

**Disentangling the Fairness & Discrimination and
Synergy Perspectives on Diversity Climate: Moving the Field Forward**

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We provide a theory-driven review of empirical research in diversity climate to identify a number of problems with the current state of the science as well as a research agenda to move the field forward. The core issues we identify include (a) the fact that diversity climate is typically treated as unidimensional, whereas diversity research would suggest that there are two major perspectives that could be reflected in diversity climate—efforts to ensure equal employment opportunity and the absence of discrimination versus efforts to create synergy from diversity; (b) a tendency to let the level of analysis (individual psychological climate or shared team or organizational climate) be dictated by convenience rather than by careful theoretical consideration, thus sidestepping key issues for research concerning the causes and consequences of the sharedness, or lack thereof, of diversity climate perceptions; and (c) the tendency to include diversity attitudes and other nonclimate elements in climate measures even though they are different from climate both conceptually and in their antecedents and consequences. The research agenda we advance suggests a need both for different operationalizations and for new research questions in diversity climate, diversity, and relational demography research.

Keywords: *diversity climate; diversity; organizational climate; fairness & discrimination; synergy; inclusion; norms; levels of analysis; relational demography*

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The demand for organizations to better understand how best to manage the social justice and performance issues associated with diversity only continues to grow. In management research, this has manifested in the growing attention to the effect of diversity climate on individuals, dyads, teams, and organizations (Dwertmann & Boehm, 2016; Gonzalez & DeNisi, 2009; Nishii, 2013). Generally speaking, diversity climate has been referred to as employees' perceptions about the extent to which their organization values diversity as evident in the organization's formal structure, informal values, and social integration of underrepresented employees. Although we argue below that many of the definitions of diversity climate in use are vague, and that both the imprecision inherent in existing definitions and the misalignment between conceptual and operational definitions of diversity climate have hindered the advancement of diversity climate research, there is nevertheless no question about the growing importance of diversity climate in organizational practice. Thus, a theory-driven review of empirical research on diversity climate is both timely and needed. We identify a number of key problems with the current state of the science and propose a research agenda to move the field forward.

The first key problem we identify is the disconnect between theory in group diversity and empirical research on diversity climate. There is consensus among researchers that diversity is a double-edged sword: It can invite social categorization-based stereotypes and biases (Tajfel & Turner, 1986) that present obstacles to organizational entry, career advancement, and the social integration of members of underrepresented groups, but diversity can also function as a source of cognitive variety that can lead to better problem solving and greater creativity and innovation (Boehm & Dwertmann, 2015; Ely & Thomas, 2001; Horwitz & Horwitz, 2007; Jackson & Joshi, 2011; Milliken & Martins, 1996; Shore et al., 2009; van Knippenberg, De Dreu, & Homan, 2004; van Knippenberg & Schippers, 2007; Williams & O'Reilly, 1998). The first perspective is well represented in empirical diversity climate

research, in particular by a common focus on equal employment opportunity practices, fair treatment and the absence of discrimination in the employment process, and the elimination of social exclusion. Indeed, what may be called the fairness & discrimination perspective clearly dominates diversity climate research and practice (cf. Ely & Thomas). However, the second perspective, which focuses on realizing the potential performance benefits of diversity and may be called the synergy perspective, is poorly integrated in diversity climate research. Even though a large number of studies have paid lip service to the value in diversity, an examination of the content of diversity climate measures shows that the vast majority of items (and, thus, measures) reflects the fairness & discrimination perspective much more than the synergy perspective. Typically, diversity climate is thought of as preventing the negative outcomes of diversity, such as stereotyping and discrimination, and facilitating positive effects by encouraging the exchange and integration of diverse information. Consequently, diversity climate research should properly reflect the underlying theoretical assumptions of diversity research. A first issue for diversity climate research to address, thus, is the need to shift to a focus in measurement that represents both perspectives.

The second key problem we identify is intimately related to the first—that of levels of analysis, in terms of both the level at which diversity climate itself is operationalized and the relevant outcomes of diversity climate. Diversity climate can be understood as individual perceptions (psychological climate) or as shared perceptions (team/organizational climate; cf. L. R. James & Jones, 1974). The same can be said for the outcomes of diversity climate, which can also be found at the individual or higher levels of analysis. The specific level of analysis in any given study should be informed by conceptual considerations. However, diversity climate research is dominated by studies in which psychological climate perceptions are linked with individual-level attitudinal outcomes (Kuenzi & Schminke, 2009), such as commitment and turnover intentions. It is difficult to escape the impression that in many of

these studies, levels of analysis are regularly informed by convenience more than by theory. We would expect to see that research focused on the synergy perspective would logically focus on shared perceptions of diversity climate and on the outcomes of synergistic processes at the unit or organizational level of analysis. However, it is not uncommon to see studies invoking the synergy perspective but focusing on outcomes at the individual level that are more reflective of the fairness & discrimination perspective instead of outcomes at the aggregate level that are reflective of synergy. Thus, a second issue to address is the need for a stronger connection between theory and research design in terms of both levels of analysis and the substantive content and bandwidth of the constructs that are examined in conjunction with diversity climate.

A third key issue to address is the inclusion of items in diversity climate measures that themselves are not reflective of what is considered to be part of the climate construct (Ehrhart, Schneider, & Macey, 2014). Examples include items about respondents' individual attitudes or experiences related to diversity and items about the existence or absence of particular diversity practices. Diversity climate is meant to capture the perceived "attitude" or shared perceptions about which behaviors are appropriate and about the meanings associated with diversity within a particular context. Including items about diversity attitudes or experiences of the individual respondent is conceptually inaccurate in nontrivial ways because diversity attitudes have been shown to differ from diversity climate both theoretically and in their antecedents and consequences. Items about the presence or absence of specific practices are also not reflective of climate, as the mere presence of a practice says nothing about the diversity messages that employees derive from that practice (Nishii, Lepak, & Schneider, 2008). Measurement items that focus on diversity practices fall into the climate rubric only if they instead focus on what their implementation communicates to employees. A third

need is thus to establish measures of diversity climate that are unconfounded by the inclusion of nonclimate elements.

We argue that addressing these issues in future research is not simply a matter of continuing existing lines of research but, rather, embracing different research questions and methodologies that have the potential to advance diversity climate research and practice in needed ways. In what follows, we organize our review around the three primary issues just described, with the bulk of our review focusing on the first two, which we see as essential for the advancement of our science. We conclude with proposed future research questions that emerge from our review.

The Nature of Diversity Climate

Diversity describes “the distribution of differences among members of a unit with respect to a common attribute, X” (Harrison & Klein, 2007: 1200).¹ The fairness & discrimination and synergy perspectives represent two conceptually and practically distinct explanations for diversity’s effects that are thought to be influenced by diversity climate. Despite the fact that they rest on different underlying theoretical assumptions (Boehm & Dwertmann, 2015; Milliken & Martins, 1996; van Knippenberg et al., 2004), to date, most conceptualizations and operationalizations of diversity climate have treated the construct as if it were unidimensional. This is problematic because when the two perspectives are blurred into one, it is not possible to differentiate the outcomes associated with each or the assumed psychological and social mechanisms that are involved in the relationship between these two foci and their outcomes. As we describe next, the theories that have been used to argue for the importance and expected influences of the fairness & discrimination versus synergy foci of diversity climate differ. Thus,

we argue in favor of distinguishing more clearly between them in the way that diversity climate is conceptualized, research hypotheses are developed, and empirical studies are designed.

Fairness & Discrimination Versus Synergy

The fairness & discrimination perspective is borne out of equal opportunity laws and organizational policies that have been adopted around the world to mitigate both access and treatment discrimination (Ilgen & Youtz, 1986). Access discrimination refers to the differential access that women, ethnic minorities, and other historically marginalized groups have to employment opportunities (i.e., being hired and/or promoted into jobs), while treatment discrimination refers to the fairness with which individuals are treated once hired. Efforts to promote greater fairness and reduce discrimination are needed because employment discrimination continues to be a serious and expensive problem in terms of not just legal liability but also negative organizational perceptions among external stakeholders who prefer to invest in organizations with fair practices and high operational costs associated with diversity-related disengagement and/or turnover (cf. Gelfand, Nishii, Raver, & Schneider, 2005).

Conceptually and in practice, a focus on fairness & discrimination is most evident at the organizational level and involves (a) attention to the fairness with which human resource (HR) practices are implemented without privileging any demographic groups over others, (b) diversity-specific programs aimed at improving outcomes for members of marginalized groups, and (c) visible efforts on the part of the organization and its senior leadership to promote outcomes reflective of fairness and reduced discrimination (Gelfand et al., 2005). At the group level of analysis, the fairness & discrimination perspective manifests in concern for fair and equitable treatment among group members and proactive attention to eliminating the exclusion and/or silencing of historically marginalized groups as a result of social categorization (Nishii, 2013).

