

MANAGING DIVERSITY IN ORGANIZATIONS: IS THERE A LINK BETWEEN DIVERSITY THEORIES AND ORGANIZATIONAL PRACTICES?

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Abstract

Diversity management is nowadays a trendy topic in organization studies. Considerable research is done on the antecedents and causes of organizational diversity. However, the amount of research done on diversity is not expected to trigger a fashion in managerial practices (Abrahamson, 1996). It is rather other socio-psychological factors (e.g., demographic changes, globalization) that do that. Although theoretical developments do not drive managerial practices, there is strong evidence in the literature that the two are closely related. The present paper explores the connection between different approaches used in diversity management and the theoretical developments in the field of organizational diversity. It uses print-media indicators to establish if the theoretical developments in diversity research co-evolve with the trends in diversity management. The results show a close co-evolution of discrimination and fairness as well as value in diversity paradigms with the research on diversity in organizations.

Key-words: *diversity management, management practices, diversity awareness training*

INTRODUCTION

Workforce in contemporary organizations is becoming more and more diverse. There are several external sources for organizational diversity. A first source of diversity is that in this globalization era, organizations often operate in more than one country and compete on several emerging markets (Robinson & Dechant, 1997). Such a modern organization operating in several countries has to find effective integration mechanisms for the cultural and social differentiation that exists among its employees. A second source of diversity is represented by the complex societal dynamics and especially the accentuated immigration taking place in the United States of America (Portes, 1997; Robinson & Dechant, 1997) as well as in Europe (Curșeu, Stoop & Schalk, in press; McLaren, 2003). In well developed countries, immigrants are therefore an ever increasing source of differentiation within organizations. A third external source of diversity is the continuous effort to legally ensure equality in rights among the employees of different backgrounds (Coil & Rice, 1993). These legal efforts increase the access of minorities (e.g., racial) or less represented social groups (e.g., women, older employees) into different organizations.

Apart from these external sources of diversity, there are internal organizational strategic actions to increase diversity in order to get a competitive advantage (Thomas & Ely, 1996). Contemporary organizations want to become competitive and in order to do so they attract the best employees with various backgrounds (e.g., expertise, education). Therefore, organizational diversity is continuously increased both by external as well as internal factors. Diversity is a fundamental form of organizational differentiation (Scott, 2003); therefore organizations have to find effective integration mechanisms and to rise to the challenge of successfully managing diversity.

Robinson and Dechant (1996) identified several business related reasons for managing diversity. The first reason is related to cost saving. Organizational diversity has several negative consequences such as: higher turnover and absenteeism rates, lower employees' satisfaction and motivation (Milliken & Martins, 1996), and a higher number of lawsuits related to discrimination (e.g., sexual harassment, racial discrimination) (Robinson & Dechant, 1996). Therefore, organizations should effectively manage the negative consequences of diversity in order to save costs. A second reason for managing diversity is related to business growth. Diversity has its positive effects and it helps the organization to increase its marketplace understanding, to be more creative and innovative, to make better decisions and find

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better solutions to problems and at the same time to build effective inter-organizational relationships in the global economy. Consequently, due to its positive effects, organizational diversity is a major driver of business growth and should be managed properly. Finally, a third reason for implementing effective management practices for diversity is the race for talent. Organizations nowadays want to attract, retain and promote the best employees, and this means that they have to look into different demographic groups. Excellence in human resource practices that create the best place to work for these demographic groups (e.g., women, racial minorities) creates a competitive advantage in the race for talent (Robinson & Dechant, 1996).

