ranging from positive to negative attitudes. An early example is the Attitudes Toward Diversity Scale (ATDS), which was developed to measure how employees respond to the presence of minority members in the work context (Montei et al., 1996). Although it measures attitudes toward coworkers, supervisors, and decision-making separately, the construct itself is one-dimensional: low scorers report a more negative attitude toward diversity and high scorers report a positive attitude. A similar approach was taken by De Meuse and Hostager (2001), who developed the Reaction-to-Diversity Inventory to assess affective, cognitive, and behavioral attitudes toward workplace diversity based on lists of words with positive or negative associations. Similarly, Nakui et al. (2011) developed the Attitudes toward Diverse Workgroups Scale (ADWS) to measure whether respondents expect workgroup diversity to have positive or negative effects on job-related outcomes, thereby focusing explicitly on attitudes about the productive benefits of diversity. This latter approach can also be recognized in the broad range of studies that focus on Value-in-Diversity Beliefs (Van Knippenberg & Haslam, 2007), a construct that directly taps into the degree to which employees expect diversity to bring added value to their team or organization.

Most of the research that makes use of one-dimensional frameworks focuses on team processes and performance as the outcomes of interest. A number of studies shows that team diversity is more likely to have a favorable effect on performance when members' diversity attitudes are positive (e.g., Nakui et al., 2011; Van Knippenberg et al., 2013). It has also been reported that positive diversity attitudes may reduce intergroup bias and enhance intergroup contact (Kauff et al., 2021). Furthermore, organizations that have positive diversity attitudes may be more likely to hire and retain employees with minority backgrounds (Hofhuis, Van der Zee, & Otten, 2016). Studies that focus specifically on the effects of diversity attitudes on intercultural communication are scarcer. Some examples of such work have shown that when diversity is valued, work group communication is more likely to be characterized by openness and trust (Hofhuis, Van der Rijt, & Vlug, 2016) and may create the opportunity for (new) team members to share divergent opinions, thus enhancing employee voice (Zhan, 2023).

Taken together, these findings suggest that under the right conditions, fostering positive diversity attitudes and value-in-diversity beliefs may be beneficial to the way in which individuals with different backgrounds interact with each other in a work environment. However, recent work has also shown that adopting and promoting these perspectives, although well-intentioned, may not always be enough to reach desired diversity outcomes. For example, Trawalter et al. (2016) showed that high-status employees (such as those belonging to the socially dominant cultural group) may feel threatened by efforts to enhance cultural diversity. As a result, they may also resist the concept of value-in-diversity. Moreover, Georgeac and Rattan (2022) showed that value-in-diversity beliefs may make members of lower status groups more aware of their identity. Increasing the salience of a potentially stigmatized identity may in turn increase individuals' perceived pressure to conform to stereotypic norms about their group, termed stereotype threat. As such it has been suggested that promoting positive diversity attitudes and value-in-diversity beliefs may only be effective in enhancing outcomes under specific conditions, such as the presence of a strong diversity climate or clear diversity management policies (Ely & Thomas, 2020).

Two-Dimensional Frameworks

Although one-dimensional diversity perspectives can provide valuable information about the general attitudes or beliefs around diversity in organizations, they do not fully capture the nuances of organizational strategies and approaches to diversity. To fill this gap, two-dimensional frameworks have been constructed to shed light on some of the more complex diversity ideologies and beliefs that develop in and around the workplace.