The dominant theoretical paradigms on which research related to the fairness & discrimination perspective on diversity climate is built include social identity (Tajfel & Turner, 1986), similarity/attraction (Byrne, 1971), and social categorization (Hogg, 2001; Turner, 1985) theories that explain the basis of interpersonal bias and discrimination. Also foundational are social exchange and psychological contract theories according to which greater organizational investments in the improvement of employment outcomes for diverse employees should be reciprocated in the form of greater attachment and engagement on the part of those employees (Avery et al., 2013; Boehm, Kunze, & Bruch, 2014; Buttner, Lowe, & Billings-Harris, 2010a, 2010b, 2012; Chrobot-Mason & Aramovich, 2013; Hicks-Clarke & Iles, 2000; Houkamau & Boxall, 2011; Kaplan, Wiley, & Maertz, 2011; McKay, Avery, Liao, & Morris, 2011; McKay, Avery, & Morris, 2009; Pugh, Dietz, Brief, & Wiley, 2008; Singh & Selvarajan, 2013; Smith, Morgan, King, Hebl, & Peddie, 2012; Stewart, Volpone, Avery, & McKay, 2011). Accordingly, the logical outcomes of a positive diversity climate at the organizational level of analysis include greater structural integration or diverse representation throughout the hierarchical levels and functions of an organization (Bennett, 2002; Cox, 1994; E. H. James, 2000), a reduction in group-based inequities in access to jobs and rewards, and an organization's enhanced effectiveness at attracting diverse talent and customers for whom social justice concerns are paramount. At the interpersonal and group levels of analysis, a positive fairness & discrimination diversity climate should promote greater social integration of historically marginalized groups as evident in the elimination of segregated social networks (Brass, 1984; Ibarra, 1993) and a reduction in negative in-group/out-group dynamics that are driven by identity stereotypes (e.g., conflict). At the individual level of analysis, a positive fairness & discrimination diversity climate should enhance experiences of inclusion (Shore, Randel, Chung, Dean, Holcombe Ehrhart, & Singh, 2011) and reduce or eliminate experiences of harassment or discrimination. Beyond these diversity-specific outcomes, also of interest is an elimination of social identity-based discrepancies among employees in their experiences of valued work attitudes, such as person-

organization fit, perceived organizational support, and commitment, as well as objective outcomes, such as turnover and performance (Gelfand et al., 2005).

In contrast, the synergy perspective on diversity climate is primarily fueled by perceptions at the unit level and reflects the widespread interest in the performance benefits of diversity. According to the value in diversity hypothesis, diverse groups have the potential to outperform homogeneous groups in complex decision making and innovation provided they are able to exchange and integrate diverse information and perspectives to arrive at synergetic team outcomes (De Dreu, Nijstad, & van Knippenberg, 2008; Hinsz, Tindale, & Vollrath, 1997). When the goal of diversity climate is to leverage synergistic outcomes from diversity, diversity climate takes on a focus that is distinct from that of the fairness & discrimination perspective. Over 30 years of research on the group diversity to performance relationship has demonstrated that the value in diversity tends to emerge only under the right conditions. Simply convening heterogeneous individuals together is insufficient for synergistic outcomes to emerge; without clear motivations, norms, and accountability structures to encourage group members to challenge each other's perspectives and persevere in their debate of multiple possible solutions, the different perspectives that may be held by diverse group members are often not shared or used or when expressed, often lead to disruptive conflict (Chatman, 2010; Crandall, Eshleman, & O'Brien, 2002; Goncalo, Chatman, Duguid, & Kennedy, 2015; Hobman, Bordia, & Gallois, 2004; Mitchell, Nicholas, & Boyle, 2009). The focus of synergy climate is thus on employees' shared perceptions about what is expected and rewarded with regard to how employees interact in order to learn from and leverage their synergistic potential. It is critical to point out that the diversity management efforts that are the focus of the fairness & discrimination perspective of diversity climate do not themselves facilitate synergy (Chatman; Nishii, 2013; van Knippenberg, van Ginkel, & Homan, 2013), although unfair treatment could of course impede synergy. Thus, operationalizations of diversity climate that focus on

fairness & discrimination (which is the case for most) are theoretically inappropriate and misaligned for testing research hypotheses related to the potential synergistic benefits of diversity.

This emphasis on diversity as an informational resource implies that the outcomes most directly relevant to the synergy perspective are performance outcomes on tasks with clear information integration components, such as complex decision making and creativity/innovation (van Dijk, van Engen, & van Knippenberg, 2012). The level of analysis would typically be the team level (e.g., team creativity, team performance). Yet it may also include the organizational level, for instance, when firm innovation or performance is seen as the outcome of top management team diversity (e.g., Bantel & Jackson, 1989), and the individual level, when the performance, creativity, or cultural competence of individuals is improved directly as a function of synergistic learning (e.g., Richter, Hirst, van Knippenberg, & Baer, 2012).

Problems Associated With the Lack of Distinction Between the Two Perspectives

Examining the fairness & discrimination and synergy perspectives as a unidimensional construct is problematic because the two are conceptually and practically different. Synergy is focused on creating positive outcomes, not preventing negative ones. In contrast, the fairness & discrimination perspective focuses on preventing negative outcomes, such as discrimination, social marginalization, and interpersonal aggression. As described in the seminal work of Ely and Thomas (2001), synergistic outcomes accrue when demographically diverse group members adopt a learning and information integration perspective. Ensuring that minority group members feel fairly treated and respected is, in and of itself, likely to be insufficient, as they may still experience pressures to assimilate to the norms of the dominant majority (Nishii, 2013). Examining both perspectives simultaneously without differentiating between them makes it impossible to tease apart the differential causal chains that are responsible for the variety of outcomes of interest. Furthermore, the combination of the fairness &

discrimination and synergy perspectives in a single scale value is problematic because it is possible to get the same diversity climate score on the basis of different configurations of responses to the individual items included in a measure. When a measure includes items that tap both perspectives of diversity climate (as many do), it is possible for high scores on one of the perspectives to compensate for low scores on the other or for average scores across both perspectives to yield the same diversity climate score despite the fact that the underlying diversity climates differ. This introduces significant noise in measurement that obscures the ability to accurately model which aspects of diversity climate account for observed outcomes, something that hinders the advancement of the field.

Given the differential theoretical mechanisms, levels of analysis, and outcomes of interest associated with these two perspectives on diversity climate, what one might expect to see in the diversity climate literature is two streams of research that can be differentiated according to the (a) measurement items that are used to assess the two foci of diversity climate, (b) predominant level of analysis employed in research designs for diversity climate, and (c) level of analysis and content of the outcome measures used. However, this is not what emerged from our review of the diversity climate literature. What we found instead is somewhat troubling, as we describe below.

Review of the Diversity Climate Literature

In order to identify relevant research, we carried out a structured literature review by using EBSCO Host (i.e., Business Source Complete, PsycARTICLES, and PsycINFO). “Diversity climate,” “climate for diversity,” or “climate for inclusion” had to appear in the manuscript. The search resulted in 143 peer-reviewed articles that were printed or in press by 2014. From these, we selected empirical quantitative articles published in management (173), applied psychology (75), social psychology (61),

and ethics (50) journals according to the ISI Web of Knowledge and excluded articles that did not focus on an organizational context or that focused on biological diversity and atmospheric climate. This resulted in 39 articles. We also used the term diversity in combination with terms that we perceive to be proximal to diversity climate in the nomological network. This resulted in 458 additional studies (128 for fairness, 40 for synergy, 269 for inclusion, 7 for psychological safety, 12 for social norms, and 2 for perspective taking). We examined each of these and applied the same criteria as described above. We excluded studies that (a) were not empirical, (b) did not ask employees about their perceptions of the organizational environment (e.g., involved individual-level relationships between diversity-related predictors and outcomes without regard for the influence of the unit or organizational context), and (c) focused on employees' perceptions of one particular HR practice rather than a set of practices that communicate something more complete about the group or organizational context related to diversity. This resulted in 7 additional studies, which left us with 46 final articles (see Table 1).

