CHAPTER 25

# Diversity in Organizations

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## DIVERSITY IN ORGANIZATIONS

The nearly 10 years following Alderfer and Sims's (2003) *Handbook of Psychology* chapter on workforce diversity have produced a bounty of research on diversity-related issues in organizations. In fact, a cursory search for diversity-related articles published in just eight of the most influential organizational journals (i.e., *Journal of Academy of Management, Academy of Management Review, Journal of Applied Psychology, Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes, Journal of Management, Journal of Vocational Behavior, Personnel Psychology*) from 2003 to the present reveals more than 250 articles. In the current chapter, we attempt to summarize and highlight several key themes and contributions of this burgeoning body of diversity research.

To do this, we first begin by defining some of the most basic constructs needed to understand the diversity literature. Such a discussion also includes a consideration of the benefits and challenges to conducting diversity-related research. Second, we attempt to update Alderfer and Sim's chapter by describing how the past 8 years of research has been guided by some of the theories that Alderfer and Sim's earlier outlined. We also add to this review some of the new theoretical insights that have guided or seem very likely to guide future diversity-related research. Third, we pose four research questions related to diversity that we believe address particularly salient and hot topics that have been the focus of a good deal of recent organizational research on diversity. For each of these issues, we not only describe the state of research and what has been done, but we also make recommendations for future research on these four topics. Finally, we draw some conclusions about the literature and make some more general speculations about how researchers might advance our theoretical knowledge and practical applications of organizational diversity in the years to come.

### Basic Concepts and Issues in Studying Diversity in Organizations

Continued and dramatic projections in the growth of diversity in the U.S. workforce and beyond are ubiquitous (see Toossi, 2002). But what is meant by the construct of "diversity" itself? How do we measure it? And what are the benefits and drawbacks to diversity within organizational settings? We begin our chapter by reviewing definitional and other very basic issues influencing diversity research. Many of these issues—even basic definitional ones—can become contentious, so we begin by informing the reader of some basic diversity-related concepts, challenges, and controversies in examining diversity in organizations.

#### *Definitions of* Diversity

When most people think about diversity, they typically think first and foremost about race and then gender-related issues. In fact, the Merriam Webster dictionary defines *diversity* as "the inclusion of different types of people (as people of different races or cultures) in a group or organization." Others begin with a much more inclusive approach to defining diversity and include, in their definitions of diversity, the inclusion of, tolerance of, and/or respect for



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others based on variations in age, attitudes and values, ethnicity, gender, physical abilities, educational background, personality, political beliefs, race, religious beliefs, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, tenure, and weight (e.g., Harrison, Price, Gavin, & Florey, 2002; University of Oregon, 2011; Williams & O'Reilly, 1998).

Definitions of diversity are not without points of debate. One such debate involves the legitimacy of even including, tolerating, or respecting certain types of diversity. For instance, many people blatantly oppose variations from heterosexuality and it is legal in many contexts to discriminate on the basis of sexual orientation and encourage such discrimination at an institutional level. Another argument focuses on the fact that not all groups are valued equally for their diversity and inter- and intra-differences in these valuations often emerge (Avery & Johnson, 2007; Hernandez, 2007; Schaerer, 2010). For instance, the Model Minority Phenomenon suggests that being Asian counts for little when considering the diversity of an organization because Asian Americans are too successful to be characterized as disadvantaged (see Cheng, 1997). Moreover, people debate whether the call for increased racial diversity within U.S. organizations can be achieved successfully by importing racially diverse immigrants. Addressing the need for diversity in academia, Tapia (2007) argues that "true diversity doesn't come from abroad" and that the creation of diversity in academies should have little to do with hiring international scholars.

To categorize diversity in meaningful ways, researchers have distinguished between surface- versus deep-level diversity (see Harrison, Price, & Bell, 1998; Milliken & Martins, 1996; see also de Chermont, 2003; 2008). Surface-level characteristics are those that are quickly apparent to interactants, such as race, gender, and age. These characteristics also are generally unchangeable and measured in very easy, accurate ways. Deep-level characteristics are those that take time to emerge in interactions, such as attitudes, opinions, and values. These characteristics tend to be more mutable, and are measured through verbal and nonverbal behavioral patterns. It is important to note that surface- and deep-level characteristics are not necessarily congruent and may result, instead, in collisions or incongruencies; that is, two Hispanic men may have very different attitudes on political issues (see Phillips & Loyd, 2006). Moreover, people who look very different on surface characteristics (i.e., a man and a woman) may hold very congruent deep-level characteristics (i.e., values about equality or about politics).

For the purpose of the current chapter, we mostly discuss diversity in terms of surface-level characteristics and summarize the research that has been done on differing dimensions of age, ethnicity, gender, height, physical disabilities, race, religious beliefs, sexual orientation, and weight. We are not trying to be exclusive of any additional feature and believe that our theoretical discussions and research questions have implications for all forms, whether surface or deep, of diversity.

Beyond the type of diversity, there are a number of issues concerning how diversity should be measured. For instance, a researcher interested in gender diversity could use the proportion of men or women in the unit, Blau's index of heterogeneity, or the average Euclidean distance on gender for members of the work unit (Williams & Mean, 2004). This diversity in ways of conceptualizing diversity recently led Harrison and Klein (2007) to consider the implications of scholars' decisions concerning the choice of measurement. They determined that diversity measures can take one of three forms: separation, variety, or disparity. Separation pertains to the average distance between group members on a given characteristic and is typically measured using the standard deviation for continuous variables (e.g., age) and average Euclidean distance for categorical variables (e.g., race). Variety captures the quantity of different categories of a characteristic represented within a group and is most commonly represented with Blau's index of heterogeneity. Disparity looks at inequality of a distribution and has rarely been examined in the diversity literature. Though we often discuss research employing variety or separation approaches interchangeably, or without explicitly acknowledging the particular approach utilized, it is important to recognize that the type of measurement can have important theoretical and empirical consequences (Bell, Villado, Lukasik, Belau, & Briggs, in press; Harrison & Klein, 2007).

### *Need for Methodological Diversity*

After a researcher has determined what type of diversity to study and how to conceptualize it, another important decision involves how to best address and answer the research question. As one might expect from scholars of diversity, the literature contains considerable variety in the samples and settings utilized to test their theories and hypotheses about diversity and its effects. That said, there is a rather significant range restriction concerning the methodologies employed within these studies. Most studies employ survey data that are often self-report in nature. In fact, we could find only two qualitative studies on diversity (Gibson & Gibbs, 2006; Roberson & Stevens, 2006) appearing in the outlets we reviewed over the

past 8 years. Moreover, the number of simulation studies focusing on diversity was not much greater (Allen, Stanley, Williams, & Ross, 2007; Finch, Edwards, & Wallace, 2009; Newman & Lyon, 2009; Roth, Bobko, & Switzer, 2006; Tonidandel, Avery, Bucholtz, & McKay, 2008). To provide some context, contrast this with the fact that there were *at least* 10 diversity meta-analyses published during this period.

One benefit of methodological diversity is that it allows for better triangulation, which simply means that studying phenomena of interest from multiple perspectives helps to provide a more comprehensive understanding (Jick, 1979; see also Leslie, King, Bradley, & Hebl, 2008). If the conclusions drawn from the differing methods converge, the field can have greater confidence in the validity of those results and view the relationships of interest as relatively robust. What is perhaps more intriguing, however, is when conclusions drawn from differing methodologies diverge (see Hebl & Dovidio, 2005). In such instances, the conflicting findings highlight needs for future research and often indicate that seemingly straightforward processes are more complex than they might appear.