Multicultural Versus Colorblind Perspectives

One of the most prominent two-dimensional frameworks distinguishes between multicultural and colorblind perspectives on diversity (Stevens et al., 2008), although other terms have been used to identify them, such as identity conscious and identity blind perspectives (Leslie et al., 2020). The latter terms reflect the fact that research on multicultural and colorblind perspectives is often theoretically grounded in Social Identity Theory (SIT; Tajfel & Turner, 1986). SIT posits that individuals have the tendency to categorize their social environment into groups based on presumed shared characteristics. People identify with in-groups that supposedly share their own characteristics, whereas individuals who are perceived as different are categorized as out-group members. This categorization provides a means of conceptualizing interpersonal and intergroup relations, and thus helps individuals to predict and give meaning to their social environment. However, the downside of social categorization is that it can lead to stereotypes and group representations that favor the in-group over the out-group. One of the basic premises of SIT is that people enhance their self-esteem through intergroup comparison, so they are therefore much more likely to ascribe positive attributes to their in-group and more negative attributes to out-groups. These attributes are subsequently associated with individuals who are perceived to be members of these groups, which in turn lead to out-group members being evaluated more negatively than in-group members, even when there is no objective basis for such evaluations. SIT is especially helpful in explaining some of the negative effects of diversity in organizations. Culture, race, and ethnicity are among the most prominent lines along which individuals categorize their social environment, as they are some of the most salient and deeply rooted social identities. As such, social identity processes can explain some of the negative effects of diversity on organizational outcomes and shed light on possible ways to minimize these effects (Van Knippenberg et al., 2004).

The multicultural (or identity conscious) perspective is characterized by an emphasis on the positive side of individual differences. People who hold this perspective explicitly recognize that diversity, in terms of culture, ethnicity, race, or any other social category, provides added value to society. Extending this view to the social identity paradigm, multiculturalists allow, or even encourage, minority members to identify with their own cultural in-group in the social context of the organization. This in turn creates a sense of belonging, which has been shown to enhance work outcomes (Komisarof, 2021). Further research has shown that multiculturalism indeed leads to more positive and secure identities and to greater openness to and acceptance of a wider range of opinions and behaviors (Verkuyten, 2006). The general consensus in the literature seems to be that multiculturalism is the preferred diversity perspective, because it is associated with more equitable and inclusive

organizations (e.g., Jansen et al., 2016), as well as opening up to the possibility for organizations to make use of the diverse experiences and viewpoints of their workforce (Zhan, 2023).

A possible downside of multiculturalism, however, is that the side-by-side existence of many group identities complicates social interactions and may cause prejudice and conflict (Van Knippenberg et al., 2004). Research in the SIT paradigm shows that individuals may find it difficult, or even uncomfortable, to work together with others who are considered to be out-group members, such as those with a migration background (Stephan & Stephan, 2000). Furthermore, as we have seen recently in many Western societies, members of high-status groups may view multiculturalism as a threat to the dominant culture (e.g., Gorodzeisky & Semyonov, 2016). Such identity threat may lead to frustration and increased prejudice toward one's presumed out-groups, especially within organizations that promote a multicultural perspective (Thomas & Plaut, 2008; Van Knippenberg et al., 2004). In sum, organizations that follow the multicultural perspective are well-placed to harness the benefits of workplace diversity by allowing employees to be themselves and identify with their own in-group. However, these benefits are only possible when employees manage to overcome some of the negative effects of diversity, such as stereotyping, prejudice, and in-group bias (see also Hofhuis et al., 2012).

In contrast, the colorblind (or identity blind) perspective is based on the idea that it is more beneficial for the organization to downplay differences between employees. From a colorblind viewpoint, it is important to reduce minority members' identification with their in-groups in favor of an overarching identity, such as a work group or organization (Jansen et al., 2016; Stevens et al., 2008). When communicating colorblindness, organizations tend to frame the concept in terms of equality and meritocracy (Markus et al., 2000; Sommier et al., 2019). This frame can be recognized in statements such as “employees are evaluated purely based on their competences and work ethic, not on culture, race, ethnicity, or other characteristics.” In this way, advocates of colorblind ideology claim neutrality or objectiveness toward differences, focusing on similarity and cohesion. However, other scholars have argued that colorblind ideology constitutes a denial of the complexity of a diverse social environment (Markus et al., 2000) and is, therefore, ignoring difference. Scholars have criticized the argument that the colorblind perspective is neutral and objective (e.g., Cho et al., 2018). The intention to only evaluate employees based on merits does not take into account that the norms and values of an organizational culture, including criteria for evaluation, are often derived from the norms and values of the dominant (often majority) cultural group. Members of high-status groups, as explained by SIT, are likely to rate the prototypical characteristics of their in-group more favorably than those associated with out-groups. Members of low-status or minority groups may thus be evaluated less positive by their majority peers or supervisors, based only on their perceived out-group membership. As a result, even though it is often formulated in terms of equality and fairness, colorblindness has been shown to be

related to unequal treatment, bias, and feelings of exclusion among lower status groups (Jansen et al., 2016; Richeson & Nussbaum, 2004).