Definitions of Diversity Climate

Our review of the literature reveals that there is considerable variety in the way scholars have defined diversity climate. Many of the definitions provided by authors are based on the pioneering work of Kossek and Zonia, who define diversity climate as the “general perception toward the importance of employer efforts to promote diversity” (1993: 62). The underlying assumption surrounding this stream of diversity climate definitions is that “promoting diversity” has to do with equality of treatment. Other definitions borrow from the influential work of Mor Barak, Cherin, and Berkman, who defined diversity climate as the “employee behaviors and attitudes that are grounded in perceptions of the organizational context related to women and minorities” (1998: 83). This definition, and the ones based on it (Kaplan et al., 2011; McKay, Avery, & Morris, 2008, 2009; McKay, Avery, Tonidandel, Morris, Hernandez, & Hebl, 2007; McKay et al., 2011; Virick & Greer, 2012), capture the general organizational sentiment related to

diversity, in particular, the extent to which the organization utilizes fair policies and socially integrates underrepresented minorities. Similarly, Smith and colleagues define diversity climate as “the shared employee perception that an organization is fair in its personnel practices and encourages inclusion among all employees” (2012: E23-E24). Although a quarter of the definitions that we reviewed refer to the social integration or inclusion of minorities, it is often unclear whether the notion of social integration refers to the extent to which different perspectives are actively integrated (i.e., synergy) or to the absence of discrimination (e.g., Larkey, 1996). Overall, our impression is that the dominant focus of these definitions is aligned with the fairness & discrimination perspective, albeit with ambiguous references to social integration—an impression that emerged from our review of operational definitions (see below).

Recently, a number of definitions have more clearly alluded to concepts related to the synergy perspective. For example, Hofhuis, van der Zee, and Otten emphasize “openness toward and appreciation of diversity” (2012: 965), and Luring and Selmer (2011, 2012) focus on the extent to which individuals value and respect the views of those who are different.

INSERT TABLE 1 HERE

The focus in these definitions on employees’ openness toward, and valuing of, diversity represents a first step toward the features of the group context that are necessary for promoting synergistic outcomes. In their case study, Groggins and Ryan (2013) similarly concluded that in addition to respecting differences, an openness to continuous learning is essential, and Nishii provided more explicit reference to synergy as requiring an integration of diverse perspectives “across roles, levels, and demographic boundaries to solve shared problems” (2013: 1754).

Given the ambiguity inherent in many of the conceptual definitions provided, we relied on the operationalizations of diversity climate to more precisely characterize the field. Because definition, theory, and measurement should ideally be aligned, we reasoned that authors' operationalizations would allow us to draw conclusions regarding their intended meaning of diversity climate. Our review revealed that the majority of studies (29 out of 45 quantitative studies) focus exclusively on fairness & discrimination, with items clustering into four types. The first cluster includes items about diversity-specific management practices, such as targeted recruiting (e.g., Kaplan et al., 2011), and mentoring, networking, and training programs designed to prepare women and minorities for promotion (Virick & Greer, 2012). A second cluster refers to the fair implementation of personnel practices, such as fair performance evaluations (Mor Barak et al., 1998), equal access to opportunities (Chen, Liu, & Portnoy, 2012), and equal pay for equal work (Nishii, 2013). A third cluster focuses on the organization's commitment to diversity, with items such as "Clearly, diversity is not important to this company" (Avery et al., 2013), "I believe this company strives to have a very diverse workforce" (Herdman & McMillan-Capehart, 2010), and "Top leaders demonstrate a visible commitment to diversity" (McKay et al., 2008, 2009; McKay et al., 2011). The fourth and final cluster that we identified references the (elimination of) bias against diverse employees, with sample items such as "When people from different backgrounds work together in groups, some people feel slighted because their ideas are not acknowledged" (Larkey, 1996).

Out of the 45 total quantitative studies that we reviewed, 16 utilized measures that include at least one item that could be characterized as tapping some aspect of the synergy perspective of diversity climate. We distinguished between those that represent hybrid operationalizations (14) and those that represent crisper operationalizations of synergy (2). As described previously, core to the synergy perspective is the exchange and integration of diverse information to create a whole that is

greater than the sum of its parts. Examples of illustrative items include “Diversity in my organization improves mission performance,” “My work unit is valued for the different perspectives that we bring to the organization” (Boehm, Dwertmann, Kunze, Michaelis, Parks, & McDonald, 2014), “employees’ insights are used to rethink or redefine work practices,” and “management exercises the belief that problem-solving is improved when input from different roles, ranks, and functions is considered” (Nishii, 2013). Items that are more ambiguous with regard to synergy are those that reference valuing different perspectives (e.g., Herdman & McMillan-Capehart, 2010; McKay et al., 2007) but say nothing about whether those perspectives are actively integrated as a means of driving more innovative decision making.

In almost all cases, those measures that included items referencing synergy included only one (e.g., Herdman & McMillan-Capehart, 2010; Luring & Selmer, 2011, 2012; McKay et al., 2007; Volpone, Avery, & McKay, 2012) or two (e.g., Boehm, Dwertmann, et al., 2014) such items (the only exceptions are Hofhuis et al., 2012, and Nishii, 2013). Given that the average scale has six or more items and the mean of all items is used to represent diversity climate, the influence of one or two synergy items amongst a majority of fairness & discrimination focused items is likely to be small. It is fair to conclude that even the measures that include items reflective of the synergy perspective primarily represent the fairness & discrimination perspective and that whereas there are “pure” fairness & discrimination measures, much more work is needed to develop pure synergy measures. Consequently, although many authors allude to leveraging the value of diversity as a hoped for outcome of diversity climate, the field of diversity climate is actually dominated by an empirical emphasis on fairness & discrimination.

Summary of Diversity Climate Definitions

Our review of the literature clearly revealed that both conceptual definitions of diversity climate and definitions/measures in use tend to be focused on fairness & discrimination to the exclusion of a focus on synergy. When synergy concepts are featured, they are obscured by ambiguous references to social integration or dwarfed in relation to a much more salient focus on fairness & discrimination. What is needed to advance diversity climate research is a clearer distinction between these two aspects of diversity climate in both definition and measurement. Toward that end, we offer distinct definitions for the two perspectives that are in line with existing definitions of organizational climate (Kuenzi & Schminke, 2009; Schneider & Reichers, 1983) as “a set of shared perceptions regarding the policies, practices, and procedures that an organization rewards, supports, and expects” (Kuenzi & Schminke: 637). Fairness & discrimination diversity climate *refers to shared perceptions about the extent to which the organization and/or workgroup successfully promotes fairness and the elimination of discrimination through the fair implementation of personnel practices, the adoption of diversity-specific practices aimed at improving employment outcomes for underrepresented employees, and/or strong norms for fair interpersonal treatment.* Synergy diversity climate, in contrast, refers to *the extent to which employees jointly perceive their organization and/or workgroup to promote the expression of, listening to, active valuing of, and integration of diverse perspectives for the purpose of enhancing collective learning and performance.* We urge authors to offer crisp references to the particular perspective(s) of diversity climate relevant for their hypotheses and take care in ensuring that the items used to operationalize diversity climate are aligned with their theoretical model and focus on the appropriate level (see Table 2). This would involve utilizing items that focus on one or the other perspective of diversity climate in a single measure, not both. If both perspectives of diversity climate are of interest, then the different theoretical mechanisms that link the two perspectives to outcomes should be explicitly specified, and ideally also measured, separately. Theoretically, we expect the fairness & discrimination perspective to more naturally align with the organizational level where the decision authority for many of the practices

feeding into the fairness & discrimination climate would lie, whereas the synergy perspective should be grounded stronger in perceptions at the unit level where synergy is primarily created in team interaction processes that may differ across teams even within a single organization.

Predictors and Outcomes Associated With Diversity Climate

We organize our review of the empirical research on the outcomes associated with diversity climate as follows. We first review empirical findings associated with the fairness & discrimination perspective on diversity climate, which encompasses the majority of published research. We then review empirical findings related to the synergy perspective. Finally, we review studies that use hybrid operationalizations of diversity climate. In our review, we distinguish between studies that involve global outcomes and those that involve facet-specific outcome variables—that is, outcomes that are theoretically specific to diversity climate.

Predictors associated with the fairness & discrimination perspective. Much of the early research focused on demographic differences in individual-level perceptions of diversity climate and found that women and minorities tend to report lower levels of perceived diversity climate than their Caucasian, male colleagues (Hicks-Clarke & Iles, 2000; Kossek & Zonia, 1993; Mor Barak et al., 1998). Research also suggests that the demographic composition of one's group may affect people's perceptions about the need to invest in managing diversity (Kossek & Zonia) and that being different from coworkers in terms of marital status and ethnicity negatively affects the perceived fairness of team decisions (Price, Harrison, & Gavin, 2006). Finally, Boehm, Kunze, and Bruch (2014) found that age inclusive HR practices foster a positive age diversity climate, and Pugh and colleagues (2008) showed that the racial

composition of an organization, as well as the broader community in which it is embedded, influences organizational diversity climate.