Only a few recent diversity articles appearing in the top outlets have employed the strategy of triangulation by combining multiple studies involving differing, yet complementary, methodologies. For instance, Gibson and Gibbs (2006) utilized interviews (study 1) and team-level survey data (study 2) to shed light on how virtual work arrangements, which included nationality diversity, influence team innovation. Hebl, King, Glick, Singletary, and Kazama (2007) conducted a field study as well as a laboratory experiment to show how pregnant customers and job applicants are treated. The results suggest a system of complementary rewards and punishments that discourage women from pursuing work (gender incongruent) but encourage them to shop (gender congruent). Subsequently, Johnson, Murphy, Zewdie, and Reichard (2008) examined people's cognitive associations between gender and leadership using survey, experimental, and qualitative data. Their results produced several informative conclusions regarding differences in the ways that men and women view leadership in general and male and female leaders in particular. In another example, Leslie and Gelfand (2008) combined a lab experiment and field data to determine that individuals are more likely to handle a discrimination claim within their organization if they perceive the company's diversity climate favorably. Moreover, King and Ahmad (2010) also combined lab and field study data to show that Muslim job applicants face challenges when they seek employment. Unfortunately, however, it is clear that these studies are more the exception than the norm within the literature.

We strongly encourage diversity researchers to employ atypical methodological strategies to provide greater triangulation within the literature. For instance, simulation studies can prove quite useful in developing or refining constructs to measure diversity or related constructs within groups (Martell, Lane, & Emrich, 1996; Tonidandel et al., 2008). Such studies also adeptly illustrate how commonly employed human resource practices might impact the level of diversity within an organization (Finch et al., 2009; Newman & Lyon, 2009; Roth et al., 2006). Alternative sampling strategies may prove necessary when studying traditionally underrepresented populations (e.g., disabled employees). In fact, researchers often need to oversample members of these groups, relative to their proportion in the population, to obtain sufficient power for comparative analysis investigating majority–minority differences. Moreover, snowball sampling (i.e., referral-based sampling) may be the only reasonable method in some instances for obtaining sufficiently large samples for statistical significance testing of certain populations that are hard to reach or even identify (e.g., gay, lesbian, transgendered, or biracial employees).

In accordance with encouraging researchers to be creative in designing their methodologies, we also implore editors and reviewers to be more receptive of nontraditional strategies. It is unrealistic to expect conventional methods that were designed to study a relatively narrow subset of the total working population (i.e., young, Christian, straight, White men) to prove equally effective in studying relatively neglected subsets of the broader population. Nevertheless, there are often biases in the publication process against research perceived to be nonconformist, particularly with respect to diversity (see Cox, 2004, for an excellent discussion of this topic). Thus, we urge those involved in the peer review process to consider projects on a case-by-case basis, paying particular attention to whether a particular methodology is appropriate in the given context (as opposed to whether they deem it a practical approach for conducting research in general). It is likely that the prospective costs associated with a particular method often will be outweighed by the insight the findings provide in filling a gap in the literature.

### *Benefits and Drawbacks of Diversity*

Having defined what it is, how it should be measured, and how it should be studied, it is important to briefly review why it is valuable to conduct research on diversity in the first place. For more than half a century, scholars

have studied the effects of diversity in teams and organizations. Despite the considerable volume of this literature, however, reviews (e.g., van Knippenberg & Schippers, 2007; Williams & O'Reilly, 1998) paint mostly a muddled picture riddled with positive, negative, and null effects. For instance, some research ties diversity to negative outcomes such as poorer communication, more negative attitudes, and greater conflict and withdrawal. Ostensibly, this occurs for two reasons. First, demographic differences may coincide with deeper level differences (e.g., attitudes, values, and beliefs) that lead people to disagree fundamentally, thereby promoting conflict. Second, demographic differences often enhance uncertainty about others, thereby making it more difficult to anticipate and interpret interpersonal communicative messages (for reviews, see Dovidio, Hebl, Richeson, & Shelton, 2006; Hebl et al., 2008).

On a more positive note, other studies illustrate potential benefits of diversity such as heighted creativity and decision making (van Knippenberg & Schippers, 2007). Such outcomes may be particularly okay when diversity in appearance coincides with diversity in perspective. Greater breadth of perspectives provides more range in the types of possible solutions generated when attempting to solve problems (i.e., greater creativity). In turn, having a broader array of implementable ideas may facilitate groups and organizations in arriving at higher quality decisions. Thus, it appears that diversity may hurt or hinder performance depending upon how it influences interpersonal dynamics within the unit.

Beyond these more direct ways that diversity influences group and organizational outcomes, there are more indirect associations as well. For instance, some individuals believe that organizations have a moral obligation not to discriminate on the basis of any non-job-related characteristics (Demuijnck, 2009). Though the pervasiveness of this belief is debatable, it appears that there are enough people, or enough of the right people, holding this viewpoint to influence key organizational outcomes. In fact, companies caught engaging in discrimination tend to experience declines in their stock price, whereas those receiving diversity commendation enjoy the opposite (Roberson & Park, 2007; Wright, Ferris, Hiller, & Kroll, 1995). The perceived premium for appearing diverse is so high that it often leads diverse organizations to flaunt it and those that are not to fake it (Bernardi, Bean, & Weippert, 2002; Conklin, 2001). Hence, it is clear that diversity can impact key organizational outcomes, which makes it an important topic to understand. Accordingly, we now turn our attention to the predominant theories in the diversity literature.

## DEFINING THEORIES THAT GUIDE DIVERSITY RESEARCH

One of the most significant contributions of Alderfer and Sims (2003) is the identification and discussion of theories that guide diversity research. In this chapter, we update their discussion of these theories and/or replace some of them with others we have found particularly useful or promising. The exclusion of earlier theories does not necessarily indicate that they are not still informing or guiding research; however, we simply do not have the space to cover each and every theory. Thus, we have chosen those we believe to be particularly informative, and these include: social identity theory, relational demography, categorization elaboration model, stigma theory, stereotype content model, lack-of-fit model, and social role theory. For each of these, we summarize the theory and add a discussion of the relevant research published since the appearance of Alderfer and Sims's chapter. We also discuss potential avenues for future research that we believe may be particularly compelling and fruitful.

### Social Identity Theory

According to social identity theory (SIT; Tajfel & Turner, 1985), individuals classify themselves and those they encounter on the basis of readily identifiable characteristics such as racioethnicity, sex, or age. The purpose of these classifications is to determine whether others belong to one's in-group (similar) or out-group (dissimilar). Because (a) individuals are motivated to feel positively about themselves and (b) the in-group is seen as an extension of the self, there is an inherent inclination to see the in-group in a favorable light. This tendency often results in forms of perceptual distortion wherein in-group member positives or out-group member negatives are exaggerated, which are known as favoritism and denigration, respectively.

Within organizations, one of the key issues relating to the theory pertains to the relative strength of an individual's multiple identities (Ashforth & Mael, 1989). People belong to any number of groups and membership in some groups will be more important to their self-concept than their membership in others. For instance, an employee simultaneously could be Hispanic, female, disabled, Catholic, and belong to a particular functional department and project team within the organization. These various identities can create competing priorities if efforts to affirm one's identity come at the potential expense of

another (e.g., working for an organization that discriminates against women). Thus, organizations commonly seek to maximize employees' identification with the organization, thereby ensuring that affective commitment and all of its positive consequences are optimized.

Diversity researchers have employed SIT as a theoretical mechanism to help explain several organizational processes. For instance, recent scholarship (e.g., Homan et al., 2008; Shteynberg, Leslie, Knight, & Mayer, 2010; Swann, Polzer, Seyle, & Ko, 2004) suggests individuals may either support or oppose organizational diversity or policies associated with it, such as affirmative action, depending on whether they see them as consistent or inconsistent with their salient group identities. Within work groups, both individuals and their groups perform better when members recognize and confirm one another's valued social identities (Milton & Westphal, 2005; Swann et al., 2004; Thatcher & Greer, 2008). Likewise, recruitment researchers (e.g., Avery, 2003; Avery & McKay, 2006; Kim & Gelfand, 2003; McKay & Avery, 2006; Umphress, Smith-Crowe, Brief, Dietz, & Baskerville Watkins, 2007; Walker, Feild, Giles, Armenakis, & Bernerth, 2009) have shown that job applicants actively look for information signaling to them that a company's environment is likely to affirm their relevant social identities when pursuing employment opportunities. Thus, SIT has proven quite useful in helping researchers understand the effects of diversity in organizational settings.

