ON BEING DIFFERENT:

EXPLORING THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN DISSIMILARITY

AND SOCIAL INCLUSION IN THE WORKPLACE

ONUR ŞAHIN

On being different:

Exploring the relationship between dissimilarity
and social inclusion in the workplace

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Over anders zijn:

Hoe werknemers die anders zijn dan hun collega's sociale inclusie waarnemen

(met een samenvatting in het Nederlands)

Proefschrift

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"The 'hey you' is not just addressed to anybody: some bodies more than others are recruited, those that can inherit and reproduce the character of the organization, by reflecting its image back to itself, by having a 'good likeness'. There can be comfort in reflection. Note that there is an invitation in proximity—to become more alike, to acquire a better likeness. The word 'comfort' suggests well-being and satisfaction, but it can also suggest an ease and easiness. Comfort is about an encounter between bodies and worlds, the promise of a 'sinking' feeling. If white bodies are comfortable it is because they can sink into spaces that extend their shape."

Sara Ahmed in *On Being Included (2012)*
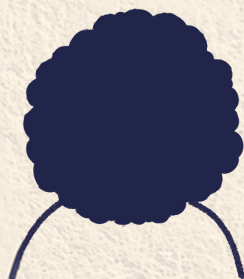
CHAPTER 1

Overview and Discussion of Dissertation

OVERVIEW AND DISCUSSION OF DISSERTATION

Diversity in the workplace has long been a topic of interest for researchers and organizations alike. Under the right conditions, diversity can result in better perspective-taking and greater task focus. However, in other circumstances, it can result in more conflict and mistrust between team members (Carter & Phillips, 2017; Galinsky et al., 2015). Therefore, it is vital to understand how diversity shapes relationships within teams and to consider the role of the context in which they operate. In doing so, it is important to recognize that individuals' experiences in diverse teams may not be uniform. Some team members may belong to the majority group within the team, finding it easy to navigate and thrive, whereas others may be in a minority position and experience what is known as 'dissimilarity'.

The concept of dissimilarity is central to understanding the dynamics within diverse teams. For instance, some employees may experience to be dissimilar from most colleagues on one or more dimensions (e.g., ethnicity, personality, and/or age). Such dissimilarity can result in notable disparities between majorities and minorities in well-being and performance, such as higher absenteeism and more experiences of conflicts and discrimination among dissimilar employees (Avery et al., 2008; Hobman & Bordia, 2006; Jansen et al., 2017). Reducing these disparities between majorities and minorities requires a profound understanding of their underlying problems. Therefore, it is critical to thoroughly explore how dissimilarity may affect individual team members. Consequently, this dissertation focuses on six key research themes, each pivotal in understanding the experiences of individuals situated within diverse teams and organizations.

First, many organizations are making efforts to become more diverse and inclusive, but their understanding of what diversity entails can differ across organizations and between the public and private sector. Prior research indicates that organizations perceive diversity through various dimensions, including demographic and task-related dimensions (Jonsen et al., 2021; Kirby et al., 2023; Point & Singh, 2003). However, these studies have exclusively investigated large private organizations, thereby overlooking the potential divergent perspectives on diversity within the public sector, which also encompasses a significant workforce. This knowledge gap creates an opportunity to explore how public organizations conceptualize diversity, which may differ from their private counterparts (Groeneveld & Verbeek, 2012). Understanding how both sectors interpret diversity is vital, as the groups prioritized by organizations may not always align with those facing barriers or requiring additional support.

Second, to date, the role of dissimilarity in the workplace has been explored through correlational studies that implicitly assume a causal relationship with work outcomes such as organizational commitment, absenteeism, and social inclusion (David et al., 2019; Jansen et al., 2017; Reinwald & Kunze, 2020). This underlying assumption, however, has not yet been adequately examined. Therefore, empirical evidence to support the assumed causal relationships is crucial to progress within this field.