Outcomes associated with the fairness & discrimination perspective. Of the 45 quantitative studies that we reviewed, we categorized 29 as falling squarely within the fairness & discrimination domain on the basis of their operationalizations of diversity climate. As mentioned previously, the dominant theoretical lenses underlying this perspective involve social exchange, psychological contract, and calculative attachment theories. According to these theories, employees who work in positive diversity climates are more likely to reciprocate in the form of positive work attitudes than employees who work in adverse diversity climates (Avery et al., 2013; Boehm, Kunze, & Bruch, 2014; Buttner et al., 2010b, 2012; Chrobot-Mason & Aramovich, 2013; Hicks-Clarke & Iles, 2000; Houkamau & Boxall, 2011; Kaplan et al., 2011; McKay et al., 2009; McKay et al., 2011; Pugh et al., 2008; Singh & Selvarajan, 2013; Singh, Winkel, & Selvarajan, 2013; Smith et al., 2012; Stewart et al., 2011), and consistent with relative deprivation theory, relationships tend to be stronger for members of marginalized groups who are more attuned to diversity climate as a result of historical injustices (Kossek & Zonia, 1993; Leslie & Gelfand, 2008; McKay et al., 2007; Mor Barak et al., 1998; Singh & Selvarajan; Singh et al.; Volpone et al., 2012).

The vast majority of the studies (22 of the 29) adopting the fairness & discrimination perspective involved an analysis of psychological (rather than shared) diversity climate perceptions, with roughly half of them involving global outcome variables and the other half involving more facet-specific ones (i.e., with a narrower bandwidth and specific theoretical relevance for diversity). Consistent with social exchange perspectives, psychological diversity climate is consistently associated with more favorable employee attitudes, such as organizational commitment (Buttner et al., 2010b; Gonzalez & DeNisi, 2009; Hicks-Clarke & Iles, 2000; Houkamau & Boxall, 2011; Kaplan et al., 2011; McKay et al., 2007), intentions

to stay or leave (Buttner et al.; Gonzalez & DeNisi; Kaplan et al.; McKay et al.; Singh & Selvarajan, 2013; Stewart et al., 2011), satisfaction (Hicks-Clarke & Iles; Houkamau & Boxall), engagement (Volpone et al., 2012), and trust in management (Houkamau & Boxall). Furthermore, these relationships between diversity climate and global attitudes tend to be stronger for members of marginalized groups who have more to gain from diversity climates that promote fairness given historical discrimination (Gonzalez & DeNisi; McKay et al.; Singh & Selvarajan; Volpone et al.). This is true also for the benefits of community climate for diversity on work turnover intentions (Ragins, Gonzalez, Ehrhardt, & Singh, 2012). Diversity climate's positive effects are stronger when reinforced by other features of the organizational environment, such as ethics climate (Stewart et al.).

Among those studies that assessed facet-specific outcomes, a common focus had to do with the positive impact that diversity climate perceptions have on the ease with which members of historically marginalized groups can identify with the organization, feel included, or experience psychological safety and/or freedom associated with their stigmatized identities. Avery and his colleagues (2013) found that job seekers' perceptions of an organization's diversity climate are positively associated with intentions to pursue employment with the organization and that this is more the case among job seekers who enjoy interacting with diverse others. The focal mediating mechanism in their study is identity affirmation: When job seekers perceive an organization to value diversity, they are more likely to expect that their own identity will be affirmed within that organizational context. Relatedly, Rabl and Triana (2014) found that the positive relationship between age diversity climate perceptions and applicant attraction is stronger among individuals with positive attitudes toward age diversity. Invoking similar arguments, Singh and colleagues (2013) found that diversity climate perceptions were positively associated with psychological safety and in turn with organizational citizenship and in-role behaviors and that this mediated relationship was stronger for racial minorities.

In a more explicit treatment of identification as an underlying mechanism, Chrobot- Mason and Amarovich (2013) showed that the negative relationship between psychological diversity climate and turnover intentions is mediated by identity freedom (feeling free to be oneself without concerns about experiencing bias against one's identity) and organizational identification (the perception that the climate is such that all employees, not just the dominant majority, can identify with the organization). Similarly, Guerro, Sylvestre, and Muresanu (2013) found that employee perceptions of organizational fairness are positively associated with perceived insider status and that this relationship is stronger for cultural minorities who enjoy high-quality relationships with their managers (i.e., leader-member exchange). Maranto and Griffin (2011) further build on this growing body of research by showing that women are more likely to experience exclusion from informal social networks than men and that this effect is stronger the less represented women are within their work units. However, experiences of exclusion were mitigated for women who reported experiencing high levels of procedural fairness and gender equity.

Leslie and Gelfand (2008) focused specifically on gender identity and found that women with a strong gender identity are more likely to feel validated to express claims of gender discrimination when they perceive the diversity climate to be positive. In another study focused on discrimination claims, Kaiser, Major, Jurcevic, Dover, Brady, and Shapiro (2013) found that the salience of an organization's diversity initiatives (e.g., through receipt of diversity awards, availability of diversity training) increases high-status group members' perceptions of procedural fairness for women and minorities, thereby reducing the perceived legitimacy of discrimination claims.

The remaining two studies that focused on facet-specific outcomes of psychological diversity climate perceptions (related to the fairness & discrimination perspective) involved outcomes that were more narrowly defined than generalized work attitudes but less specific to diversity itself. In the first of

these, Virick and Greer (2012) examined the relationship between perceptions of positive diversity climate for women and the likelihood that job incumbents nominate female successors. They found that, among male incumbents, female successors were more likely to be nominated when incumbents perceived the diversity climate for women to be favorable. Second, Price et al. (2006) found that dissimilarity from team members is associated with lower perceptions of fairness in team decision making, which is in turn associated with higher levels of social loafing behavior, and that this relationship is strengthened when people are not held accountable for their contributions to the team's work.

A disproportionately fewer number of studies involved shared diversity climate perceptions related to the fairness & discrimination perspective. We see this bias in the published research to be nontrivial not only because climate as a construct is theoretically meant to capture shared perceptions of the environment (Ehrhart et al., 2014) but also because the sharedness of climate perceptions strengthens the impact of climate on employee attitudes and behaviors (Bowen & Ostroff, 2004). Of the studies involving shared diversity climate perceptions, four examined global outcomes (Boehm, Kunze, & Bruch, 2014; Gonzalez & DeNisi, 2009; McKay et al., 2009; McKay et al., 2011), and another two included facet-specific outcomes (Chen et al., 2012; McKay et al., 2008). Gonzalez and DeNisi found that organizational diversity is positively associated with firm effectiveness when diversity climate is high but has a U-shaped association when diversity climate is low. The authors attributed the positive influence of diversity climate to a weakening of the negative dynamics associated with group bias as well as to the promotion of knowledge sharing (i.e., consistent with the synergy perspective). However, because the measure that they used to assess diversity climate is composed of items that assess fairness & discrimination exclusively, and the performance outcomes that they assessed are too general to be directly attributable to synergistic processes, it is impossible to rule out the possibility that enhanced

performance is accounted for not by synergistic processes but instead by an accumulation of improved individual attitudes and behaviors.

The plausibility of this alternative explanation for Gonzalez and DeNisi's (2009) results is supported by arguments made in the other studies involving shared perceptions of fairness & discrimination diversity climate and global outcomes. Specifically, Boehm, Kunze, and Bruch (2014) hypothesized and found support for the idea that positive shared age diversity climate is associated with higher unit performance and lower turnover because of higher collective perceptions of social exchange (and not synergistic processes per se). Similarly, McKay and his colleagues (2009) showed that the positive relationship between diversity climate and store-level sales performance is greatest when managers and subordinates align in their positive perceptions of diversity climate. They explained that the higher sales performance of stores with positive diversity climates results from the additive effect of greater motivation, citizenship behaviors, and performance on the part of employees who feel that they have an equal opportunity to succeed and be integral members of the organization. In a conceptually similar study, McKay and colleagues (2011) argued that because of the principles of social exchange, employees will be more likely to behave in accordance with their organization's emphasis on service under conditions of positive diversity climate. Their results supported this hypothesis and, furthermore, revealed that the positive link between diversity climate and customer satisfaction was higher in stores with greater proportions of minorities for whom diversity climate was more important.