Despite its utility in this regard, scholars continue to look for interesting ways of expanding SIT to make it more comprehensive in explaining diversity-related phenomena. One prime example of this type of extension involves the consideration of how individuals actively manage their multiple important identities simultaneously (Chattopadhyay, Tluchowska, & George, 2004; Hewlin, 2003, 2009; Roberts, 2005). For instance, what happens if an environment affirms one important identity while simultaneously threatening another? Another interesting example involves less readily detectable social identity markers such as religion or sexual orientation. Given that identity confirmation is beneficial to employees, but disclosure could result in discriminatory treatment, individuals with invisible identities face somewhat of a conundrum concerning whether to disclose this information. Some very interesting theoretical and empirical coverage (e.g., Clair, Beatty, & MacLean, 2005; Phillips, Rothbard, & Dumas, 2009; Ragins, Singh, & Cornwell, 2007) has examined the implications and limitations of SIT in these types of situations, fleshing out the nuances associated with the disclosure dilemma.

## Relational Demography

In the late 1980s, Tsui and O'Reilly (1989) developed a theoretical framework that incorporated and extended some of the tenets of SIT to integrate two streams of related work that were developing independently of one another. On the one hand, demography researchers focused on explaining how an organization's composition could influence individual and organizational behavior. On the other, more micro-diversity researchers devoted their attention to assessing how individual demographic characteristics influence people's organizational experiences. Relational demography sought to combine these two streams in the form of a person–situation interaction perspective. The basic notion entailed a contingency approach wherein the independent influence of a unit's demography and an individual's demographics were dependent on one another, with greater similarity between the two yielding more favorable outcomes.

Relational demography was initially proposed at the dyadic level of analysis and research continues to explore how supervisor–subordinate or rater–ratee similarity influences outcomes (e.g., McFarland, Ryan, Sacco, & Kriska, 2004; Sacco, Scheu, Ryan, & Schmitt, 2003; Shore, Cleveland, & Goldberg, 2003; Stauffer & Buckley, 2005). Nevertheless, scholars have extended the framework in a number of interesting ways. Evidence suggests that employees are less likely to perceive discriminatory treatment and more likely to feel supported when they are more demographically similar to their coworkers and supervisors (Avery, McKay, & Wilson, 2008; Bacharach, Bamberger, & Vashdi, 2005). Similarly, mistreatment in the form of demographic differences in pay disfavoring women and minorities tend to be smaller in units containing greater proportions of women and minorities, respectively (Joshi, Liao, & Jackson, 2006). These findings imply that employees often perceive more favorable treatment as the proportion of similar others in their surroundings increases, which could help to explain why individuals tend to identify more with and be less prone to leave groups containing greater proportions of in-group members (Chattopadhyay, George, & Lawrence, 2004; Hom, Roberson, & Ellis, 2008; Sacco & Schmitt, 2005).

One of the most promising recent extensions to relational demography involves the identification of boundary conditions to the effects of similarity in organizations. Essentially, if it is known that dissimilarity often proves detrimental to employees, it is especially important to ascertain what contextual characteristics heighten or diminish this occurrence. Along these lines, recent studies

have produced several key insights. For instance, organizational climate and culture appear to play a key role, as demographic dissimilarity's impact is less pronounced when organizational cultures emphasize collectivism or climates accentuate collegiality or support for diversity (Avery, McKay, Wilson, & Tonidandel, 2007; Bacharach et al., 2005; Chatman & Spataro, 2005; Gonzalez & DeNisi, 2009). Beyond the organization, an individual's residential context also appears pertinent as dissimilarity in one's neighborhood influences reactions to dissimilarity at work (Avery et al., 2008; Brief, Umphress, Dietz, Burrows, Butz, & Scholten, 2005). Moderators are also surfacing at the individual level (e.g., Stewart & Garcia-Prieto, 2008). Most notably, scholars continue to examine asymmetry within relational demography by exploring differences between majority and minority group member responses to demographic dissimilarity (Avery et al., 2007; Chatman, Boisnier, Spataro, Anderson, & Berdahl, 2008; Chatman & O'Reilly, 2004; Tonidandel et al., 2008). Additionally, evidence indicates that identity enhancement motives trump in-group favoritism when the two conflict, as similarity may not be viewed favorably if the similar others are perceived to reflect poorly on the in-group (Avery et al., 2007; Lewis & Sherman, 2003).

### Categorization–Elaboration Model

A more recent theoretical model, introduced by van Knippenberg, De Dreu, and Homan (2004), attempts to clarify the mediating mechanism between group-level diversity and performance. They purported that one reason diversity potentially enhances group functioning is that differences in identity often correspond to differences in perspectives. Based on this logic, heterogeneity within a team should enhance its access to a broader array of information. This information, in turn, should help to facilitate creativity and decision making, thereby increasing the team's productivity. Unfortunately, this process describes the ideal manner in which a team might function and their model suggests that the key to unlocking diversity's potential lies in helping groups ensure that the exchange of information between group members is as unencumbered as possible (see van Knippenberg & van Ginkel, 2010 for a more comprehensive discussion of the theory). As the preceding description suggests, the moderators of the diversity–information elaboration linkage are critical. Although the combination of moderation and mediation they proposed in their model was quite complex, one critical implication is that numerous contextual factors may help to determine whether diversity facilitates or impedes information elaboration.

Following the theory's introduction, several studies have identified variables influencing the amount of information elaboration that takes place within diverse teams. For instance, the presence of greater transformational leadership appears to enhance the favorability of the diversity–performance relationship by increasing the amount of elaboration within the group (Kearney & Gebert, 2009). Among group members themselves, it seems that characteristics such as diversity beliefs (i.e., inclinations regarding whether diversity helps or hinders groups), openness to experience, and need for cognition are important (Homan et al., 2008; Homan, van Knippenberg, Van Kleef, & De Dreu, 2007; Kearney, Gebert, & Voelpel, 2009). Specifically, diverse workgroups are better equipped to perform well when their members see diversity as a potential benefit, are receptive to new things, and are highly motivated to understand things they encounter.

In one particularly interesting study, Dahlin, Weingart, and Hinds (2005) tested some tenets of the information elaboration model in examining the linkage between team diversity (educational and national) and information usage. Specifically, they posited that diversity would influence the range, depth, and integration of information used by the group. Range pertains to the quantity of knowledge categories presented within the group (i.e., how many different things do they use?). Depth refers to the differentiation among the knowledge categories represented (i.e., how different from one another are the things they use?). Integration captures the extent to which the different knowledge sources are linked (i.e., how well do their different things fit together?). Their findings indicated that both types of diversity helped to increase information use, with moderate levels (relationships were inverted U-shaped curves) of educational and national diversity corresponding to the most range and depth. Nevertheless, integration was lowest when educational diversity was high and national diversity was moderate. Based on these findings, the authors concluded that "both types of diversity provided information-processing benefits that outweighed the limitations associated with social categorization processes" (p. 1107). Thus, it appears that most of the research investigating the elaboration model has proven fairly supportive. This suggests future research should continue to examine the ways that diversity influences the distribution and utilization of information in groups.