Third, research on the relationship between various types of dissimilarity and perceived inclusion is limited. For example, Guillaume and colleagues (2012) provided insights into the effects of surface-level (i.e., readily visible) and deep-level (more underlying, less visible) dissimilarity on social integration, but tested these effects using separate models. The interplay between these types of dissimilarity and their combined effects on employees' work outcomes remains unexplored.

Fourth, the cumulative effects of dissimilarity across multiple dimensions are not well understood. Examining how dissimilarity on multiple dimensions relates to work outcomes would offer a more nuanced and complete understanding of the experience of employees.

Fifth, the mechanisms that drive the relationship between dissimilarity and work outcomes are often theorized but rarely tested. In the context of growing evidence that dissimilarity plays an important role in the workplace, a precise understanding of the processes that are triggered by dissimilarity is imperative.

Sixth, and finally, the exploration of dissimilarity's impact on employees requires a thorough understanding of the organizational context, particularly the climate for inclusion. Some evidence suggests that in environments fostering equitable treatment of dissimilar employees, such employees perceive as much inclusion as their peers (e.g., Jansen et al., 2017; Nishii, 2013). However, this aspect remains under-researched. A more nuanced perspective can be achieved by probing into how the climate for inclusion shapes the relationships between different types of dissimilarity (such as surface-level and deep-level, and across various specific dimensions) and work outcomes, as well as the underlying mechanisms triggered by dissimilarity.

By exploring these research themes, this dissertation comprehensively investigates how feeling different from the norm affects individual employees, utilizing a multi-method approach consisting of desk research, experimental studies, and large-scale correlational studies. In the following section, I define and explain the

theoretical frameworks that have guided this research and clarify the key concepts used throughout this dissertation. Subsequent to this, I present a comprehensive summary of the methods employed and results obtained in Chapter 2 through 6. Rather than dedicating a separate Chapter to discuss the findings, I will do so in the concluding section of this Chapter, placing my findings in the context of the field of relational demography and exploring their broader implications. This discussion will not only consider the academic implications for the social science literature, but also the practical implications for practitioners in diverse work environments. As such, this chapter serves as the synthesis of my dissertation, integrating key findings and their implications.

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

Relational Demography and Dissimilarity

The study of how dissimilarity affects employees in teams is often approached through the lens of the relational demography framework (Tsui & O'Reilly III, 1989). This framework posits that demographic dimensions, such as age, gender, and race, are not isolated factors but are considered in the broader social environment. In other words, the way employees' age, gender, and/or race shapes relationships between team members is not determined solely by these attributes on their own. Rather, it is shaped by how these characteristics correspond to and differ from those of other team members. For instance, in a predominantly male team, a female member's interactions and experiences may be shaped more by the gender imbalance rather than by her gender alone.

Building on this understanding, the relational approach emphasizes the importance of recognizing the similarities and differences between employees as a critical aspect of their workplace relationships (Kaur & Ren, 2022). It provides a useful framework to study the social psychological processes that relate to dissimilarity, which will be the main focus of this dissertation. In this context, it is essential to define what 'dissimilarity' means within a team environment.

Dissimilarity refers to the extent to which an individual differs from team members on one or more dimensions, including ethnicity, age, gender, work experience, and education level. In the existing literature, dissimilarity is explored through two lenses: actual dissimilarity and perceived dissimilarity. The former involves calculating a measure of the distance between an individual and their team members on specific dimensions (e.g., Euclidean distance, Jansen et al., 2017), while the latter focuses on individuals' perceptions of differences between themselves and

their team members (e.g., Hobman et al., 2003). Importantly, research indicates a close association between actual and perceived dissimilarity, rendering the choice between them more pragmatic than theoretical (Cunningham, 2007).

Given this background, Chapter 3 of this dissertation comprises experimental studies wherein actual dissimilarity is manipulated by assigning participants to fictitious teams where other team members have either similar or dissimilar work styles. Since actual and perceived dissimilarity are closely related (Cunningham, 2007), such manipulation of team composition is also expected to impact participants' perceptions of dissimilarity. However, in Chapters 4, 5, and 6, the goal is to gain a deeper understanding of the relationship between multiple types of dissimilarity and perceived inclusion. Therefore, perceived dissimilarity is adopted as the method of operationalization. This decision primarily stems from the diverse range of dissimilarity types examined, making it challenging to calculate an index of dissimilarity for each one.