There are several approaches in the literature on diversity management practices in organizations (Maxwell, Blair & McDougall, 2001; Thomas & Ely, 1996). The paper starts from the taxonomy of diversity management approaches proposed by Thomas and Ely (1996). They distinguish between three “paradigms” for managing diversity in organizations: (1) the discrimination and fairness paradigm, (2) the access and legitimacy paradigm and (3) the value in diversity paradigm. Abrahamson (1996) argued that there is a close relationship between management practices and scientific theoretical developments and the two co-evolve in a close relationship. With respect to diversity management practices, no clear efforts were made to explore the extent to which these approaches are related to the main theoretical trends in the organizational diversity literature. The aim of this paper is to review the main approaches used by organizations to manage diversity and explore the extent to which these approaches are related to the diversity theories advanced in the scientific literature. It will be argued that the theoretical roots of managerial practices that emerged from the discrimination and fairness paradigm are the theoretical propositions of social categorization theory. Another argument is that the practices associated with the access and legitimacy paradigm can be associated to the propositions of the similarity attraction theory. Finally, the closing argument is that the newest approach in managing diversity (value in diversity) is rooted in the cognitive resource diversity theory.

SOCIAL CATEGORIZATION THEORY AND THE DISCRIMINATION AND FAIRNESS PARADIGM

The first paradigm for managing diversity in organizational settings described by Thomas and Ely (1996) is the discrimination and fairness paradigm. According to the authors, this is the dominant way of understanding and managing diversity. Managers look at the diversity related issues through the lenses of compliance to the legal requirements for equal opportunity, fair treatment at work, and unbiased selection and recruitment. A central managerial concern according to this approach is to respect the legal requirements associated with the above mentioned issues, to make sure that the company achieves its recruitment and selection goals (e.g., in terms of number of disabled people and minority groups members). Usually, bureaucratic organizations with tight control processes are prone to use this approach in managing diversity. These organizations tend to promote a fair treatment of their employees through top down directives and use mentoring and career development programs in order to make the adaptation of their employees smoother. Therefore, they promote diversity, but often diversity comes with a price and it contradicts the main assumption on which this paradigm is based, namely that all people are equal. The members of highly diverse organizational groups are less satisfied, less committed to the group and the probability of absenteeism and turnover is higher than in homogeneous groups (Curşeu, 2006; Jackson, Joshi & Erhardt, 2003; Milliken & Martins, 1996; Williams & O'Reilly, 1998). Also, the occurrence of interpersonal conflict is higher in these heterogeneous groups due to social categorization processes (Jackson, Joshi & Erhardt, 2003; Jehn, Northcraft & Neale, 1999). In the discrimination and fairness paradigm, management interventions are also targeted at reducing these negative effects of diversity. An illustrative example is the diversity awareness training, which will be discussed later on. What is obvious in this approach of diversity management is the emphasis on managerial actions that foster the equality and fair treatment of employees. Even though in the more practical literature, this association was not explicitly made (see for example Maxwell, Blair & McDougall, 2001 and Thomas & Ely, 1996), it is clear that all these measures aim at reducing the negative effects of social

categorization processes. The discrimination and fairness paradigm is therefore closely associated with the social categorization theory.

The social categorization theory is inspired from the general categorization studies in human cognition (Ross & Makin, 1999). The general tendency to classify people in groups is called social categorization (Tajfel, 1981; Turner, 1987). This general tendency to put people in groups works for other people as well as for ourselves, and it has been one of the cornerstones of intergroup relations (based on in- out-group distinction) (McGarthy, 1999). The functions of social categorization are similar with the functions of cognitive categorization in general (see Allport, 1954). Due to the fact that we use social categorization, we can deal with the immense variety of our social world. The attributes used to describe a particular social group are called stereotypes and they guide the information processing and behavior in social situations. Based on physical appearance, we can rapidly categorize people in different groups (e.g., gender, racial or ethnic) (Curșeu, Stoop & Schalk, in press; Hamilton & Sherman, 1994; Hilton & Hoppel, 1996) and the stereotypes used to describe these social groups will automatically be inferred to all newly met individuals that have been classified in a particular group (Greenwald, Banaji, Rudman, Farnham, Nosek & Mellott, 2002). Stereotyping is therefore an automatic process linked to social categorization. When stereotypes have a negative valence (Judd & Park, 1993), they will most probably be associated with discrimination and intergroup conflict. The ingroup-outgroup bias based on oversimplification and overgeneralization (members of the out-group are seen as similar with each other, while the in-group members are perceived as different) is mainly generated by the use of stereotypes (Hilton & Hoppel, 1996). Oversimplification has some positive side effects (e.g., frees cognitive resources for other tasks), but in group settings it mainly has negative effects. If group members that are different (belong to an out-group) are perceived as sharing the same attributes (e.g., negative traits), this can lead to interpersonal frictions and relationship conflicts. Therefore, the social categorization theory mainly predicts negative effects for group diversity on group performance.