### Stigma Theory

Widely recognized at the forefront of stigma theory is Goffman (1963), who defined *stigma* as socially

constructed marks that deeply discredit, taint, and discount individuals. In his classic book, Goffman describes with very rich, poignant first-person accounts the social interactions that mar the lives of many different types of stigmatized individuals (e.g., eplileptics, stutterers, racial minorities). Goffman differentiated three categories of stigmas: aberrations of the body (e.g., physical disability, birthmarks), characterological flaws (e.g., drug addictions, mental illnesses), and "tribal stigmas" (e.g., ethnicity, nationalities, religious backgrounds). Not surprisingly, characteristics of diversity often serve as stigmas and cue the process of stigmatization—or stereotyping, prejudice, and discrimination. Consistent with this, sociologists Link and Phelan (2001) proposed in their definition of stigma theory that stigmatization occurs when five components converge. First, individuals label others based on salient cues. Second, the labeled differences get linked with stereotypes. Third, groups of individuals are separated into those who have the labeled differences ("they") and those who do not ("we"); (see also Allport, 1954). Fourth, emotional reactions are directed between these two groups of individuals. And fifth, status loss and discrimination occurs with those who are set apart as different.

Stigma theory consistently highlights the dynamic nature and how the process of what gets valued is negotiated within social interactions and social norms (Goffman, 1963; Jones et al., 1984). Thus, what is conceptualized as a stigma in one interaction could be viewed as an asset in another. Similarly, certain stigmas (e.g., homosexuality) may be activated in one setting (e.g., a fundamentalist church meeting) but not in another (a modern art show), and some physical environments (e.g., buildings without elevators) may increase the salience of a stigma (e.g., certain physical disabilities) in ways that other environments do not. The impact of a potential stigmatizing "mark" also is influenced substantially by personal, social, and cultural values (see Chao & Moon, 2005; Umphress, Simmons, Boswell, & Triana, 2008).

While all people experience limitations in certain contexts, Crocker, Major, and Steele (1998) suggest that stigmatized individuals are those individuals who experience stigmatization across a wide variety of social contexts. Such experiences are evident in the workplace, too, and recent organizational literature has compiled many studies indicating that diverse targets face workplace stereotypes (e.g., Heilman & Okimoto, 2007) and organizational discrimination (e.g., Judge & Cable, 2011; Madera, Hebl, & Martin, 2009) and that targets' organizational-related behaviors can be negatively affected through this discrimination (e.g., Brown & Day, 2006; Gupta, Turban, & Bhawe, 2008; Nguyen & Ryan, 2008; Shapiro, King, & Quinones, 2007; Singletary, 2009).

A great deal of research has been done on the perspective of the perceiver and the stigmatized target; however, the majority of this research focuses on attitudes and prejudice rather than discriminatory behaviors (see Fiske, 1998). To more completely understand the complexity of stigma, it is critical to understand both perceiver and stigmatized target together in actual behavioral interactions, and we promote future research that does this and looks at behaviors (see Hebl & Dovidio, 2005; Hebl et al., 2008). We also promote future research that more clearly links what the short- and long-term workplace implications are for those who experience repeated stigmatizing interactions. One recent topic that has emerged in the workplace literature is the notion that stigmas can influence not only targets but associates (i.e., coworkers, friends) of the targets as well (see Kulik, Bainbridge, & Cregan, 2008; Hebl & Mannix, 2003). The implications of carrying a courtesy stigma or being an ally in the workplace are prime areas for research. Finally, future stigma research might also investigate how stigmas play out on the Internet and/or in virtual interactions, which have been significantly proliferated due to the rise in social media (e.g., Facebook) that allows employers greater access to personal information about prospective and incumbent personnel.

### Stereotype Content Theory

At the foundation of the stigma construct are stereotypes, which have experienced significant theoretical development of their own. As described by the authors of the stereotype content model (Cuddy et al., 2009), psychology researchers have long noted that (a) humans have a need to belong (see Baumeister & Leary, 1995) and (b) there exist in almost every culture hierarchical differences in structure and competition for resources. From this, we note the strong need people have to respond to others on two basic dimensions that are aligned, socially desirable traits: warmth and competence (Cuddy, Fiske, & Glick, 2008). The first dimension (i.e., warmth) allows perceivers to accurately assess whether targets are "friends versus enemies" and the second (i.e., competence) allows targets to judge whether "they can effectively achieve things." Cuddy and colleagues (Cuddy et al., 2009; Cuddy, Fiske, & Glick, 2007; Fiske, Cuddy, Glick, & Xu, 2002; Fiske, Xu, Cuddy, & Glick, 1999) suggest that the two dimensions are orthogonal and can be placed on two continua to create four different categories. Thus, individuals can perceive targets to be low on both dimensions (e.g., the poor, homeless), high on both dimensions (e.g., the middle

class, Whites), high on competence but low on the warmth dimension (e.g., Asians, men), and low on competence but high on the warmth dimension (e.g., elderly, disabled). Reactions to those with mixed endpoints tend to be ambivalent.

Importantly, Fiske and colleagues suggest that a group's position within the two continua greatly influences resulting social structural variables. Those who are perceived to be in high- (versus low-) status groups tend to be imbued with more competence. In addition, those perceived to be in competition with one's own group are often associated with low warmth and low levels of liking. Where the particular stereotype falls along both of these dimensions (i.e., warmth and competence) is often associated with specific sets of emotional reactions such as prejudice, admiration, contempt, envy, and/or pity. The stereotype content model, therefore, is a theory that allows researchers to make predictions about responses to certain types of people. For instance, people may typically feel pity toward physically disabled and elderly individuals but feel envious prejudice toward White men and Asians (Lin, Kwan, Cheung, & Fiske, 2005).

The body of research elucidating the cross-cultural similarities predicted and found from the stereotype content model is impressive and is beginning to guide theory development and explain social and structural inequities within organizations as well as societies. For instance, recent research has shown how immigrants may be characterized as something between an in-group and out-group, but that this differs according to type of nationality, race, ethnicity, and class (Lee & Fiske, 2006). Such results may reveal why model minorities (i.e., Asians) often are judged more favorably than low-status clusters (i.e., Latinos, Mexicans, Africans), even when their credentials are exactly the same (King & Ahmad, 2010; King, Madera, Hebl, Knight, & Mendoza, 2006). Similarly, women tend to be viewed as either warm or competent, depending on whether they are stay-at-home mothers or professionals in the workforce (Cuddy, Fiske, & Glick, 2004). However, the stereotype content model also acknowledges that subgrouping among categories may occur and recent research has found that this can be true of a "top women leaders" category, in which women leaders who demonstrate their effectiveness are rated higher in communality, agency, and effectiveness than men (Rosette, & Tost, 2010).

Less work with the stereotype content model has looked at how stereotypes influence organizations and specifically how content might change longitudinally with coworker experiences, task interdependence, and different diversity ideologies (see Lee & Fiske, 2006; Plaut et al., 2009). Further development along these lines, as well as identification of additional means through which one can alter the content of the stereotypes one endorses, could prove beneficial to enhancing the experiences of employees in diverse settings.

### Social Role Theory

One theory that attempts to explain the origin of sex stereotypes was proposed by Eagly (1987). She suggested that gender differences arise because men and women are differentially distributed into societal positions. That is, men are overrepresented in leadership and power positions (i.e., managers, leaders, business owners), whereas women are overrepresented in caring and nurturing roles (i.e., nurses, secretaries, teachers). Because of these differences, Eagly argues, people come to associate different sets of personality traits and abilities with men (i.e., they are more autonomous, better at making decisions) and women (i.e., they are more empathic and better caretakers). The differentiation between these attributes is often described in terms of a division between communal (i.e., sensitive, nurturing, feminine) and agentic (assertive, dominant, independent, masculine) characteristics (Eagly, 1987; Eagly & Karau, 2002; Madera et al., 2009). These associations can become self-fulfilling prophecies whereby men and women do become differentiated in their abilities and preferences (see also Wood, Christensen, Hebl, & Rothgerber, 1997), and this is further compounded by the fact that the roles that they are filling require different sets of behaviors (i.e., nurses do care for others, CEOs do have to make important and powerful decisions). Thus, Eagly (1987) argues that it is the distribution of men and women into societal positions that creates the differences. Furthermore, the role incongruity of women in leadership positions leads to prejudice and decreased abilities for women to perform and succeed in leadership positions as easily and as well as do men (see Eagly & Karau, 2002).