We categorize another study by McKay and his colleagues (2008) as an example of research involving facet-specific rather than global outcomes, even though sales performance is once again the outcome of focus, because of the fact that the authors examine mean racial differences in sales performance. They found that mean racial differences in sales performance are the largest in stores with adverse diversity climates because in those contexts, ethnic minority employees are more likely to

respond to perceived injustices by engaging in self-limiting behaviors and psychologically withdrawing from their work. In comparison, mean racial differences are smallest in stores with positive diversity climates. In another study in which objective performance is examined through a diversity lens, Chen and colleagues (2012) focused on a specific type of sales—what they call cultural sales, or sales transactions involving clients from cultures that differed from an employee’s own culture. In their two-level model, they find support for their hypotheses that the positive relationship between individual-level motivational cultural intelligence and cultural sales is stronger in firms with prodiversity climates as well as in firms with high aggregate motivational cultural intelligence. With regard to diversity climate, their reasoning is that supportive diversity climates trigger a social contagion process such that employees who feel they are fairly treated in turn treat their diverse customers better.

Outcomes associated with the synergy perspective. Only one of the studies that we reviewed measured diversity climate with a scale that is more in line with the synergy than the fairness & discrimination perspective (Hofhuis et al., 2012). The authors assessed the extent to which branch employees think positively about, understand and accept, discuss, and see as advantageous the cultural differences among them. They found that psychological diversity climate is positively associated with job satisfaction, perceived job recognition, organizational identification, and cultural identity salience. Moreover, the relationship involving cultural identity salience was stronger among majority group members who become more accepting of other cultural perspectives in positive diversity climates and in so doing, develop a greater perspective of their own cultural identity. Hofhuis et al. also found that the relationship involving organizational identification is stronger for minority employees for whom it is easier to identify with an organization with a supportive diversity climate.

In the only other study that we categorized as reflecting the synergy perspective, Hoever, van Knippenberg, van Ginkel, and Barkema (2012) experimentally manipulated an aspect of synergy

climate—perspective taking—to demonstrate its importance for leveraging performance benefits from diversity. They manipulated perspective taking by instructing research participants to actively try to understand the reasoning underlying the perspectives of their team members. As expected, diverse teams that engaged in perspective taking integrated more information, allowing them to develop more novel and useful ideas.

Predictors associated with hybrid conceptualizations of diversity climate. To date, research on the predictors of diversity climate is extremely limited. In one notable exception, Herdman and McMillan-Capehart (2010) found that formally established diversity programs strengthen perceptions of positive diversity climate. This relationship is amplified by management team heterogeneity and the extent to which managerial attitudes reflect a valuation of employees. More recently, scholars have begun examining how employees' perceptions of diversity climate can be positively influenced by other features of the organizational context, such as by the use of a common language (Lauring & Selmer, 2012) and perceptions regarding the fairness of performance appraisals (Volpone et al., 2012).

Outcomes associated with hybrid conceptualizations of diversity climate. In their study, Lauring and Selmer (2011) clearly derive their underlying theoretical arguments from the synergy perspective; however, upon close inspection, the items used to operationalize diversity climate (what they call group openness to diversity) are somewhat ambiguous and appear to be focused primarily on the absence of bias against different coworkers. For example, the item “department members make an extra effort to listen to people speaking different languages” could simply reflect a tolerance for, or lack of bias against, coworkers who are different, which is consistent with the fairness & discrimination perspective. With that said, one could describe their measure to reflect what might be considered a “weak” operationalization of the synergy perspective. Their reliance on employees' reports of global outcomes—group performance and satisfaction—unfortunately does not help to pinpoint the synergy

mechanisms on which they base their arguments. They find that group members who perceive that their group is open to linguistic, value, and informational diversity also report a positive impression about the group as a whole. However, this positive association could be present regardless of whether the group actually successfully integrates diverse viewpoints to create new knowledge and would seem reflective more of social integration as a fairness & discrimination outcome than of synergy.

Like the study by Luring and Selmer (2011), 13 other empirical studies that we reviewed utilized a mix of items measuring the fairness & discrimination as well as synergy perspectives. Although almost all of these measures were dominated by fairness & discrimination items and contained just one or two items that reflect the synergy perspective (Nishii, 2013, is an exception), we review them here because we did not see them as pure examples of the fairness & discrimination perspective of diversity climate. As was the case with studies representing the fairness & discrimination perspective, the majority of these studies involved psychological diversity climate perceptions and global rather than facet-specific outcomes.

The focal construct in two studies by Buttner and colleagues (2010a, 2012) is employees' perceptions of organizational diversity promise fulfillment, which primarily has to do with the fair implementation of organizational practices, except for the inclusion of one item about whether different opinions are valued. They find that diversity promise fulfillment perceptions are associated with higher commitment and lower turnover intentions for employees of color and that these relationships are mediated by interactional justice. Furthermore, they found that the relationship between diversity promise fulfillment and organizational commitment is stronger when procedural justice is high. In a follow-up study, Buttner et al. (2012) distinguish between diversity promise fulfillment and diversity climate, the latter of which they conceptualize as a more proximal construct that is heavily influenced by one's supervisor and that mediates the relationship with global employee attitudes (turnover intentions

and commitment). They also find support for a positive interactive effect of diversity promise fulfillment and diversity climate on employee attitudes. These results suggest that there may be some trickle down of diversity climate through levels of the organization; however, relationships involving both constructs were analyzed by using individual-level perceptions, and therefore conclusions about the interactive effects across levels of analysis should be interpreted with caution.

Two of the remaining three studies that examined the association between psychological diversity climate and global outcomes were similar in their reliance on relative deprivation theory according to which the positive outcomes associated with diversity climate perceptions are stronger for minority employees. Specifically, Volpone and colleagues (2012) found that employees' perceptions that they have received fair performance appraisals are associated with positive diversity climate perceptions, which in turn are associated with engagement, and that this (partially) mediated relationship is stronger for racial minorities who are more sensitive to discrimination. Similarly, McKay and colleagues (2007) argued that women and racial minorities benefit more from diversity climate. Consistent with this, their findings showed that the positive relationship between diversity climate perceptions and commitment (which was associated with turnover intentions) was stronger for women and Black employees.

Finally, in the last study that we categorized as linking a hybrid diversity climate measure with a global outcome, Smith and colleagues (2012) offer a nice contribution by highlighting how multiple sources of information are used to assess an organization's actual commitment to diversity. In particular, they showed that when a company's projected diversity image is reinforced by demographic heterogeneity in its workforce, potential applicants are more likely to perceive the company as being authentically committed to diversity. Moreover, in a follow-up study, they found that subjects who perceived the organization's diversity climate as authentic were more likely to engage in interpersonal

helping behaviors directed at newcomers. They relied on synergy arguments to explain their findings—in particular, that when organizations implement practices aimed at representation as well as inclusion, they create multicultural environments that are characterized by learning and integration at every level. However, we caution that because all but one item in their measure of diversity climate focus on fairness and discrimination, and because the theoretical rationale for choosing helping behaviors toward newcomers as the outcome variable for the synergistic processes that they propose to be at work is not obvious, these findings may not actually provide evidence of the synergy perspective.

Only two of the studies involving psychological perceptions of a mixed diversity climate measure examined facet-specific outcomes. Sliter, Boyd, Sinclair, Cheung, and McFadden (2014) utilized a measure containing a single item reflecting synergy (“workgroup has a climate that values diverse perspectives” McKay et al., 2007); however, their hypotheses are clearly reflective of the fairness & discrimination perspective. They utilize the job demands and resources model to argue that diversity climate represents a type of job resource that buffers minority employees against experiences of interpersonal conflict, which in turn is associated with engagement and burnout. Compared to the study by Sliter and colleagues, a study by Hobman and colleagues (2004) more deliberately relies on theoretical arguments related to both of the perspectives of diversity climate. They hypothesized that as a result of social categorization processes, individuals who are dissimilar to their coworkers are less likely to experience involvement in information elaboration and collective decision making and that this negative relationship would be moderated by perceptions of the group’s openness to diversity. Utilizing a measure that mixes a learning/synergy focused item with other items that are concerned more with the absence of bias, they largely find support for their hypothesis.

The three studies involving shared diversity climate operationalized by hybrid measures all focused on facet-specific outcomes. In the first of these, Drach-Zahavy and Trogan (2013) utilized the

McKay et al. (2007) measure that includes a single item reflecting the synergy perspective. However, their theoretical arguments are aligned with the fairness & discrimination perspective. They hypothesize and find that when team members share the perception that preventing discrimination really matters in their unit (i.e., favorable diversity climate), the positive relationship between team diversity and interpersonal aggression is attenuated.