In line with the social categorization propositions, diversity will have negative influences on employees. It will negatively

affect the performance of organizational groups as well as individual employees. Diversity has a negative impact on group members' satisfaction, commitment and willingness to remain with the group, as well as a positive impact on their turnover intention (Thomas & Ely, 2001; O'Reilly, Caldwell & Barnett, 1989; Sacco & Schmitt, 2005; Tsui, Egan & O'Reilly, 1992). Group diversity also impacts the group as a whole and is associated with higher levels of conflict, low quality communication and collaboration, as well as with low levels of group cohesion (Campion, Medsker & Higgs, 1993; Jackson, 1992; Jackson, May & Whitney, 1995; Jehn, Northcraft & Neale, 1999; Tziner & Eden, 1985; Watson, Kumar & Michaelsen, 1993). The strongest effects are predicted for attributes that make social categorization salient. In this case, visible attributes (e.g., race, gender) linked to group diversity are supposed to trigger social categorization processes to a greater extent than less visible attributes. This proposition is in line with the automatic activation of stereotypes.

Diversity awareness training aims at reducing the information processing biases associated with stereotypes (e.g. overgeneralization, oversimplification, ignoring relevant information) and focuses on using de-categorization and re-categorization (participants should be provided with information supporting the idea that except the dissimilarities with the outgroup, they might have similar things in common) to improve intergroup relationships (Jackson, Joshi & Erhardt, 2003; Rossett & Bickman, 1994; Robertson, Kulik & Pepper, 2001; Sanchez & Medkik, 2004). Elements that are tackled in the training are based on the empirical results on stereotypes reduction. A few of these elements will be discussed further on. The trainers should remind the group members that except their dissimilarities they might have several things in common and in order to override the tendency to notice and remember instances that confirm already-held stereotypes, challenge the group members to look for examples of individuals who do not fit the stereotyped representation. Also, the training should stimulate the identification of instances in which the individual behavior is not congruent with the stereotypes – see the within-category diversity and test the accuracy of the stereotypes (testing the accuracy of stereotypes and focusing on disconfirming information will reduce the negative valence of stereotypes - Hamilton & Sherman, 1994;

Hilton & Hippel, 1996). The above mentioned elements should be combined with opportunities for the group members to form an accurate impression about the other members in the group. The group members should also explore the rewards of interacting with diverse others, like new ways of thinking, learning about others, combining different perspectives on the problem. The training should increase the group members' awareness about the natural tendency to distance themselves from people who appear different and also increase the group members' awareness about the stereotypes – is there any good evidence that the stereotypes are accurate? The increased awareness on the use of stereotypes increases the control over their automatic activation (see for details Hamilton & Sherman, 1994; Hilton & Hippel, 1996). The trainees should be trained to avoid jumping to the conclusion that the different others will not like you or judge you because you are different. A good solution is to stimulate the direct contact between the group members, and the search for communalities - this will (eventually) decrease the perceived differences (Robertson, Kulik & Pepper, 2001). However, intergroup contact should not be taken as a golden rule in diversity training, since the results concerning the advantages of diverse training groups are mixed (Curşeu, Stoop & Schalk, in press). Diverse training groups (facilitating intergroup contact) are especially effective when the organizations want to change employee attitudes and the trainees have not been involved before in diversity related trainings (see for details Robertson, Kulik & Pepper, 2001).