Recent research casts some positive light on the limitations that role incongruities prescribe. Specifically, Rosette and Tost (2010) found that when top leaders are shown to have attained success that can *only* be attributed to them (and not other factors), female (vs. male) top leaders were rated significantly higher on all dimensions of communal, agentic, and effective characteristics. Thus, once women have incontestably achieved success at the top echelons of society, they are finally accorded more favorable perceptions than are men, but the problem remains how to get them there and help them succeed.

Social role theory can be adapted further to understand many different types of majority/minority inequities. That is, there are other very obvious differential distributions of stigmatized and nonstigmatized individuals into society as well as organizations. We urge diversity researchers to consider the proxies that masculinity and femininity might be playing as differences in status (see also Ridgeway, 2009), and that the same sort of differential distributions into societal roles capture differences in other diversity characteristics, such as race and ethnicity, age, religious beliefs, pregnancy and parenthood status, and size. Future research that considers organization inequality as a function of higher- (vs. lower-) status groups more generally (not just men) as having increased access to resources, status, and power may yield more general findings and build more generalizable theories about what can be done to summon greater levels of equality for all organizational members.

### Lack-of-Fit Model

Another very similar theory (and one certainly congruent with social role theory) that has been applied to try to explain gender inequities in the workplace is Heilman's Lack-of-Fit Model (Heilman, 1983, 1997). This theory is also based on an understanding that sex stereotypes obstruct the advancement of women in the corporate hierarchy, particularly at the highest levels. At such levels, Heilman argues, sex-typing of positions occurs and top management and executive-level corporate jobs are deemed to be masculine. Similarly, jobs that are high-powered, high paying, and important are more often categorized as men's rather than women's work (Duehr & Bono, 2006). The fact that most working women tend to be segregated in other fields (and the fact that women often experience mobility issues and discrimination within male-typed work) reinforces the image of their being "unfit" for jobs that are considered masculine.

While most of the research on the lack-of-fit model has focused on gender imbalances within organizations and particularly among gender and leadership, it is very applicable to the challenges that many other types of diverse and stigmatized individuals face in organizations. Recently, for instance, Sy et al. (2010) found that, consistent with the lack-of-fit model, ratings of leadership abilities and technical competence of Asian Americans increased when they were being rated for occupations that were race stereotypical (e.g., engineer) versus nonstereotypical (e.g., sales). Similarly, recent research has also shown that "being White" (versus being non-White) was perceived to be more consistent with the business leader prototype (Rosette, Leonardelli, & Phillips, 2008).

Heilman (1983) prescribed that when a workplace role is inconsistent with the stereotypes of employees, they suffer from a perceived lack of fit to the role. This lack of fit results in decreased expectations of success by others, increased expectations of failure, and often ultimately decreases in the performance itself. We propose that the lack-of-fit theory, coupled with social role theory, could be the basis of even more diversity-related research. We believe urgent questions need to be addressed, such as how minority individuals can increase perceptions of their fitness. The answers are not simple, as Rudman (1998), for instance, shows that self-promotional behavior comes at a detriment to women but not to men. Furthermore, women are held to stricter standards for promotion, meaning that female upper-level managers need to receive higher performance ratings to be promoted than do men (Lyness & Heilman, 2006).

### Summary

We summarized just some of the widely used and promising theories that explain and promote diversity within organizations. Additional theories exist and no doubt also have great potential. For instance, though initially developed to describe organizational patterns concerning deep-level diversity, Schneider's (1987) attraction–selection–attrition (ASA) could prove relevant to demographic diversity as well. In short, his model purports that people are attracted to organizations perceived to possess values similar to their own. Likewise, companies look to select employees they perceive as sharing their core values. When misfits occur, one (or both parties) recognize the lack of fit and act to correct it through the misfit voluntarily or involuntarily leaving the organization. The end result of this process is an organization wherein individuals tend to possess similar values and personality types. Perhaps this process also explains why many traditionally homogeneous organizations report such difficulty attracting and retaining employees belonging to underrepresented demographic groups. Although some research has tested thirds of the model independently, we know of no research examining the process more holistically. Thus, we encourage authors to utilize the theories described here; we also hope they will continue consulting and developing other theories as well.

## HOT TOPICS AND UNRESOLVED ISSUES IN DIVERSITY RESEARCH

In this section, we consider some of the particularly important diversity-related questions driving research in the field, including our own. These represent hot topics, under-researched areas, and unresolved issues that are important for future research to address. There are four specific questions that we will address: (a) How do we get everyone interested in increasing diversity initiatives?; (b) How do we reduce discrimination so that we might directly or indirectly increase diversity?; (c) Is composition or climate a more important focal point for effective diversity management?; and (d) Why is moderator and mediator research particularly important for diversity research? We consider and discuss each of these in detail.

### How Do We Get Everyone Interested in Increasing Diversity Initiatives/Issues?

A number of studies (many of which are very recent) reveal that the key to increasing diversity initiatives may be to carefully consider and recruit as stakeholders the different constituents in organizations. We begin by discussing minorities themselves and, subsequently, move on to a consideration of majority members.

It might be assumed that minorities (as defined by representation or power) would automatically and always favor diversity initiatives, particularly since such initiatives often focus on providing them with benefits (Avery, in press). However, research shows that this is not always the case. Many of these individuals sometimes experience costs, not just benefits, associated with diversity initiatives. One area in which this has been researched extensively is concerning affirmative action programs, or programs that give any special consideration to diverse members. The costs associated with being beneficiaries of these initiatives derive from both minorities' own psyches as well as from the reactions that they (sometimes accurately) perceive among others. Specifically, recipients who feel that they received handouts simply because of their race may experience self-doubts as well as feel compelled to be defensive against others (for a review, see Pratkanis & Turner, 1996). Moreover, people often assume that such beneficiaries have substandard levels of competency (see Heilman, 1997; Heilman, Block, & Lucas, 1992), and evidence suggests that sometimes such recipients are simply devalued if they are believed to be chosen simply because they are different (Jacobson & Koch, 1997). Indeed, much of the research on this topic suggests that the erroneous convictions and negative affirmative action stereotypes are more powerful (and negatively so) than the actual helpfulness of affirmative action (see Barnes Nacoste, 1994).

Though many people assume that affirmative action programs entail strong preferential treatment (see Heilman & Blader, 2001), the reality is that few programs (except those mandated by the EEOC to address cases of organizational discrimination) actually work that way. So-called reverse discrimination is illegal, and affirmative action programs usually work by increasing the diversity within the initial pool of candidates. Thus, educating people about the details of affirmative action programs may do a great deal to curtail negative attitudes about them, both from beneficiaries and nonbeneficiaries (Doverspike, Taylor, & Arthur, 2000).

The other critical constituent to consider when planning or implementing diversity initiatives is the majority group. In fact, recent research on race shows that Whites may be particularly lukewarm about embracing multiculturalism because they, themselves, do not feel included (Plaut, Garnett, Buffardi, & Sanchez-Burks, in press) and do not believe that they will benefit (Doverspike et al., 2000). For instance, rather than suggest that Whites are prejudiced, Plaut et al. suggest that Whites (like everyone) have a basic need to belong (see Baumeister & Leary, 1995) and tend to view multiculturalism as an exclusionary ideology. Accordingly, they see it as a far less palatable option than do their minority counterparts. Increasing buy-in, then, necessitates the involvement of majority members and potentially framing diversity so that it is inclusive of and benefits everyone, as opposed to merely minorities. Plaut et al. further state that, given the power distribution in American organizations (e.g., 87% of CEOs and top management in private industries is White), it is simply critical to create messages that appeal to both minorities and majorities alike.