In contrast, the other two studies invoke both fairness & discrimination and synergy arguments. Boehm, Dwertmann, et al. (2014) argue that group performance is promoted when diversity climate attenuates negative group processes, such as discrimination, that get in the way of performance and when it fosters positive group processes, such as communication. Indeed, they found that the positive relationship between group diversity climate and performance is mediated by an absence of workgroup discrimination. Two out of seven items from their scale represent strong operationalizations of synergy (“diversity in my organization improves mission performance” and “my work unit is valued for the different perspectives that we bring to the organization”), but, unfortunately, because the positive group processes associated with synergy were not measured and the majority of items focus on fairness & discrimination, it is possible that the observed performance benefits of diversity climate may represent an accumulation of improved individual-level outcomes.

Although Nishii (2013) also includes a mixed conceptual and operational focus on fairness & discrimination as well as synergy, her study differs from the rest in its inclusion of separate sub-dimensions relating to the two perspectives. The first sub-dimension focuses on the fair implementation of employment practices at the workgroup level, the second reflects a workgroup’s commitment to personalized rather than stereotypic interactions, and the third (called “inclusion in decision making”) is focused on synergy. Consistent with her theoretical argument that a group’s ability to leverage diverse backgrounds as a source of insight is predicated on the invalidation of arbitrary status differences and

the existence of strong norms for engaging multiple identities, findings showed that the three sub-dimensions were highly correlated and therefore collapsed into a single second-order factor. Results supported the argument that the negative interpersonal conflicts that are often triggered by diversity are eliminated in inclusive climates, thereby making it possible for diverse groups to engage in integrative decision-making processes. Although her conceptual model is largely synergy oriented, with the first dimension related to fairness included as a foundational requirement for synergistic processes, the use of conflict measures to assess mediating group processes did not allow Nishii to capture the positive group process benefits that are likely to emerge in inclusive climates. It is possible that respondents may have indicated that they did not experience a “conflict of ideas” in their work unit (which has a negative connotation) but still engage in the active exchange and integration of dissenting or contrasting points of view (as found by Hoever et al., 2012). It is likely that an organizational-level operationalization of the first fairness & discrimination factor would not be as highly correlated with work-group level experiences involving the second and third dimensions, thereby allowing for more distinct tests of links with fairness & discrimination versus synergy outcomes at various levels of analysis in future uses of the measure.

Two additional studies are worthy of mention here although they might not formally be considered diversity climate studies. They both examine the relationship between shared perceptions of psychological safety and diversity, with the underlying premise being that psychological safety to voice diverse perspectives is important for leveraging synergistic outcomes. In the first of these, Martins, Schilpzand, Kirkman, Ivanaj, and Ivanaj (2013) found that expertise diversity is related to higher performance under conditions of high psychological safety. Similarly, Kirkman, Cordery, Mathieu, Rosen, and Kukenberger (2013) found that when members of internationally diverse communities of practice

report high levels of psychological safety, they tend to engage in more information sharing, as evidenced in higher performance.

Other Problems Associated With Diversity Climate Measures

According to long-standing definitions of organizational climate, climate is (a) a perceptual construct (Rentsch, 1990; Schneider, 1983), (b) a property of the unit (Kuenzi & Schminke, 2009; Schneider, Ehrhart, & Macey, 2013), and (c) not about individual attitudes of the employees (Ostroff, Kinicki, & Muhammad, 2012; Schneider, Erhart, & Macey, 2011). Unfortunately, our literature review made it apparent that a significant number of studies do not share this understanding of diversity climate.

First, organizational characteristics such as the proportion of minority members (Rabl & Triana, 2014) or the existence of development programs for women (e.g., Mor Barak et al., 1998) do not represent diversity climate. Rather, they represent factors that, once interpreted by employees, might shape perceptions of diversity climate. The distinction is important here because even within a single organization where practices are presumably held constant, there is often variation in the way that those practices are perceived. Practices could be perceived as reflecting an intrinsic motivation to ensure equal opportunity or as efforts to simply project a positive external image or meet legal requirements (Bowen & Ostroff, 2004; Nishii & Wright, 2008), just as diversity itself may be interpreted as a sign of an organization's commitment to diversity or as nothing more than a reflection of the available labor pool (Pugh et al., 2008). The former interpretations would likely lead to more favorable diversity climate perceptions than the latter. Climate measures should thus tap subjective interpretations and not request factual reporting of the existence of certain practices or diversity.

Second, diversity climate measures sometimes include items referring to individualized experiences rather than shared ones, with items such as “I trust the company to treat me fairly” (McKay et al., 2008) and “I have sometimes been unfairly singled out because of the demographic group I belong to” (Chrobot-Mason & Aramovich, 2013). Even when it is assessed at the individual level of analysis (i.e., psychological climate), however, diversity climate is a property of the unit (i.e., team, organization), and the perceptions should concern the work environment as a whole rather than an individual’s own experiences (Schneider et al., 2011). As Wallace, Edwards, Paul, Burke, Christian, and Eissa state, when there is “a mismatch between the levels of theory, measurement, and/or statistical analysis, empirical results may not be interpretable with regard to theoretical or methodological linkages among the constructs” (2016: 840). Similarly, questions about discrimination against specific demographic groups should, in a climate measure, assess the perception that discrimination exists in the organization and not an individual respondent’s experiences with discrimination. Finally, collapsing individualized experience and unit-level items is problematic because the former are more affective responses, while the latter focus on cognitive appraisals of the environment (Burke, Borucki, & Hurley, 1992; Wallace et al.).

Third, a significant number of diversity climate measures utilize questions that capture personal attitudes related to diversity. Perhaps the clearest and strongest example of this is the Mor Barak et al. (1998) measure that includes two personal attitude subscales (with items such as “I believe diversity is a strategic business issue”). The inclusion of such attitude subscales or items is problematic not only because diversity climate and personal attitudes represent different theoretical concepts but also because research shows that diversity climate and attitudes have different causes and effects. In their study, van Knippenberg, Homan, and van Ginkel (2013) review evidence that members of underrepresented groups have more positive diversity attitudes than members of majority groups but

more negative climate perceptions, suggesting that combining them in one measure may obscure issues of importance. This is not to say that personal diversity beliefs and attitudes are not relevant. Indeed, there is a case to be made that they can moderate the effects of diversity (for a review, see van Knippenberg, Homan, & van Ginkel). Diversity attitudes can also be seen as shaping, and being shaped by, diversity climate (cf. Ostroff et al., 2012). However, they represent causes, consequences, or correlates of diversity climate and not diversity climate itself.

What Diversity Climate Research Needs to Do (and Not Do)

Our theory-driven review identified three key issues to address in diversity climate research, the first two of which are closely intertwined. First, diversity climate research should move away from the almost exclusive focus on the fairness & discrimination perspective and engage conceptually as well as empirically with the synergy perspective as a separate aspect of diversity climate that is not automatically implied by a climate that is favorable in fairness & discrimination terms. Second, levels of analysis and research outcomes should be more carefully considered. Not only should the synergy perspective more than the fairness & discrimination perspective prioritize outcomes at the team level of analysis but it is also a nontrivial question whether individual-level outcomes are driven more by individual-level or shared climate perceptions (i.e., as a cross-level influence). In other words, the focus on individual-level outcomes in and of itself does not justify a focus on psychological rather than shared climate.

A somewhat more separate but also important issue is that operationalizations of diversity climate should capture only climate and avoid confounds with such issues as diversity attitudes, individualized experiences, or potential antecedents of climate perceptions. The answers to our call to

develop the field towards climate measures that would treat the fairness & discrimination and synergy perspectives as separate aspects of diversity climate thus would ideally also result in more pure and unconfounded climate measures.

Moving the Field Forward: Future Research on Diversity Climate

Research on diversity climate has shown that efforts to manage diversity matter. Even so, because of the three key problems we identified, the field has been holding itself back both in terms of the quality of the evidence generated and in terms of the research questions asked. Addressing these three problems would move the field forward not only by leading to more valid conclusions regarding currently researched questions but also by focusing us on new ones.