Wentling and Palma-Rivas (1999), as well as Koonce (2001) analyzed the effectiveness of diversity awareness trainings and they agreed that the most successful diversity awareness trainings share a few characteristics. The first and most important one refers to obtaining the commitment and support from top management. In order for the diversity training to succeed, it is needed that the company's CEO and top management would enunciate the importance of diversity as a business value for the organization and communicate throughout the organization why the diversity training is offered. Second, the diversity training should be embedded in a larger organizational strategic plan and it should be associated with other diversity management practices or initiatives. In line with the discrimination and fairness paradigm

for managing diversity, the diversity awareness training should be a component of a more general recruitment, development or promotion plan to be implemented in the organization. The diversity awareness training will not be effective if it is not directly tied to the business strategy and policies of the company. Third, before conducting the training itself, a proper training needs assessment should be conducted. A training needs analysis will help the employees to understand the value of diversity awareness training and the trainers to tailor the training in order to achieve optimal results. Fourth, in order to obtain the best results, qualified diversity trainers should be used. Effective diversity awareness trainers are expected to have sound professional and academic skills, as well as personal and interpersonal skills. Fifth, diversity awareness training is more effective if the attendance is mandatory and all employees with a stake on diversity are involved in the training. Finally, confidentiality should be guaranteed in order to build trust, but at the same time, the training should require accountability, especially because it can require group members to have direct interpersonal contact with members of other social and demographic groups (for more details see Koonce, 2001; Robertson, Kulik & Pepper, 2001; Wentling & Palma-Rivas, 1999).

THE SIMILARITY-ATTRACTION HYPOTHESIS AND THE ACCESS AND LEGITIMACY PARADIGM

The second paradigm for managing diversity described by Thomas and Ely (1996) is the access and legitimacy paradigm. It emerged in the competitive climate of the 1980s and 1990s, when organizations had to expand their business and capture different market sectors. On the other hand, other markets emerged in the global economy and suddenly, in order to stay competitive, organizations had to expand to these new emerging markets. However, the knowledge and expertise embedded in organizations was not always sufficient to make the organization effective on the new market sectors. Therefore, new employees, usually with extensive knowledge and expertise related to the new market sector, had to be attracted in order to foster effectiveness. Thomas and Ely (1996) give the illustrative example of Access Capital International (a US investment bank), which at the beginning of the 1980s expanded to the European markets. However, American employees that were sent overseas were often

ignorant of local European cultures and so the company encountered great difficulties with this expansion. As a consequence, the company started to hire Europeans that attended American business schools and they ensured the success of ACI in Europe. The newly hired people established firm connections within the European banking industry, as well as strong interpersonal connections with customers. In the American context, law firms often hire lawyers coming from minority groups (e.g., Mexicans) in order to gain access to these minority groups. Therefore, the second approach of managing diversity relies on attracting diverse people with extensive knowledge and expertise about a particular market segment within the organization. In this instance, "the motivation for diversity usually emerges from very immediate and often crisis-oriented needs for access and legitimacy" (Thomas & Ely, 1996, p. 174). The best way in which access and legitimacy is achieved is by selecting employees that come from the market segment targeted by the company. It is therefore the similarity of employees with the clients that ensures legitimacy and access. As a theoretical background, the access and legitimacy paradigm is associated with the similarity attraction hypothesis.

The similarity attraction hypothesis is inspired both from the social network research (Ibarra, 1992) and social psychological research on interpersonal attraction (Byrne, 1971). Social network analysis focuses on the exploration of the nature of relationships that develop among the individuals and not on their feelings, or on the way they process social information. The similarity among individuals is revealing for the pattern of interactions that will occur among them. Similar individuals will have a tendency to interact more frequently and in a more positive fashion with each other than dissimilar ones. This general tendency of similar actors to develop stronger network ties was labeled in social networks literature as homophily (Ibarra, 1992). According to the interpersonal attraction theories, if individuals share several common characteristics (e.g., belong to the same gender or racial group), it is very likely that they will be attracted to one another. As a consequence, they will develop stronger interpersonal relationships and will collaborate better (Byrne, 1971; Berscheid & Walster, 1978). Individuals that are similar are very likely to share common experiences and values, to have the same expectations for social interaction, and therefore the social

interactions are more rewarding and desirable (Horwitz, 2005; Williams & O'Reilly, 1998). Similar individuals also seem to develop very fast a shared language and manage to communicate more effectively than dissimilar ones (Wiersma & Bantel, 1992).