Additional research reveals that framing can dramatically and successfully influence perceptions about diversity. For instance, diversity initiatives tend to be viewed more favorably when they involve *instrumental justifications* (a framework suggesting that everyone stands to be a beneficiary) as opposed to *compensation justifications* (frameworks focusing on the benefits that protected groups receive and deserve to redress past discrimination; Knight, Hebl, Foster, & Mannix, 2003; Kravitz et al., 1997). Similarly, frameworks that are broad are rated more favorably than those with a narrow focus (Holladay, Knight, Paige, & Quinones, 2003), though some authors have cautioned that this broadening of diversity might distract the focus

of initiatives from dealing with inequality (Linnehan & Konrad, 1999).

Many people simply believe that frameworks and organizational diversity policies altogether should simply be colorblind, which is an ideology focused on the notion of sameness and that categories should be avoided or ignored. The problem with this idea of assimilation, however, is that research shows that despite individuals' best interests, people automatically and very quickly identify and characterize individuals according race, gender, and other categories (Cosmides, Tooby, & Kurzban, 2003). Furthermore, studies suggest that attempting to ignore or suppress information about diversity may actually lead individuals to act in more, not less, discriminatory ways (Macrae, Bodenhausen, Milnes, & Jetten, 1994; Madera, Hebl, & Beal, 2011; Plaut, Thomas, & Goren, 2009). Though we don't yet have a conclusive answer to the question of how to get everyone "on board" with diversity initiatives, the encouraging news is that research aimed at shedding light on this issue continues to proliferate.

### How Do We Reduce Discrimination So That We Might Directly and Indirectly Increase Diversity?

The first step to reducing discrimination, we argue, is to accurately identify its various forms. Few would argue that the display of discriminatory behaviors in the United States has changed over time. In the past, discrimination tended to involve more *formal*, or very overt types of behaviors that explicitly (and often illegally) exclude individuals on the basis of their group membership from workplace and organizational opportunities. While there still exist examples of such flagrant types of discrimination, such overt displays are less common and tend to have legal repercussions or be subject to EEOC reparations. However, subtler forms of discrimination, which we refer to as *interpersonal* and others refer to as *incivilities* and *microinequities* (Cortina, 2008; Deitch et al., 2003; Rowe, 2008; see also Sanchez-Burks, Bartel, & Blount, 2009) are rampant in many organizations and have very negative consequences for individuals who are victimized. Such consequences may be particularly pernicious because such discrimination and the amount of it is often underestimated and undetected by majority members (see Swim & Miller, 1999).

Interpersonal discrimination often consists of nonverbal (e.g., avoiding eye contact, grimacing) as well as verbal (e.g., dismissive language) and paraverbal behaviors (e.g., tone of voice) that are not illegal to display. To differentiate the two forms of discrimination, Hebl, Foster, Mannix, and Dovidio (2002) had research confederates apply for jobs at Texas retail stores wearing a hat that read (unbeknownst to them) either "Texan and proud" (nonstigmatized condition) or "gay and proud" (stigmatized condition). After the interaction, (a) confederates, (b) a visual observer, and (c) two independent raters (who later listened to audio recordings of interactions but were blind to the study's purpose) rated formal behaviors (e.g., being told a job was available, which researchers knew there was a priori; being allowed to complete an application) and interpersonal behaviors (e.g., eye contact, length of the interaction, smiling, frowning). Hebl et al. (2002) found that those wearing the "gay and proud" (vs. control) hats experienced significantly more interpersonal but not formal discrimination.

This pattern was replicated in subsequent studies with differing stigmas and contexts. For instance, visibly pregnant (versus nonpregnant) applicants received more hostile interpersonal behaviors when applying for jobs (Hebl et al., 2007), women wearing obesity prostheses (vs. those who did not) received more interpersonal discrimination when seeking customer service from retail personnel (King, Shapiro, Hebl, Singletary, & Turner, 2006), and male obese (versus non-obese) applicants and customers received more interpersonal but not formal discrimination (Hebl, Ruggs, & Williams, 2010). In addition, women (vs. men) in organizations (King et al., 2010), Arab (vs. non-Arab) job candidates (Derous, Nguyen, & Ryan, 2009) and Muslim (vs. non-Muslim) job applicants (King & Ahmad, in press) were also targeted with increased interpersonal but not necessarily formal discrimination. While discrimination in organizations has become more subtle, it has not necessarily become less pernicious and research shows both individual and organizational costs of interpersonal discrimination including decreased performance, reduced health outcomes, decreased purchasing behaviors, loss of profit, loss of valuable employees, and decreased equity (King & Cortina, 2010; Lim, Cortina, & Magley, 2008; King, Hebl, George, & Matusik, 2010; King et al., 2006; Singletary & Hebl, 2012; Word, Zanna, & Cooper, 1974).

The second step to reducing discrimination is to consider strategies that may be successful and how different constituents can enact them (we point readers who are interested in a detailed chapter of such strategies to Ruggs, Martinez, & Hebl, in press). To begin, those who are diverse, themselves, might wish to enact strategies to decrease discrimination (and ultimately increase diversity within organizations). Recent research has shown that strategies involving acknowledgment and/or disclosing (bringing attention directly to one's stigma rather than

ignoring it), increasing one's positivity and agreeableness (despite potentially negative expectations), and deindividuating oneself from stereotypical associations with a stigmatized status can all be at least somewhat effective strategies for individual targets of discrimination to pursue (Flynn, Chatman, & Spataro, 2001; Griffith & Hebl, 2002; Ragins, 2008; Ragins et al., 2007; Singletary & Hebl, 2009). Clearly, there is much more work to do to disentangle why, when, and how these strategies work, as well as their limitations.

Allies within organizations also can have a significant impact in reducing discrimination and increasing diversity (again, see Ruggs et al., in press). Allies might wish to enact such strategies because they (a) have friends who are experiencing discrimination, (b) feel empathic toward those who are victimized, or (c) feel otherwise compelled by a moral code or social imperative (see Martinez, 2012; Monteith, Ashburn-Nardo, Voils, & Czopp, 2002). Although there is less empirical research showing what is (and how it is) effective, allies can help set social norms within organizations that contribute to more inclusive work environments. One way that they can do this is to model positive attitudes toward minority-group employees, which has been shown to lead others to similarly adopt positive attitudes (Blanchard, Crandall, & Brigham, 1994; Thomas, 1999; Zitek & Hebl, 2007). Allies also can use their power to improve stigmatized employees' circumstances, access to resources, and support networks. Clearly, research shows that coworker support for stigmatized individuals particularly leads to positive organizational outcomes (e.g., Griffith & Hebl, 2002). Similarly, allies can join and support affinity groups and confront discrimination against stigmatized individuals within organizations. Though further studies are needed to address the limiting conditions and contexts, research shows that confronting can be a very successful tool for reducing discrimination and, ultimately, increasing and supporting diversity (Ashburn-Nardo, Morris, & Goodwin, 2008; Czopp, Monteith, & Mark, 2006).

Finally, larger entities can also act to reduce discrimination within organizations (see also Ruggs et al., in press). Recently, in fact, King and Cortina (2010) nicely argued that organizations have both financial and social imperatives to act in ways that protect individuals from experiencing discrimination. Specifically, they stated that organizations have corporate social responsibility (CSR), or an obligation to act for the social good of the communities that they serve. As such, there are many ways that organizations can reduce discrimination and enhance diversity. They may, for instance, select diversity-minded recruitment, selection, and placement procedures that deter employees who do not hold equitable values. Recent studies have shown success in using procedures that include portraying on advertisement brochures diversity within the organization (Avery, Hernandez, & Hebl, 2004; Purdie-Vaughns, Steele, Davies, Ditlmann, & Crosby, 2008), use of structured interviews and behavioral scripts to reduce negative stereotypes (Avery, Richeson, Hebl, & Ambady, 2009; Sacco et al., 2003), and specific top management instructions that focus employers on the use of legitimate performance criteria (Umphress et al., 2008).