Evidence suggests that members of low-status groups generally are more supportive of a multicultural approach and less supportive of the colorblind perspective (e.g., Cho et al., 2018). As explained above, although the colorblind perspective is based on the ideal of treating all people the same, minority members appear to view it as neither colorblind nor color neutral, but instead as exclusionary (Jansen et al., 2016; Stevens et al., 2008). The colorblind perspective implicitly downplays the importance of cultural identification and openness to diversity, which may lead to a decreased sense of inclusion and belonging (Hofhuis, Van der Rijt, & Vlug, 2016). The threat to their in-group identity, as well as a lack of room for cultural maintenance, has been associated with lower well-being among minority groups (Dover et al., 2016; Jansen et al., 2016). Furthermore, when minority members perceive a devaluation of cultural or ethnic differences, frustration, dissatisfaction, and conflict are more likely to occur (Hofhuis et al., 2012). As a result, the colorblind ideology, although grounded in rhetoric of equality, often ends up protecting the existing status quo of group hierarchies.

In sum, the multicultural perspective has been shown to enhance openness toward and appreciation of cultural difference in the work environment, especially among members of traditional low-status groups (Cho et al., 2018; Jansen et al., 2016). On the other hand, the colorblind perspective appears to reduce opportunities for inclusion and may have a negative impact on intercultural communication and diversity outcomes (Dover et al., 2016; Richeson & Nussbaum, 2004).

Business Case Versus Moral Perspectives

A different two-dimensional approach that has gained traction among organizational scholars distinguishes between business case versus moral perspectives on diversity that may exist within organizations (see Van Dijk et al., 2012 for an extensive literature review). The business case perspective departs from the abovementioned notion that diversity may lead teams or organizations to be more productive. In organizations that adapt this perspective, diversity is approached as utilitarian, mainly with the goal to enhance profitability. The positive effects of diversity on performance are often explained through the information-elaboration paradigm (see Van Knippenberg et al., 2004), which states that in a diverse work environment, a greater pool of knowledge and experiences is available, which, if leveraged effectively, may help organizations reach better problem-solving capabilities. Indeed, a growing body of research shows that diversity may have positive effects on the creativity, flexibility, decision-making, productivity, and performance of work groups or organizations (see Homan, 2019 for a review).

At the same time, a growing group of scholars has taken a more critical approach to this utilitarian rationale for pursuing diversity management. Scholars in the critical paradigm embrace the perspective that we have a moral obligation to reduce power inequalities between low- and high-status groups in society and that organizations should pursue diversity policies to empower members of nondominant groups, reduce these structural inequalities, and promote inclusion. The moral perspective, therefore, is grounded in the notion that, by promoting diversity, an organization aims to be a socially responsible institution, providing equal opportunities to all groups and trying to reduce prejudice and discrimination (Janssens & Zanoni, 2021). The moral perspective can be recognized in many types of organizational communications, such as job advertisements, annual reports, or diversity statements, in which organizations explain that they aim to promote fairness, equality, and inclusiveness, are actively fighting against bias and discrimination, and are willing to publicly support the cause of social justice (Hofhuis et al., 2023; Jansen et al., 2021).

The business case and moral perspectives are often thought to be opposed, and they may be difficult to integrate within one organization. However, research also shows that organizations that employ the moral perspective do not always do so with the sole motivation to inspire social change or for the normative purpose of “doing good.” They may also be motivated through external legal or regulatory incentives, with the goal of generating a positive impact on the organization's reputation and/or avoiding litigation (Bear et al., 2010; Podsiadlowski & Reichel, 2013).