As a conclusion, according to the similarity attraction hypothesis, organizational diversity increases the chances of the organization to be perceived as legitimate and gain access in different market sectors through the fact that employees share similar traits and experiences with the clients in a particular market niche. However, the only diversity management practices according to the access and legitimacy approach are related with attracting relevant employees for a particular organizational goal. After the aim of the organization is attained, only scarce attention is paid to the real management of diversity. Employees might feel exploited and organizations using this approach to managing diversity have diversified only in those areas that interact with a particular market segment (Thomas & Ely, 1996).

COGNITIVE RESOURCE DIVERSITY THEORY AND THE VALUE IN DIVERSITY PARADIGM

The value in diversity paradigm is an approach for managing diversity that emerges from the other two paradigms. Organizations that initially used one of the two previously discussed paradigms for managing diversity realize their shortcomings and go a step further in trying to fully use the potential of diversity. For example, the American law firm that hired a Hispanic female in order to get access to the Spanish communities of clients might end up discovering that she can contribute to the company much more than that. Therefore, the organization might start to value the new perspectives and business ideas brought up by the new employee (Thomas & Ely, 1996). The very essence of the value in diversity paradigm and value in diversity theoretical hypothesis is that an organization is stronger to the extent to which its staff is diversified. This paradigm holds especially for the cases in which the primary task of the organization or the group is a cognitive one, or it heavily relies on information processing.

An illustrative example of the value in diversity paradigm at work is the case of the SLICE (Simple Low-Cost Innovative Concept Engine) team created by Boeing-Rocketdyne

to design a new rocket engine (see for a detailed case description Malhorta, Majchrzak, Carman & Lott, 2001). In the mid 1990s, Boeing-Rocketdyne was facing a harsh competition on the extending market of rocket engines driven by the need for commercial launches. Rocket engines had to be built faster, cheaper, with fewer errors and with a longer life time. Therefore, the objective of Boeing-Rocketdyne was to reduce the costs for building a rocket engine by 100 times, to get it to the market 10 times faster and increase its life time with a factor of three. In order to produce the new design, Boeing-Rocketdyne created a highly diverse and differentiated virtual design team. The members were the best performers in their field in the world and they had the task to design an engine that would fulfill all the above mentioned criteria. Diversity however, came with a price and the members had to work together virtually because they were dispersed in different geographical locations. An effective knowledge management system and a virtual communication tool had to be used in order to make team interactions possible. Using a three-folded management strategy based on strategy setting, technology use and continuous work restructuring, the management in Boeing-Rocketdyne created the settings for a highly creative team. The results exceeded the expectations. The design was ready in 10 months with no team member spending more than 15% of his time on the project, with a manufacturing cost reduction from an estimated 7 mil USD to 0.5 mil USD, and a first unit production cost reduction from an estimated 4.5 mil USD to 47.000 USD. The new rocket engine design also was superior in a technical sense: it was made of six major components instead of 1200 (as it used to be for the previous engines) and with a predicted quality and safety level three times higher than the engines that were in use before (Malhorta et al., 2001). This is an illustrative example of how diversity can contribute to organizational effectiveness through the considerable variety in cognitive resources brought into the organization by its members. The theoretical perspective that covers these issues is the cognitive resource diversity theory.