We urge researchers to conduct more investigations aimed at generally uncovering and empirically demonstrating successful ways to reduce discrimination, both at the individual and group level. We further encourage researchers to show the cause-and-effect links between discrimination and reduced diversity, and to identify moderators and mediators of successful strategies. Finally, we believe that though it is difficult to do, more organizational research on diversity and discrimination-related constructs must be done within actual organizational settings.

## The Composition Versus Climate Debate

### *Which Comes First?*

Given the potential for diversity to be beneficial or detrimental to group and organizational functioning, it behooves scholars and organizations to determine the optimal strategies for managing it. A key debate within the literature on diversity management is whether the organization should focus on its composition or its climate in a reprise of the classic "Which came first—the chicken or the egg?" argument. By composition, we refer to the demographic makeup of a company's personnel. This may pertain to simple measures like the proportion of men, women, gays, or minorities within a unit, or could involve more complex indicators such as the standard deviation of employee ages. By climate, we refer to shared perceptions regarding the organizational valuation of diversity and inclusion. This may involve surveys designed to assess these perceptions or more objective indicators such as the extent to which an organization is integrated across hierarchical levels (Cox, 1994).

Proponents of composition argue that a company should concern itself primarily with attracting and selecting a diverse workforce. The presumption is that a diverse workforce, in and of itself, will force the organization to diversify its approach to management, thereby making the organization more inclusive (Kossek, Markel, & McHugh, 2003). In a sense, this approach extrapolates the contact

hypothesis (Allport, 1954) from the individual to the organizational level of analysis. Generally speaking, the contact hypothesis proposed that individuals become more tolerant of and sensitive to the needs of dissimilar others as their level of exposure to these individuals increases. Research on it tends to support this premise, especially when the contact takes place between equal-status individuals in an affirming environment (Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006).

At the organizational level, however, the notion that composition precedes or even relates to climate has met with considerably less support. For instance, McKay, Avery, and Morris (2008) reported very small correlations between the percentages of female ($r = -0.03$, *ns*) and minority ($r = 0.12$, $p < 0.05$) associates and a retail store's diversity climate. Likewise, Gonzalez and DeNisi (2009) observed small, nonsignificant correlations between demographic diversity and diversity climate in restaurants. Looking at 142 banks, Pugh, Dietz, Brief, and Wiley (2008) found the climate–correlation relationship to be conditional, depending on the composition of the surrounding community. Finally, in one of the most direct tests of the composition-begets-climate hypothesis, Kossek et al. (2003) examined changes in composition and climate over an 8-year period at a university. Their results indicated that increasing the level of diversity in a department had no consistent effect on the departmental diversity climate. This led them to conclude that "HR strategies that focus on structural change without working to develop supportive group norms and positive climate may be inadequate change strategies" (p. 328).

While the literature has produced little evidence that composition affects climate, there have been a number of findings to support the plausibility of the reversed causal linkage. From a staffing standpoint, authors have demonstrated that a hospitable diversity climate can aid in attracting (Avery & McKay, 2006; Martins & Parsons, 2007; McKay & Avery, 2006) and selecting (Petersen & Dietz, 2008; Umphress, Simmons, Boswell, & Triana, 2008; Ziegert & Hanges, 2005) a broader spectrum of applicants. Several studies also indicate that diversity climates or perceptions thereof influence the attitudes and behaviors of incumbent employees in a manner likely to influence the organization's composition. For example, King, Hebl, Matusik, and George (2010) found that tokenism influences women's perceptions of diversity climate, which in turn influence their job satisfaction, affective commitment, job stress, intent to remain, and organizational citizenship. Thus, organizations with less hospitable diversity climates may find it difficult to retain their female employees. Other authors (Avery et al., 2007; Gonzalez & DeNisi, 2009; McKay et al., 2007) linked diversity climate perceptions to employee withdrawal (absenteeism and turnover intentions) and showed these linkages to be especially pronounced among Black employees. Moreover, diversity climates also influence demographic differences in actual job performance, with these differences being significantly smaller when climates are more supportive of diversity (McKay et al., 2008). Collectively, these studies imply that diversity climate may be vital to attracting, promoting, and retaining traditionally underrepresented employees.

### *Which Is More Impactful?*

Besides the uncertainty about whether one precedes the other, there is also the question of the relative influence of composition and climate on organizational phenomena of interest. As mentioned previously, the literature linking diversity to organizational and team performance is quite inconsistent, which has given rise to a recent wave of research looking at moderators (the next section contains a detailed discussion of this research). Of the recent literature to focus on main effects, one reported a negative relationship between racial diversity and profitability along with null effects of age and sex diversity (Sacco & Schmitt, 2005), whereas the other tied race and gender diversity to positive outcomes such as more customers, sales revenue, and profitability (Herring, 2009). Literature investigating the main effects of climate on organizational and unit-level outcomes has proven far more consistent. For instance, more hospitable diversity climates coincide with greater sales growth (McKay, Avery, & Morris, 2009) and customer satisfaction (McKay, Avery, Liao, & Morris, in press).

A few studies have included both climate and composition at the unit levels of analysis. In these studies, the correlations between climate, composition, and the focal outcomes paint a bit of a mixed picture. For instance, in their examination of restaurants (N = 26), Gonzalez and DeNisi (2009) examined diversity climate, gender diversity, racial diversity, return on profit, return on income, and productivity. The correlations for diversity climate ($r$s = −0.13, 0.02, and −0.04), gender heterogeneity ($r$s = 0.02, 0.08, and 0.08), and racial heterogeneity ($r$s = 0.00, 0.09, and −0.13) were all quite small and several were negative. In McKay et al.'s (2009) examination of 654 retail stores, diversity climate ($r = 0.20$) and the percentage of minority associates ($r = 0.13$) correlated positively with sales growth, but the percentage of female associates correlated negatively ($r = -0.08$). Likewise, McKay et al. (in press) reported similar patterns between climate ($r = 0.20$)

and composition (percent minority $r = 0.12$ and percent female $r = 0.06$) with customer satisfaction in 769 retail stores. It should be noted, however, that because White and female employees represented the majority in those stores, this suggests a similar (opposite) pattern of association for racioethnic (gender) diversity. Though it is not possible to make any conclusive statements about the relative importance of climate and composition from these findings, perhaps the most notable results from these studies are the interactions they reported between the two. It appears that diversity climates are most impactful when there is more racioethnic or moderate gender diversity within the unit (Gonzalez & DeNisi, 2009; McKay et al., in press).

Logic suggests organizations focus on their climates prior to investing resources in diversifying their composition for two key reasons. First, an organization's diversity climate is often more controllable than its composition, which may be influenced by a number of relatively uncontrollable factors such as community factors (McKay & Avery, 2006). Second, efforts to attract employees belonging to groups currently underrepresented in the organization are likely to prove ineffective or even wasteful if the company hasn't taken steps to ensure that these individuals will be supported adequately should they opt to work there. Accordingly, we encourage researchers to devote more attention to diversity climate, which has been vastly understudied in relation to composition. In particular, there is a need for greater understanding of its antecedents, especially in light of its seemingly many important consequences.

## The Devil Is in the Details—Moderators and Mediators of Diversity Effects

A good deal of the early research on diversity focused primarily on determining its simple effects on unit-level outcomes such as performance (Williams & O'Reilly, 1998). Over time, however, the literature has revealed that the relationship between diversity and performance is anything but simple (van Knippenberg & Schippers, 2007). The consistent inconsistency of diversity's effects lead many researchers to refocus their attention on identifying boundary conditions (i.e., moderators). Moreover, scholars (e.g., Lawrence, 1997) also began to call for greater attention to explicating the mechanisms underlying relationships between diversity and outcomes of interest (i.e., mediators). Subsequently, it became commonplace for research to explore when and why diversity sometimes influences performance.