Perceptions of Social Inclusion

A critical aspect of understanding the implications of dissimilarity is exploring how it affects perceptions of social inclusion. While inclusion is a widely studied and essential topic in the context of diverse workplaces, definitions vary among researchers (Ellemers et al., 2013; Puritty et al., 2017; Shore et al., 2011, 2018). For the purpose of this dissertation, social inclusion will be defined as an individual's perception that the group not only 1) likes them and provides them the feeling that they belong, but also 2) allows and encourages them to be authentic. These aspects, belonging and authenticity, are considered fundamental human needs (Jansen et al., 2014). This particular understanding of social inclusion will frame and guide the exploration of how dissimilarity affects inclusion within the workplace.

Previous studies have explored the relationship between dissimilarity and concepts that appear similar to social inclusion, including organizational inclusion, team identification and group attachment (Gonzalez, 2016; Hobman & Bordia, 2006; Kim et al., 2019; Shore et al., 2011; Stewart & Garcia-Prieto, 2008). What distinguishes social inclusion from organizational inclusion is that the former puts the emphasis on interpersonal relationships in the workplace, while the latter emphasizes inclusion within organizational structures and procedures, such as decision-making and access to information.

Other concepts that emphasize social relationships, such as identification or attachment, focus on individuals aligning with or forming emotional bonds to a group,

making the individual the central figure. Social inclusion, on the other hand, redirects the focus to the group's role in conveying signals of belonging and authenticity to the individual. This nuanced perspective highlights the unique role of social inclusion in group dynamics and sets the stage for deeper exploration.

Some studies suggest that dissimilar employees may feel less included compared to their non-dissimilar counterparts, with potential effects on well-being and job performance (Guillaume et al., 2012; Jansen et al., 2017). Building on this foundation, this dissertation aims to delve into the dissimilarity-inclusion relationship, exploring its conditions and underlying mechanisms.

Why Dissimilarity Relates to Perceptions of Inclusion: The Ingroup Projection Model

Various theoretical models have been employed to explore how dissimilarity influences dynamics between employees. Among them, the social identity approach and similarity-attraction paradigm have been utilized (for a review, see Kaur & Ren, 2022). However, the ingroup projection model (IPM; Mummendey & Wenzel, 1999; Wenzel et al., 2007) stands out as particularly relevant for this dissertation. The IPM specifically theorizes about the dynamics between subgroups within larger groups, making it especially applicable when considering how dissimilarity between employees can create subgroups within teams. This model can provide valuable insights into why employees who are dissimilar to most of their team members may perceive less inclusion than their peers (Jansen et al., 2017).

The IPM is anchored in the social identity approach (Tajfel & Turner, 1986), which posits that individuals define themselves by their social group memberships. Within a larger, overarching (superordinate) team, people often belong to subgroups and tend to compare their ingroup (the group they identify with) to other subgroups as well as to the prototype of the larger team, which is seen as the positive standard for all subgroups. According to the IPM, individuals perceive their ingroup as more representative of the overarching team than other subgroups. As a result, they generalize the distinctive characteristics of their ingroup to the larger team, comparing themselves and others to a 'prototype' based on their ingroup's qualities. This process can create tension and conflict among subgroups within teams, as they may attribute conflicting characteristics of their ingroups to the larger team.

Building on this understanding, in settings where one subgroup is more numerous, both larger and smaller subgroups recognize the larger group's higher relative representativeness (Verkuyten & Martinovic, 2016; Waldzus et al., 2004). This recognition

is not merely a matter of numbers, it often reflects the higher status of the larger group. Consequently, they wield the power to set the norms and values of the prototypical overarching team member. Those who differ from these standards are seen as deviants, not only from the ingroup but also from the larger team. This deviation may result in discrimination and mistreatment, manifesting through ingroup favoritism and outgroup devaluation (Glambek et al., 2020).