Conversely, organizations that focus on a business case perspective may choose to do so because it can convince managers and other stakeholders of the importance of diversity management. For example, interviews with managers in UK organizations by Tomlinson and Schwabenland (2010) revealed that the business case perspective is associated with proactive diversity policies because it provides a rationale for managers to act to promote inclusion. In the views of the interviewees, if the prevailing opinion is that it is not the organization's responsibility to enhance social justice in society, diversity policy must be justified by economic benefit. Providing a strong business case, therefore, may convince decision-makers to implement the policies that proponents of the moral perspective are calling for.

In other situations, this strategy may backfire, as was revealed in a study of public and private organizations in the Netherlands (Jansen et al., 2021). The authors provided evidence that in external communication, public organizations without a profit incentive are more likely to mention moral perspectives on diversity. When a public sector organization, such as a municipal government, communicates a business case perspective instead of a moral perspective in its diversity statement, it is perceived as less moral and, indirectly, also less attractive, because public organizations are expected to approach diversity as a way to enhance social justice, not to enhance profitability.

In sum, the distinction between moral and business case perspectives is not as clear as is often presented, and efforts have been made to integrate them (e.g., Van Dijk et al., 2012). As such, we can state that business case and moral perspectives on diversity can have both positive and negative effects on diversity outcomes, and that these effects may be contingent on characteristics of the workplace itself, such as its diversity climate or the degree of actual diversity among employees (Ely & Thomas, 2020), as well as on the wider context in which the organization operates, including its public reputation and the overall goals of the organization (Hofhuis, 2022; Jansen et al., 2021).

Multidimensional Frameworks

As explained above, the study of diversity perspectives has given rise to one-dimensional as well as two-dimensional frameworks that compare and contrast how individuals and organizations respond to diversity challenges. However, the issues are generally more nuanced and intertwined than a simple one- or two-dimensional framework can capture. As a result, a number of scholars have taken a more inductive approach to identifying organizational diversity perspectives. By conducting exploratory research within different organizational contexts, multidimensional frameworks have emerged that capture more of the complexities of how diversity perspectives are represented in organizational practice.

Further Clarifying the Business Case

The most widely used example of a multidimensional framework was developed by Ely and Thomas (2001) in a qualitative study among a sample of American organizations. These researchers identified three specific perspectives which organizations may adopt in their drive toward diversity: discrimination-and-fairness, access-and-legitimacy, and integration-and-learning, also referred to as the moral, market, and innovation perspectives, which is the terminology that we will use here (see also Hofhuis et al., 2023).

The first perspective in Ely and Thomas' (2001) framework is the moral perspective, already mentioned in the previous section, which reflects the idea that enhancing cultural diversity in the workplace is an ethical or moral obligation that organizations have within society. Next, they formulated two additional perspectives, both of which encompass a rationale for why diversity may lead to higher organizational productivity. As such, both are closely related to the abovementioned business case perspective. The market perspective stems from the recognition that most organizations operate in a society or market that is inherently culturally diverse. Hence, having a diverse workforce is a valuable tool for gaining knowledge about, and access to, different groups of stakeholders. An example is a supermarket in a culturally diverse neighborhood, which matches the cultural

backgrounds of its employees with those of its customers to provide the best service. The market perspective can also be applied to other types of organizations: a governmental organization must have a diverse workforce in order to understand and meet the needs of different groups within the society it serves, and a health care provider must be able to communicate effectively about health-related issues in terms that all groups in society are able to comprehend. In sum, the market perspective reflects an organizations' desire to have all societal groups represented within the workforce to foster a better connection between the organization and the community and/or society it operates in.

Finally, the innovation perspective reflects the idea that cultural diversity may have direct benefits for internal processes within the organization, such as increased learning potential and innovation. According to Ely and Thomas (2001, p. 240) the “insights, skills and experiences employees have developed as members of various cultural identity groups are potentially valuable resources that the work group can use to rethink its primary tasks.” This idea is closely aligned with the information-elaboration paradigm explained above (Van Knippenberg et al., 2004), in which team diversity is seen as a way to enhance decision-making and creativity in teams. Diverse teams have a larger pool of knowledge and experiences to draw from, which is a valuable tool for solving complex problems and generating new innovative ideas (Homan, 2019; Nakui et al., 2011).