### *Moderators*

The recent literature is replete with scholarly attempts to identify moderators. One promising variable appears to be the type of leadership taking place within the group. For instance, groups experiencing more transformational and inclusive leadership tend to experience more favorable outcomes of diversity (Kearney & Gebert, 2009; Nishii & Mayer, 2009). Individual differences also appear important, as members' diversity beliefs (Homan et al., 2007) and need for cognition (Kearney et al., 2009) moderate the effect of diversity on performance. Finally, there are several contextual moderators as well. From a structural standpoint, the diversity configuration of the group (i.e., faultlines vs. cross-cutting), task complexity, and group size moderate effects of age and gender diversity on performance and health (Sawyer, Houlette, & Yeagley, 2006; Wegge, Roth, Neubach, Schmidt, & Kanfer, 2008) with diversity appearing more beneficial for smaller groups with cross-cutting characteristics working on more complex tasks. One seemingly intuitive moderator that has yet to receive any support, however, is the composition of a unit's customers. In fact, the two recent studies to examine this possibility found no consistent patterns for racial or gender employee-customer matching (Leonard, Levine, & Joshi, 2004; Sacco & Schmitt, 2005).

In a recent meta-analysis of the role of context in the team diversity–performance relationship, Joshi and Roh (2009) helped to identify a number of additional situational boundary conditions. Though the simple effects they observed for diversity were very small ($r$s ranged between $-0.06$ and 0.13), significantly larger effects were detected in certain circumstances. First, they found that the demographic composition of the occupation influenced the diversity–performance relationship, with the effects of gender and race diversity being more positive in more evenly balanced (as opposed to primarily male or White) settings. Second, the industrial setting was also important, with relations-oriented (which included demographics) diversity being positively related to performance in service organizations ($r = 0.07$), but negatively related to performance in manufacturing ($r = -0.04$) and technology ($r = -0.18$) companies. Third, relations-oriented diversity positively predicted performance of independent teams ($r = 0.08$), negatively predicted performance of moderately interdependent teams ($r = -0.12$), and failed to significantly predict performance of highly interdependent teams. Finally, the duration of the team proved influential, as relations-oriented diversity was helpful in shorter-term ($r = 0.09$) but hurtful in longer-term teams ($r = -0.14$).

Collectively, the preceding literature demonstrates the importance of continuing to identify boundary conditions of the effects of diversity. Although it is convenient to think in terms of simple main effects, it considerably underestimates the complexity of diversity's impact on groups and organizations. Consequently, we urge future researchers to avoid the temptation of addressing the question of whether diversity helps or hinders performance. Instead, a more fruitful pursuit is to focus on stipulating the conditions under which diversity is more prone to enhance or diminish the bottom line.

### *Mediators*

In addition to investigating when diversity influences outcomes, it is also of interest to determine why such a relationship occurs. Many researchers within the diversity literature have focused on doing just that. For instance, one underlying mechanism, information elaboration (van Knippenberg et al., 2004), was discussed at some length previously in this chapter. The basic gist of that discussion was that diversity sometimes leads to an exchange of information that may help the group to make more creative, well-informed decisions (Dahlin et al., 2005). This enhanced decision making, in turn, should help the group perform at a higher level than if the information elaboration had not taken place (Homan et al., 2007; Kearney & Gebert, 2009;). Thus, information exchange mediates the relationship between diversity and performance.

In a similar vein, researchers have proposed learning as a potential mediating mechanism. If dissimilar individuals commonly possess different sources of information, perspectives, and worldviews, putting these individuals together could facilitate their learning from one another. To test this premise, Gibson and Vermeulen (2003) studied more than 150 teams working in medicine and pharmaceuticals. In particular, they were interested in the impact of demographic subgroups (i.e., the extent to which members of one demographic group tend to also belong to another particular group). Their findings revealed that moderate subgrouping yielded the most learning. Furthermore, the data suggested that both very homogeneous and heterogeneous teams engaged in more learning behavior after statistically accounting for the impact of subgroups. To the extent that more diverse group members learn more from each other than do homogeneous group members, it should follow that this learning may translate into differences in performance.

A somewhat different approach to understanding how diversity influences performance builds on social identity theory. According to Swann et al. (2004), verification (i.e., getting others in one's group to see you as you see yourself) is a potential mediator of the diversity–performance linkage. Building on the learning linkage described above, diversity often encourages group members to learn from one another. In the process of doing so, they are likely to learn about one another as well. As this revelatory process unfolds, verification should occur, thereby enhancing members' level of identification with the group. The more members identify with the group, the more likely they are to perceive its fate as their own and invest themselves in helping the group to achieve its goals. Hence, verification may mediate the relationship between diversity and performance.

It is important to recognize that the most insightful contributions to understanding diversity's effects are those integrating moderation and mediation into a single model (Edwards & Lambert, 2007). Empirical investigation of the simple relationships between diversity and the three mediators discussed in this section is likely to yield results comparable to those obtained when focusing on the diversity–performance linkage (i.e., inconsistent findings). In other words, the diversity–mediator and mediator–performance relationships are probably contingent on many of the moderators of the diversity–performance linkage. Accordingly, we encourage scholarly engagement in rigorous theoretical development and testing of models combining moderation and mediation. In doing so, we also urge authors to consider and explicitly specify the stage(s) at which the moderation should be expected to take place.

## Summary

Although a number of critical issues remain unresolved within the diversity literature, we identified four key issues we believed to be particularly important. Understanding how to elicit and build support for diversity initiatives will only grow in importance as the level of heterogeneity within organizations continues to increase (Avery, in press). Having greater diversity also may increase the potential for misunderstanding, competition over resources, and, thus, discrimination. Accordingly, it is important for organizations to understand how best to allocate their resources to create an environment supportive of diversity. This means research will need to explore the many nuances defining the diversity terrain by explicating boundary conditions and mediating mechanisms of diversity's effects on organizational outcomes. In reviewing the status quo with respect to current answers to these pressing issues, we hope to have provided readers with a sense of where we believe diversity research is headed and the course it will need to follow if it is to achieve its aims.

## CONCLUSION

The purpose of this chapter was to provide an update on the literature investigating the effects of diversity in organizations since the appearance of the last volume of this *Handbook* in 2003. In the course of organizing and reviewing this literature, a number of things became clear. First, the study of diversity is quite healthy. It is impressive to see how much scholarship on the topic has made its way into the top outlets in our field during the early 21st century. Moreover, there is excellent research on diversity that appeared in journals that we did not cover here. It was immensely difficult trying to include all of the recent literature in this chapter and, admittedly, some topics were under-covered in our review (e.g., adverse impact, affirmative action). This should not, however, be interpreted as an indication that we see these topics as unimportant. Rather, there are practical limitations to what can be included in any one review and it is unfortunate that many deserving articles had to be excluded from our review for space considerations.

Second, it is impressive to see the ongoing development, utilization, testing, and refinement of theory within the diversity literature. This is especially welcome in light of the fact that past diversity scholarship often received criticism for its lack of solid theoretical grounding (e.g., Nkomo, 1992). Though we limited our focus to seven theories, there are certainly others that could have been included (e.g., demographic faultlines, the interactional model of cultural diversity, tokenism, stereotype threat). As researchers continue to extend existing theory and develop new theory to account for diversity phenomena, we urge them to consider how these theories apply (or do not apply) across the various types of diversity. Some theories may prove more relevant to some types of diversity than to others. For instance, a psychological process like identity comprehension (Thatcher & Greer, 2008) may apply better to the study of social identities that are often highly valued (e.g., racioethnicity, sex, religion) as opposed to those that are not (e.g., obese, drug addict). Thus, a useful aspect of theory development is the determination of the theory's boundary conditions.

Third, despite the enormous progress seen within the literature, there remains a great deal left to learn. We've discovered that the answer to the question of whether diversity helps or hurts performance is a resounding . . . it depends. Studies continue to unravel the contingencies and intervening mechanisms of the diversity–performance relationship and more work is needed along both fronts. We hope scholars continue diversifying their approaches as they enhance our understanding of how diversity affects the bottom line.

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