To further illustrate the dynamics of dissimilarity, consider a team where the majority of members are able-bodied, work full-time and participate in annual sports events. These characteristics become the expected norm, defining the prototype of the larger team. Any deviation from this norm, such as when team members cannot commit to full-time work, for example due to caretaking responsibilities or energy-limiting disabilities, becomes noticeable and may be seen as a lack of dedication to the team's goals. This can impact how much the team will include those deviating members in all sorts of activities, such as team lunches or meetings.

The situation becomes even more complex for those with disabilities. Their non-participation in sports events might exclude them from team-building activities, further emphasizing their dissimilarity. Since being able-bodied is a feature of the prototype, deviations from this norm may be met with resistance. Team members with disabilities may therefore feel uncomfortable sharing their unique experiences or needs, as it emphasizes their dissimilarity to the prototype. This can limit their ability to be authentic within the team. Moreover, the majority may neglect their needs, as they will mostly interpret the team's needs based on those of the prototypical member, overlooking those who differ from the norm.

Surface-level and Deep-level Differences

While the IPM provides valuable insights into the dynamics between subgroups, it does not consider that individuals may deviate from the prototype on multiple characteristics, and that these deviations may differently impact intergroup relationships depending on the characteristics involved. Recognizing this limitation, the literature calls for a multidimensional approach to explore how different types of diversity impact relationships.

Diversity can be categorized into different dimensions, such as surface-level (or readily detectable, e.g., age, gender and ethnicity) and deep-level (more underlying, e.g., personality, sexual orientation and work experience) dimensions (Jackson & Joshi, 2011), or as demographic (e.g., ethnicity and sexual orientation) and nondemographic (e.g., personality and work experience) dimensions (Kirby et al., 2023).

Research on surface-level and deep-level dissimilarity suggests that they may have distinct relationships with social inclusion, likely because different types of dissimilarity trigger different psychological processes (Guillaume et al., 2012).

For example, individuals who are dissimilar on surface-level dimensions, such as ethnicity or gender, may readily stand out from the rest of the team and be immediately categorized as outgroups. This immediate categorization can have lasting consequences. Since they are quickly identified as outgroups, they may experience outgroup devaluation and ingroup favoritism from the majority early in new social relationships. These negative contacts can serve as anchoring events, defining moments that taint future interactions with the majority group and contribute to an unpleasant workplace environment (Reinwald & Kunze, 2020). This is indicated, for instance, by surface-level dissimilar individuals' tendency to increasingly disengage from work as time passes (Reinwald & Kunze, 2020).

In contrast to surface-level dissimilarity, deep-level dissimilarity often emerges more subtly as colleagues interact and grow familiar with one another. These individuals might be initially categorized as part of the ingroup, only to be recategorized as outgroup members once their dissimilarity to the prototypical team member becomes apparent. While they may have more positive experiences early in social relationships compared to those who are surface-level dissimilar, their differences from the rest of the team might be more difficult to overcome. Deep-level dissimilarity, encompassing dimensions such as personality, values, and work-style, is theorized to hinder communication and collaboration, thereby impeding social integration (Guillaume et al., 2012).

The distinction between surface-level and deep-level dissimilarity is not merely about their immediate effects. Deep-level dissimilarity is often easier to conceal, but this carries its own consequences. Concealing stigmatized identities has been linked to negative outcomes such as reduced inclusion, job satisfaction and well-being (Ellemers & Barreto, 2006; Newheiser et al., 2015; Suppes et al., 2021). Moreover, the invisibility of deep-level dimensions complicates the process of finding others with similar challenges, making it more difficult for dissimilar individuals to find a subgroup within the team in which they can belong and find support.

While these two types of dissimilarity are often studied separately, there may be notable interactions between them. It is commonly anticipated that individuals who are surface-level dissimilar will also be deep-level dissimilar, even in the absence of underlying differences (Ellemers & Rink, 2016). This expectation can lead to complex

reactions. For example, research on collaboration reveals that individuals tend to respond more negatively when their partner is only surface-level dissimilar (e.g., on gender), as opposed to being both surface-level and deep-level (e.g., on work style) dissimilar. This negative response is likely driven by the violation of expectations (Rink & Ellemers, 2006).