Including Negative Perspectives

In response to Thomas and Ely's framework, scholars have investigated whether there may be other relevant distinctions between perspectives that could help explain the divergent effects of diversity policy and attitudes on diversity outcomes. One common critique of Thomas and Ely is that they only studied reasons why organizations may want to adopt diversity, without considering potential reasons why they would not want to. Dass and Parker's (1999) study was one of the first to include a negative perspective, termed the resistance perspective, where an increase in an outside demand for diversity is viewed as irrelevant or even as a threat to the company. According to the authors, this perspective may be present in organizations that are relatively homogeneous, and in which employees may feel uncomfortable working together with others with a different background because of a sense of anxiety or subjective perceptions of threat (Stephan & Stephan, 2000). They explained that the resistance perspective may also be appropriate in cases where the context makes the incentives for increasing diversity very low. For example, religious organizations are very unlikely to hire priests from a different religion. The resistance perspective may also occur in organizations that operate in homogeneous societies, where hiring staff with a different cultural background is very difficult or impractical.

A further contribution to the literature on negative perspectives of diversity was made by Podsiadlowski et al. (2013), who inductively established organizational motives for and against

pursuing diversity among a sample of organizations in Austria. They subsequently developed and tested a standardized questionnaire to measure these motives. In their work, they expanded the taxonomy of diversity perspectives to five. First, in line with Dass and Parker (1999), their reinforcing homogeneity perspective described an organizations' intent to avoid or even reject a diverse workforce. Organizations that employ this perspective not only ignore potential differences between employees but reject diversity in favor of a homogeneous workforce. According to the authors, the tendency to drive out diversity can be explicit or implicit, by using selection and promotion criteria that are ascribed only to people belonging to the dominant cultural group, such as local business knowledge, access to networks, and experience, thus raising barriers to employment for nondominant group members (Podsiadlowski et al., 2013).

Next, Podsiadlowski et al. (2013) argued that the moral perspective should be divided into two: a colorblind perspective and a fairness perspective, where the former is in line with the description of the colorblind approach outlined previously, and the latter is more aligned with the moral perspective also described above. Both perspectives emphasize the importance of ensuring equal and fair treatment and avoiding discriminatory practices, but they are different in their reasons for doing so. Colorblindness focuses on equal employment opportunities without acknowledging differences among the people being hired, whereas fairness ensures equal and fair treatment by addressing the need for specific support for low-status groups to reduce social inequalities. Finally, the last two perspectives in Podsiadlowski et al.'s work (2013) focus on the business case of diversity. Their access perspective aligns with the market perspectives described earlier, and their integration-and-learning perspective aligns with the previously detailed innovation perspective.

Comparing Positive and Negative Perspectives

The last framework of organizational diversity perspectives discussed in this chapter is the taxonomy used in the Benefits and Threats of Diversity Scale (BTDS; Hofhuis et al., 2015). In this work, an exploratory interview study was conducted among middle managers in public service organizations in the Netherlands, in which they were asked to list expectations regarding cultural diversity outcomes in their daily work. Five positive and four negative diversity outcomes were extracted, which were subsequently developed into a questionnaire.

Measures for five positive outcomes of cultural diversity are included in the BTDS. Image of social responsibility reflects the attitude that cultural diversity in the workplace leads to a positive image of the organization regarding its social responsibility and attention to equal opportunities. Job market concerns the benefits of cultural diversity for an organization's position regarding recruitment and retention of employees. Social environment focuses on the attitude that having different cultural

groups in a department is fun and leads to a more inspiring and comfortable work environment. Understanding groups in society addresses the ability of diverse organizations to gain insight about and access to different groups within society to better understand stakeholders and markets. Creative potential is the notion that cultural diversity leads to more effective idea generation, increasing learning opportunities, knowledge sharing, and problem-solving potential of teams.