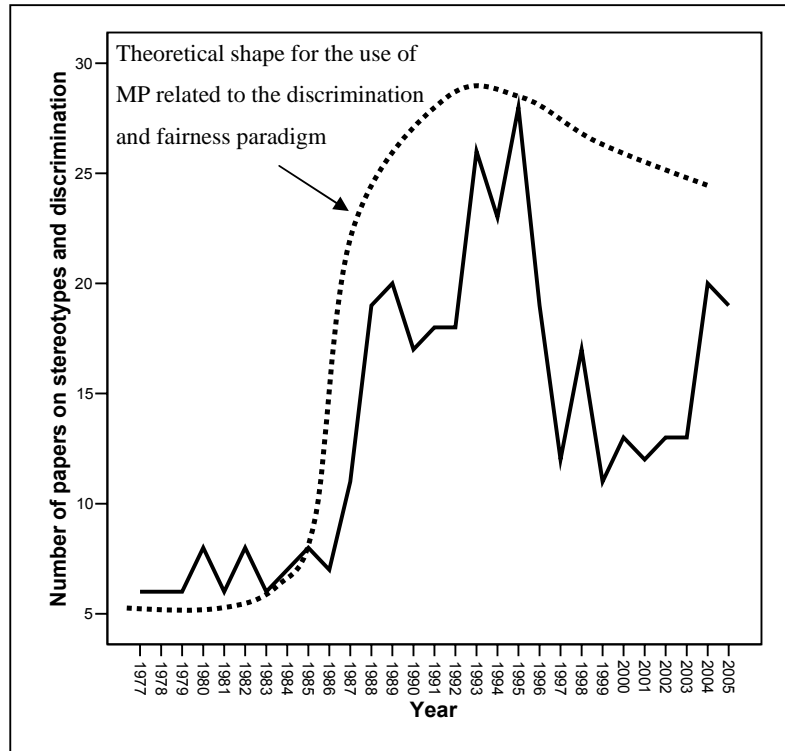
According to Jackson, Joshi and Erhardt (2003), as well as to Mannix and Neale (2005), this theoretical stream belongs to the optimistic view on the effects of diversity on organizational performance. This theoretical approach states that organizational diversity mainly creates opportunities and benefits for

organizational effectiveness and the fundamental idea is that diverse employees will contribute with their various knowledge, expertise, skills and cognitions to a greater information richness within the organization and this will ultimately be translated into better decisions, more creative solutions and more effective plans or organizational actions (Harrison & Klein, in press; Horwitz, 2005; Jackson, Joshi and Erhardt, 2003; Mannix & Neale, 2005).

The roots of the cognitive resource diversity and value in diversity hypothesis are to be found in the systemic perspectives on groups and organizations. The law of requisite variety in systemic schools of thought states that the strength of a social system depends on the variety of its agents. The value in diversity hypothesis focuses first of all on the cognitive implications of diversity. Consequently, empirical support for this hypothesis was found especially in tasks that involve information processing (Ancona & Caldwell, 1992; De Dreu & West, 2001; Jehn, Northcraft, & Neale, 1999; Schrujijer, & Mostert, 1997). This is the reason why the value in diversity hypothesis is labeled the information/decision-making perspective in two of the most influential reviews on group diversity (Van Knippenberg, De Dreu & Homan, 2004; Williams & O'Reilly, 1998).