Diversity Climate as Fairness & Discrimination and Synergy

Conceptualizing and operationalizing diversity climate as including separate fairness & discrimination and synergy aspects raises new and potentially important questions for diversity climate research. A first question is whether these two aspects have interacting influences. Extrapolating from the categorization-elaboration model (van Knippenberg et al., 2004) would suggest they do in that a strong fairness & discrimination climate may be important to reduce or eliminate negative social categorization processes but that this in and of itself would not be enough to stimulate the active pursuit of synergetic outcomes. This could suggest that a strong fairness & discrimination climate would be a necessary but insufficient precondition for the synergetic effects of a strong synergy climate. Arguments made by Nishii (2013), as well as van Knippenberg, van Ginkel, and Homan's (2013) recent analysis of diversity mind-sets, suggest that a strong synergy climate cannot exist without a strong fairness & discrimination climate. Thus, we expect the proactive pursuit of synergy climate to be

superior because it should yield not only synergetic performance outcomes but also those associated with fairness & discrimination climate.

Multilevel Models of Diversity Climate Effects

Even though both the fairness & discrimination and synergy perspectives may be meaningfully linked to outcomes at the organizational, team, and individual levels of analysis, they may nevertheless differ in the meaningfulness with which they can be operationalized as psychological versus shared climate. At its core, the synergy perspective relies on interpersonal and team interaction. It involves leveraging distributed information associated with diversity—an activity that is virtually impossible without interaction between demographically dissimilar people. It would therefore seem that the shared experience of a synergy climate is required to make this happen. The fairness & discrimination perspective, in contrast, could also suggest a case for stronger effects with more shared climates but at the same time leaves much more room for a case for psychological climate influences. Indeed, for certain outcomes, such as individuals' identification with the organization, an individual's perception of the climate may be more guiding than the extent to which others share this perception. However, the fact that 22 out of 29 fairness & discrimination studies and 32 studies overall operationalize climate at the individual level is very significant and would, as one reviewer of this paper pointed out, have some people question whether we are actually talking about climate research. The explicit distinction between fairness & discrimination and synergy aspects of climate thus also invites questions regarding the differential importance of the sharedness of climate perceptions.

Mediating Mechanisms and Outcomes for Fairness & Discrimination Versus Synergy

We outlined how the theoretical mechanisms that link the fairness & discrimination and synergy perspectives to the respective outcomes should be different. Whereas fairness & discrimination mainly

relates to social categorization and social exchange, synergy outcomes should emerge from a process of information exchange and integration. Consequently, the mediators and outcomes associated with the two perspectives may also differ (cf. van Knippenberg et al., 2004). Even so, the logic captured in the categorization-elaboration model of social categorization and information elaboration processes as interacting would suggest that these are not completely separate paths to separate outcomes. Research that builds from the distinction between fairness & discrimination and synergy may thus also enrich our understanding of diversity climate effects by speaking to the extent to which these perspectives are associated with different mediating processes.

Creating Positive Diversity Climates

As the conceptualization and measurement of diversity climate is refined (see Table 2), we urge scholars to identify interventions and managerial behaviors that effectively improve the diversity climate of a workgroup or organization. As apparent from our review and mentioned elsewhere (cf. Dwertmann & Boehm, 2016), there is a clear lack of such studies. Existing research has mainly examined demographic attributes (e.g., Kossek & Zonia, 1993; Mor Barak et al., 1998) at the individual level and HR practices and programs at the organizational level (Boehm, Kunze, & Bruch, 2014; Herdman & McMillan-Capehart, 2010). Although these studies are useful, they suffer from the same bias towards fairness & discrimination and largely leave the question unanswered of what organizations can do to build a strong synergy climate.

In Conclusion

Our theory-driven review of the diversity climate literature clearly shows that diversity climate matters. What at a high level of abstraction can be called a positive diversity climate is associated with

positive outcomes relevant to the challenges of organizational diversity. At the same time, our review identifies a clear need to address three major shortcomings in diversity climate research: the fact that research is heavily biased towards the fairness & discrimination aspect of diversity climate while largely neglecting the synergy aspect, the underdeveloped treatment of levels of analysis and the outcomes associated with different perspectives on diversity climate, and the confounded nature of many diversity climate measures. We contend that addressing these issues should introduce a shift in focus that will advance diversity climate research and yield insights with great value for diversity management practice.

Note

1. Our arguments in this article refer to all types of diversity. However, an argument could be made that the fairness & discrimination perspective aligns more naturally with ascribed, unchangeable, or surface-level diversity, while the synergy perspective is theoretically broader and refers to the integration of diverse perspectives that may derive from a wider variety of factors than ascribed dimensions alone.

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Table 1
Empirical Journal Articles on the Topic of Diversity Climate

Authors	Level of analysis DC	Fairness & discrimination versus synergy focus	Consequences of DC*	Moderators of the DC relationship	Measure of DC	Referent of DC items
Avery et al. (2013)	Individual	Fairness & discrimination focus	Job pursuit intentions; identity affirmation (mediator)	Other groups orientation as a moderator of the relationship between organizational value of diversity and job pursuit intentions	Four self-developed items based on prior scales (e.g., Mor Barak, Cherin, & Berkman, 1998)	Company
Boehm, Dwertmann, Kurze, Michaelis, Parks, & McDonald (2014)	Workgroup	2 out of 7 items with a strong synergy focus	Workgroup performance; workgroup discrimination (mediator)	Group size as a moderator of the DC-discrimination relationship and the entire mediation model	7 items from Parks, Krause, Crepeau, & McDonald (2008)	Mix
Boehm, Kurze, & Bruch (2014)	Company	Fairness & discrimination focus	Company performance; collective turnover intentions; collective perceptions of social exchange (mediator)		4 self-developed items based on Pugh, Dietz, Brief, & Wiley (2008)	Mix
Buttner, Lowe, & Billings-Harris (2010a)	Individual	1 out of 5 diversity promise fulfillment items with a weak synergy focus	Interactional justice; organizational commitment; turnover intentions; psychological contract violation	Procedural justice; racial awareness	5-item diversity promise fulfillment scale from Chrobot-Mason (2003)	Organization
Buttner, Lowe, & Billings-Harris (2010b)	Individual	Fairness & discrimination focus	Interactional and procedural justice; organizational commitment; turnover intentions; psychological contract violation		6 items from Mor Barak et al. (1998)	Mix
Buttner, Lowe, & Billings-Harris (2012)	Individual	Fairness & discrimination focus of the diversity climate scale; 1 out of 5 diversity promise fulfillment items with a weak synergy focus	Organizational commitment; turnover intentions		10 items from Mor Barak et al. (1998) and 5-item diversity promise fulfillment scale from Chrobot-Mason (2003)	Mix

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Table 1 (continued)

Authors	Level of analysis DC	Fairness & discrimination versus synergy focus	Consequences of DC ^a	Moderators of the DC relationship	Measure of DC	Referent of DC items
Chen, Lui, & Pormoy (2012)	Organization	Fairness & discrimination focus ^b	Individual cultural sales		15 items from Robertson (2006)	Organization
Chrobot-Mason & Aramovich (2013)	Individual	Fairness & discrimination focus	Turnover intentions; organizational identification; climate for innovation; psychological empowerment; identity freedom (mediators)		Self-developed measure consisting of four subscales based on Cox (1991; 1994; structural integration, informal integration, low cultural bias, intergroup cohesion). Low cultural bias measured with 7 items from K. James, Lovato, & Cropanzano (1994)	Mix
Dalton, Willems, Ivancevich, & Graves (2009)	Individual	Fairness & discrimination focus	None		53 self-developed items based on Larkey (1996)	Mix
Drach-Zahavy & Trogan (2013)	Work unit	1 out of 9 items with a weak synergy focus	Interpersonal aggression		9 items from McKay, Avery, Tondan del, Morris, Hernandez, & Hebl (2007; referent changed to unit)	Work unit
Gonzalez & Denis (2009)	Work unit	Fairness & discrimination focus	Organizational attachment; firm effectiveness		10 items from Mor Barak et al. (1998)	Mix
Groggins & Ryan (2013)	Individual (within qualitative case study of single organization)	Qualitative study, therefore not coded	Openness to change; openness to others; openness to error; perceived person-environment fit; efficacy for change; interpersonal competence; improvement capacity; actual person-environment fit		Focus group interviews	—
Gaerero, Sylvestre, & Muresanu (2013)	Individual	Fairness & discrimination focus	Perceived insider status	Leader-member exchange relationship	4 items from Mor Barak et al. (1998)	Organization
Herdman & McMillan-Capelhart (2010)	Hotel	1 out of 3 items with a weak synergy focus	DC as outcome	Management team relational values; management team heterogeneity	3 self-developed items	Hotel

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Table 1 (continued)