Four perceived threats of cultural diversity were included in the BTDS; they were categorized by using dimensions from Intergroup Threat Theory (Stephan & Stephan, 2000). Realistic threat addresses the perceived threat to individuals' careers, power, or status within an organization. Symbolic threat reflects the notion that established beliefs, values, and symbols within the organization are threatened as a result of incorporating different cultures in the workplace. Intergroup anxiety is a sense of fear or insecurity resulting from (anticipated) interactions with members of different cultures, which could potentially lead to miscommunication, embarrassment, or conflict. Finally, productivity loss refers to the perceived threat to the quality of the work of a team or department due to language problems, possible tensions between colleagues, or the sense that culturally diverse teams are more difficult to manage.

Since its development, the BTDS has been successfully used in various countries and contexts. For example, a study in Japan showed that employees who have experience abroad display higher scores on the benefits-scales of the BTDS, which in turn facilitates diversity management and fosters inclusion (Orsini, 2020). In the Netherlands, the BTDS was used to show how perspectives of public service employees align over time with broader societal attitudes regarding diversity (Hofhuis, 2022), especially the increase in recognition of the business case for diversity. In the previously discussed work by Podsiadlowski et al. (2013), the threat subscales of the BTDS were reported to correlate with colorblindness, whereas the benefit subscales were shown to relate to the business case perspectives, which confirm that the BTDS aligns with previous frameworks while adding a more nuanced view on the precise outcomes that respondents associate with diversity.

In sum, multidimensional frameworks of diversity perspectives help scholars understand the finer aspects of how diversity is viewed within organizations. They allow for an examination and comparison of different positive and negative perceptions of diversity outcomes, which can help scholars as well as practitioners identify where potential diversity resistance may originate, and how to design policies and interventions that may enhance intercultural communication and workplace inclusion.

Future Research Directions

The one-dimensional, two-dimensional, and multidimensional frameworks for studying diversity perspectives in organizations all have specific uses that depend on the societal, organizational, and methodological context of the work for which they are used. However, when we generalize across the different frameworks, various knowledge gaps can be identified that may help us give directions for future research on diversity perspectives.

First, as may have become apparent from the overview presented above, nearly all widely used frameworks for studying diversity perspectives have been developed from a Western viewpoint. Whereas the general literature on workplace diversity is predominantly based on North American and European contexts (Plaut, 2010), an increasing number of studies is being published that examine workplace diversity in other parts of the globe (Nkomo et al., 2015). The same cannot be said about the diversity perspective literature, where studies conducted in non-Western contexts are still exceedingly rare and tend to adopt Western frameworks. Because we cannot assume that the components of diversity perspectives and links with organizational diversity outcomes are universal, it is of vital importance to this field of research to expand its horizons, to develop and test frameworks in different cultural contexts, as well as in multinational or global organizations in which employees with different cultural backgrounds interact within the same work environment.

A second opportunity for future research stems from the fact that the majority of studies in the field of diversity perspectives focus on cultural, ethnic, or racial diversity. Although studies on other demographic characteristics such as gender, LHBTQ+ or age have been conducted, future scholars should investigate whether the frameworks mentioned above also apply to studying these and other types of diversity. For example, such investigations would shed light on the question whether individuals respond differently to organizational policies and communications regarding different diversity dimensions. Moreover, it would allow us to examine whether the same type of diversity perspective would be effective in promoting or managing different dimensions of diversity. Furthermore, in a world of complex identities and an increasing focus on intersectionality, it is important that scholars examine the combination of, and interplay between, various diversity dimensions in the organizational context. For example, it would be relevant to understand how diversity perspectives may have a unique impact on women of color or on LHBTQ+ employees with a migration background. We hope that future scholars will be able to use existing diversity frameworks outlined here as a starting point for conducting such work.