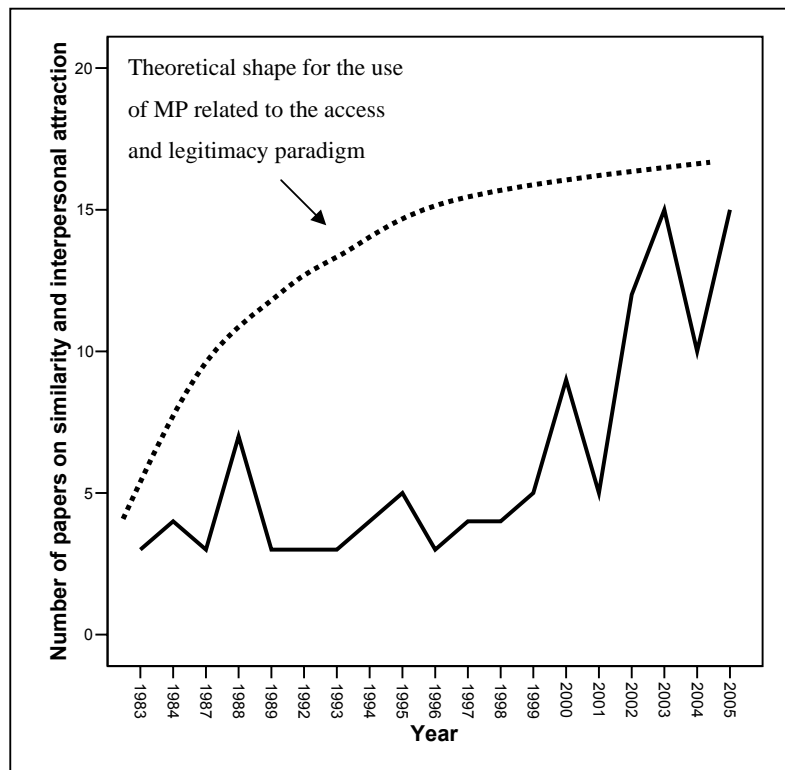
TENTATIVE CONCLUSIONS

In order to answer the question raised in the title of this paper, we followed a strategy suggested by Abrahamson (1996) to study management fashion. He argued that the use of managerial practices follow a certain fashion and there is a connection between how fashionable a managerial practice is (how often it is used in organizations) and the literature published on theoretical aspects related to that particular practice. Abrahamson (1996) explored the match between the extent to which the quality circles as managerial practices (see total quality management practices) were used in organizations and the number of papers published in the literature on quality control (the print-media indicator). Similar to Abrahamson (1996), in the present study the ABI/Inform database was used to check for scientific papers published on the three above described theoretical perspectives on organizational diversity.



Legend: MP=managerial practices

Figure 1. Print-Media Indicators for Stereotypes and Discrimination (ABI/Inform)



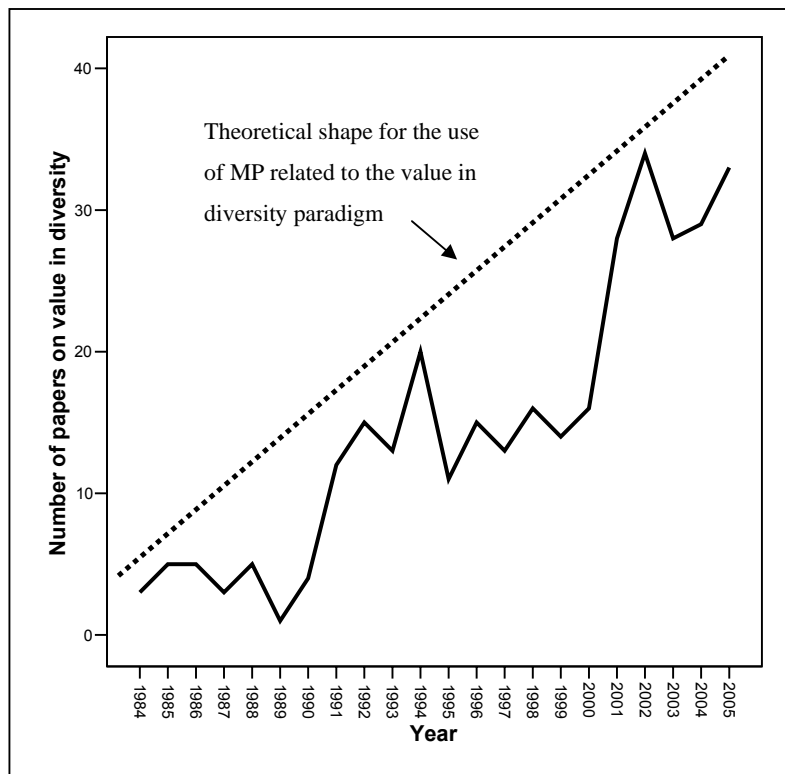
Legend: MP=managerial practices

Figure 2. Print-Media Indicators for Similarity and Interpersonal Attraction (ABI/Inform)

According to the arguments provided by Thomas and Ely (1996), the managerial practices inspired from the discrimination and fairness paradigm had a peak in the 1990s and they were closely associated with the large antidiscrimination movement that grew in the second half of the 1980s. Therefore, the evolution of these managerial practices follows a curve depicted in Figure 1 (a reversed semi U shape). Figure 1 also depicts the number of papers on stereotypes and discrimination published between 1977 and 2005. The visual inspection of the two curves depicted in Figure 1 support a certain degree of co-evolution between the use of managerial practices related to discrimination and the fairness paradigm, and the number of scientific papers published on topics related to stereotypes and discrimination.

A similar strategy was used to explore the match between the use of managerial practices associated to the access and legitimacy paradigm and the papers published on similarity and interpersonal attraction, as well as homophily.