Authors	Level of analysis DC	Fairness & discrimination versus synergy focus	Consequences of DC	Moderators of the DC relationship	Measure of DC	Referent of DC items
Hicks-Clarke & Des (2000)	Individual	Fairness & discrimination focus	DC as outcome		2 subscales adapted from Alimov-Mekalef (1993) and Kosek & Zonia (1993)	Organization
Hobman, Bordia, & Gallois (2004)	Individual	1 out of 6 items with a strong synergy focus	Workgroup involvement		6 items based on Whitt, Pascarella, Edison, Nom, & Terenzi (2001); Kosek, Zonia, & Young (1996); Hirtel & Fujimoto (1999)	Team
Hoever, van Knippenberg, van Ginkel, & Barkema (2012)	Team	Synergy (perspective taking)	Creativity		Perspective taking experimentally manipulated, then tested with 5 self-developed items	Individual
Hofhuis, van der Zee, & Otten (2012)	Individual	Weak synergy	Job satisfaction; perceived job recognition; diversity-related conflict; cultural identity, or organizational identity, and dual identity (interaction of cultural and organizational identity; mediators)	Cultural background as a moderator of the DC-mediator relationships	6 items from Luijters, van der Zee, & Otten (2008) (respectively Kruthoff, 2001)	Branch
Houlihan & Boxall (2011)	Individual	Fairness & discrimination focus			Telephone interview with 4 items from McKay, Avery, & Morris (2008)	Company (including top leaders as representatives) Organizations
Kaiser, Major, Jurcovic, Dover, Brady, & Shapiro (2013)	Individual	Fairness & discrimination focus	Discrimination claims (6 experimental studies' outcomes)		Organizational diversity structures (multiple tested in 6 experimental studies)	

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Table 1 (continued)

Authors	Level of analysis DC	Fairness & discrimination versus synergy focus	Consequences of DC*	Moderators of the DC relationship	Measure of DC	Referent of DC items
Kaplan, Wiley, & Maertz (2011)	Individual	Fairness & discrimination focus	Turnover intentions	Calculative attachment (mediator); pay satisfaction, level of perceived supervisor effectiveness (moderators)	5 self-developed items	Mix
Kirkman, Cordery, Mathieu, Rosen, & Kukenberger (2013)	Community	1 out of 7 items with a strong synergy focus	Organizational communities of practice performance		7 psychological safety items from Edmondson (1999)	Community
Kouzes & Zonia (1993)	Individual	Fairness & discrimination focus	DC as outcome		14 self-developed items	Company
Larley (1996)	Individual	Fairness & discrimination focus	None		56 self-developed items	Mix
Lauring & Selmer (2011)	Individual	1 out of 4 items with a weak synergy focus	Group satisfaction; group performance		10 items adapted from Hobman et al. (2004)	Department members
Lauring & Selmer (2012)	Individual	1 out of 4 items with a weak synergy focus	DC as outcome		10 items adapted from Hobman et al. (2004)	Department members
Leslie & Gelfand (2008)	Individual	Fairness & discrimination focus ^b	Internal claims of gender discrimination	Gender identity	5 items by Nishii & Raver (2003)	Mix
Maranto & Griffin (2011)	Individual	Fairness & discrimination focus	Exclusion from academic department via informal interactions	Gender	Procedural justice (several items from Mor Barak et al., 1998, and self-developed items)	Unclear, probably academic department and university
Martins, Schilpzand, Kirkman, Ivanaj, & Ivanaj (2013)	Team	1 out of 7 items with a strong synergy focus	Team performance		7 psychological safety items from Edmondson (1999)	Team

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Table 1 (continued)

Authors	Level of analysis DC	Fairness & discrimination versus synergy focus	Consequences of DC*	Moderators of the DC relationship	Measure of DC	Referent of DC items
McKay et al. (2007)	Individual	1 out of 9 items with a weak synergy focus	Sales performance; organizational commitment (mediator)		9 self-developed items	Company (including top leaders as representatives)
McKay et al. (2008)	Store unit	Fairness & discrimination focus	Sales performance		4 items from McKay et al. (2008)	Company (including top leaders as representatives)
McKay, Avery, & Morris (2009)	Store unit	Fairness & discrimination focus	Store unit sales performance	DC from a supervisor and subordinate perspective as interactive effect	4 items from McKay et al. (2008)	Company (including top leaders as representatives)
McKay, Avery, Liao, & Morris (2011)	Store unit	Fairness & discrimination focus	Customer satisfaction	Service climate; minority representation; female representation	4 items from McKay et al. (2008)	Company (including top leaders as representatives)
Mor Barak et al. (1998)	Individual	Fairness & discrimination focus	DC as outcome		16 self-developed items	Mix
Nishi (2013)	Work unit	6 out of 15 items with a weak or strong synergy focus	Relationship conflict; task conflict; unit satisfaction; unit turnover		15 self-developed items from three dimensions (foundation of equitable employment practices, integration of differences, inclusion in decision making)	Unit (1 item focuses on top management)
Price, Harrison, & Gavin (2006)	Individual	Fairness & discrimination focus	Social loafing	Identifiability of individual contributions	2 items from justice (e.g., Lind & Tyler, 1988) and group decision rule (e.g., Miller, Jackson, Mueller, & Schersching, 1987) studies and 1 self-developed item	Team
Pugh et al. (2008)	Unit	Fairness & discrimination focus	DC as outcome	Racial composition of the community where the organization is located	4 items from existing employee survey	Mix

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Table 1 (continued)

Authors	Level of analysis DC	Fairness & discrimination versus synergy focus	Consequences of DC*	Moderators of the DC relationship	Measure of DC	Referent of DC items
Rabl & Triana (2014)	Individual	Fairness & discrimination focus	Organizational attractiveness and expected age discrimination	Potential applicants' individual attitudes toward age diversity as a moderator of the relationship between diversity climate and organizational attractiveness as well as expected age discrimination	2 × 2 scenario design between organizational age diversity and organizational age diversity management practices	—
Ragins, Gonzalez, Ehrhardt, & Singh (2012)	Individual	Community diversity climate measured	Moving intentions		5 self-developed items	Community
Singh & Selvarajan (2013)	Individual	Fairness & discrimination focus	Employee intentions to stay with the organization	Community diversity climate; race	4 items from McKay et al. (2008)	Company (including top leaders as representatives)
Singh, Winkel, & Selvarajan (2013)	Individual	Fairness & discrimination focus	Employee performance (organizational citizenship behaviors—organizational citizenship behaviors—interpersonal, in-role behaviors)	Psychological safety as a mediator of the DC-outcome relationships; race as a moderator of all relationships	4 items from McKay et al. (2008)	Company (including top leaders as representatives)
Sliker, Boyd, Sinclair, & Cheung, & McFadden (2014)	Individual	1 out of 9 items with a weak synergy focus	Engagement, burnout; interpersonal conflict (with physician and manager; mediators)		9 items from McKay et al. (2007)	Company (including top leaders as representatives)

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Table 1 (continued)

Authors	Level of analysis DC	Fairness & discrimination versus synergy focus	Consequences of DC	Moderators of the DC relationship	Measure of DC	Referent of DC items
Smith, Morgan, King, Hebl, & Peddie (2012)	Individual	1 out of 12 items with a strong synergy focus	Interpersonal helping behavior to newcomers		Authenticity of diversity management: 4 items from the Mor Barak et al. (1998) organizational inclusion dimension and 8 self-developed items based on McKay et al. (2007), McKay et al. (2008), and Roberson (2006)	Organization
Stewart, Volpone, Avery, & McKay (2011)	Individual	Fairness & discrimination focus	Turnover intentions	Perceived ethics climate interacts with perceived DC to predict turnover intentions	4 items from McKay et al. (2008)	Company (including top leaders as representatives)
Virick & Greer (2012)	Individual	Fairness & discrimination focus	Sex of person nominated as successor	Gender and performance of the incumbent moderate the DC for women-sex of nominated successor relationship	5 self-developed items	Organization
Volpone, Avery, & McKay (2012)	Individual	1 out of 9 items with a weak synergy focus	Employee engagement		9 items from McKay et al. (2007)	Company (including top leaders as representatives)

Note: Some of the measures may have been modified from the original source. Please refer to the original work. Results for Hypothesis 3c from Singh et al. (2013) and Hypothesis 2b from Virick and Greer (2012) were significant (at the $p < .10$ level). Hypothesis 6 from Gonzalez and DeNisi (2009) gained partial support. Hypothesis 4 from Rabi and Triana (2014) was partially supported. Hypothesis 3 from Sliker et al. (2014) gained partial support. DC = diversity climate or climate for diversity. *These include outcomes and mediators of a diversity climate-outcome relationship. †These studies did not provide all items. The judgment was made based on the ones that were provided.