A major limitation of the literature presented in this chapter is the lack of diversity in research methods that are used to investigate diversity perspectives and how they relate to intercultural communication and diversity outcomes. Most of the work cited above makes use of traditional

methods that are common in social and organizational sciences. Some studies used a qualitative approach, employing interviews with employees or other stakeholders (Ely & Thomas, 2001; Tomlinson & Schwabenland, 2010). Other studies used a quantitative approach such as distributing surveys among employees (Jansen et al., 2016). There are also a number of experimental studies that provide knowledge of how individuals respond to different kinds of diversity perspectives in organizational communication (Dover et al., 2016) or respond to being primed toward positive or negative diversity attitudes (Hofhuis, Van der Zee, & Otten, 2016). In some cases, a multimethod approach was employed where qualitative and quantitative studies are used in sequence to develop a framework, which is followed up by the construction and validation of a scale (Hofhuis et al., 2015; Podsiadlowski et al., 2013). However, scholars have been calling for a paradigm shift in research on organizational diversity, away from perception-based research, as described above, and toward examining real-life, nonobtrusive data. Recent work has answered this call by examining how diversity perspectives can be represented in traditional as well as digital media (Sommier et al., 2019), or in organizational communications such as websites (Jansen et al., 2021), social media posts (Zhou, 2021), or annual reports (Hofhuis et al., 2023). A particularly promising development in this field is the rise of computational research methods, such as automated content analysis, that allow scholars to analyze large amounts of real-life organizational data without the need for manual coding. For examples of such studies and suggestions on how these tools can be used to advance the field of diversity perspectives, please see work by Zhou (2021) and Hofhuis et al. (2023, 2024)

Finally, a very important omission in the current literature on diversity perspectives and how they affect intercultural communication and diversity outcomes is the influence of time. Although research on constructs such as value-in-diversity and the moral perspective on diversity have been around since the end of the last century, the question of how these perspectives evolve longitudinally, across and within organizations, is rarely asked. A few studies have suggested that moral perspectives on diversity were the first to gain traction in organizations and that business case and value-in-diversity perspectives have slowly gained ground (Hofhuis, 2022; Hofhuis et al., 2023). However, recent developments around the Black Lives Matter movement and a rise in critical approaches such as critical race theory have also increased public awareness of moral approaches to workplace diversity, especially in Western societies (Ely & Thomas, 2020; Janssens & Zanoni, 2021). The abovementioned computational research methods may be a promising way to examine such trends and development due to their ability to examine large amounts of data from different points in time.

Conclusion

The aim of this chapter has been to provide an overview of different types of frameworks that have been developed to examine diversity perspectives in organizations and how they may relate to intercultural communication and diversity outcomes. We have described one-dimensional frameworks, which allow scholars to place individuals, teams, or organizations on a spectrum, ranging from positive to negative diversity attitudes. However, such frameworks have fallen short in capturing the full range of divergent ideologies and cognitions around the complex topic of workplace diversity. We also described two specific two-dimensional frameworks, which may help us make sense of some of the conflicting and paradoxical information that is available on how to approach workplace diversity and how to effectively manage it. Finally, we provided a brief overview of some of the existing multidimensional frameworks on diversity perspectives that have been developed to capture the more nuanced approaches that organizations may employ.

Knowledge about which diversity perspectives are held by employees and managers at different levels in the organization may be one of the key factors that can influence the effectiveness of diversity management strategies. When a proposed diversity policy or intervention does not align with the prevailing perspective in the organization it is likely to do more harm than good by increasing diversity resistance among employees and fostering a sense of threat (Stephan & Stephan, 2000; Thomas & Plaut, 2008). Conversely, when diversity management aligns well with the perspectives within the organization, they may strengthen each other and, as such, enhance the success rate of policies and interventions. Those who are tasked with designing and implementing diversity policy in their organization, therefore, would benefit from choosing one of the frameworks described above, measuring the attitudes and beliefs that are present among the workforce, and using that information to formulate a fitting diversity management strategy.

In sum, we can conclude that the topic of diversity perspectives has generated a growing body of literature that show different motivations, rationales, and strategies that exist within organizations regarding how to deal with employees with various cultural, ethnic, and racial backgrounds. Furthermore, this work has provided empirical evidence that diversity perspectives are an important factor in determining the way in which individuals interact with each other in the workplace and the degree to which every employee may feel included. As such, diversity perspectives are an essential predictor of the effectiveness of organizational diversity management.

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