It has been argued (Thomas & Ely, 1996) that in the highly competitive climate of the 1980s and 1990s, organizations started to grow increasingly diverse in order to have a competitive advantage, and to gain legitimacy and access to new market sectors. The shape of this trend is depicted in Figure 2. However, the match with the number of papers published on similarity, interpersonal attraction and homophily is rather difficult to support.



Legend: MP=managerial practices

Figure 3. Print-Media Indicators for Value in Diversity (ABI/Inform)

Figure 3 illustrates the co-evolution of managerial practices inspired from the value in diversity hypothesis and the number of papers published in the cognitive resource diversity

literature. Both curves depicted in Figure 3 show a steady increase throughout time. The third diversity management paradigm shows

therefore the closest co-evolution with the scientific literature diversity.

In conclusion, there is reasonable evidence for a co-evolution between diversity management practices and the scientific theories on diversity. However, the fit is not absolute, suggesting that scientific theories are only in part related to managerial practices. This does not suggest that theoretical developments drive in any way the managerial practices. As mentioned by Abrahamson (1996), the drivers of management fashion are to be found in societal and psychological factors rather than theoretical developments. The managerial practices associated with the discrimination and fairness and the value in diversity paradigms seem to co-evolve in a closer fit with the scientific theories of diversity. However, it is more reasonable to assume that these practices were driven rather by the large antidiscrimination movement that marked most western societies in the 1990s. The interest paid by the scientific literature to issues related to stereotypes and discrimination can be understood as a consequence of the same societal factors that drove the diversity management practices. Also, the shape of the curve representing the extent to which managerial practices related to access and legitimacy are used in modern organizations only has a reduced fit with the histogram of the published papers on similarity and interpersonal attraction. This paradigm was driven by the increased competitive pressure on organizations that expanded to different market sectors. The same pressure to stay or become competitive pushed organizations toward the third managerial approach to diversity. This perspective is however more closely associated to the theoretical developments in the literature on cognitive resource diversity. It became nowadays common wisdom that a diverse workforce is not only inevitable but can (should) also be a valuable asset for modern organizations. A rather limited interest in diversity management is to be encountered in developing countries. Further on, we focus on the Romanian context in order to provide a short illustration.

HOW DOES DIVERSITY MANAGEMENT WORK IN THE ROMANIAN CONTEXT?

Probably the simplest answer to this question is: it doesn't really work ...yet! Such a hasted answer will most probably not satisfy the reader that managed to get to this point and it is certainly not a scientifically

appropriate one. Most of modern Romanian organizations are rather young and certainly have limited experience in operating on a global market, where diversity is an important asset. Formed in a transition economy, organizations have to face rapid economic, legal and political changes and they have to adapt to these external factors as well as possible in order to survive. If diversity is a competitive advantage in this particular context as well, this remains an open question. Although diversity in terms of minority groups (e.g., ethnic minorities) is an issue that could draw the attention of Romanian organization scholars, to my knowledge no attention has been paid to this issue so far. Consistent research concerning gender diversity in Romanian organizations is however available (see for example CPE, 2006; Curșeu & Boroș, 2004).

In simulated personnel recruitment tasks, Curșeu and Boroș (2004) showed that women are still discriminated when applying for managerial positions. These results are fully supported by the data reported by a survey conducted by CPE (2006). This survey was conducted on 695 employees from 43 organizations and showed that 19.83% of the men and 38.25% of the women believe that when a woman makes an application for a management position, she will be more carefully assessed in comparison to a man. In general, women reported higher difficulties in choosing a flexible working schedule, and 64.23% of the respondents mentioned that women have more difficulties compared to men in their career development. Also, only 50% of the companies had explicit sanctions concerning sexual harassment. However, 73% of the managers reported that their company uses formal rules against gender based discrimination in hiring and promotion (CPE, 2006). When looking back at the way employees perceive the situation, these seem rather a set of rules and regulations rather than actual managerial practices. To conclude, although the first steps in diversity management have been made in Romania, (organizations implemented formal rules against discrimination based on gender), there is still a long way to go from the legitimacy and discrimination approach to the value in diversity philosophy.

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