However, social inclusion presents a different context from collaboration, making it difficult to state predictions based solely on previous research. Still, there is reason to believe that the effects of the two types of dissimilarity may be interdependent. Understanding this relationship warrants further investigation.

Differences on Specific Dimensions

The distinction between surface-level and deep-level categories can be useful in understanding how dissimilarity may impact individuals, but these categories often group together a wide range of diverse dimensions (e.g., ethnicity, gender, and age as surface-level dimensions and sexual orientation, work experience, and personality as deep-level dimensions; Guillaume et al., 2012; Jackson & Joshi, 2011).[1] This broad grouping does not recognize the unique differences between these dimensions. For instance, being dissimilar on some dimensions (e.g., disability, religion or sexual orientation) can be more stigmatized than being dissimilar on other dimensions (e.g., personality or work experience). Additionally, some dimensions may be more demographic in nature (e.g., gender and sexual orientation), while others are non-demographic (e.g., personality or work experience).

As such, it is important to consider a wider range of dimensions beyond the sur-face-level and deep-level categories to gain a more nuanced understanding of the dissimilarity-inclusion relationship. This perspective allows for the consideration of multidimensionality of dissimilarity, acknowledging that individuals possess multiple concurrent attributes and identities on which they can differ from others (Liu et al., 2019). Research employing this multidimensional approach has shown that individuals with multiple stigmatized identities are more susceptible to job insecurity, workplace harassment, incivility, unfair treatment, stereotype concerns,

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1   Dimensions are not always neatly categorized as either surface-level or deep-level. For example, a person of color who is white-passing (i.e., perceived as a White person) might experience their skin color as a more deep-level dimension, while a sexual minority who openly expresses their sexuality might find that it becomes a surface-level dimension in their environment. The perception of dissimilarity as surface-level and/or deep-level can vary among individuals and is further explored in Chapter 5.

and feelings of invisibility (Berdahl & Moore, 2006; Lavaysse et al., 2018; Remedios & Snyder, 2018; Zurbrügg & Miner, 2016). Yet, the implications of multidimensionality in dissimilarity remain an open question, particularly if the relevant dimensions are not inherently stigmatized.

Mechanisms Explaining the Dissimilarity-Inclusion Relationship

The prevailing theory and literature generally suggest that dissimilarity, regardless of the dimension, is likely to be negatively associated with perceptions of inclusion. As previously touched upon, dissimilarity within a team setting can activate certain mechanisms, resulting in reduced social inclusion. Although the IPM has not been applied within the relational demography approach, it offers valuable insights. Specifically, the IPM posits that categorizing individuals as outgroups within teams affects attitudes towards them, with empirical studies supporting this in terms of reduced desire for contact and helping intentions (Waldzus et al., 2003; Wenzel et al., 2007). When applied to the context of individual dissimilarity within teams, this theory suggests that these attitudes are some of the mechanisms that may contribute to decreased perceptions of inclusion.

However, the field of relational demography is rich and diverse, drawing from various theoretical frameworks to understand how dissimilarity may affect relationships between individuals and their team. For instance, the similarity-attraction paradigm (Byrne, 1997) has been employed to predict that dissimilar employees will be more likely to want to leave the organization because they will feel more uncomfortable in the group (Jackson et al., 1991). Additionally, the social identity theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1986) has been used to predict that surface-level dissimilar employees would feel less attached to their work group, given that people 'perceive outgroup members as less trustworthy, honest and cooperative' than ingroup members (Guillaume et al., 2012), p. 85). Despite these predictions, empirical evidence for these theorized mechanisms that explain why dissimilarity is related to work outcomes remains limited (Guillaume et al., 2012; Riordan, 2000).

The Role of Context: Climate for Inclusion

While the discourse surrounding dissimilar employees' experiences in the workplace may be disheartening, opportunities for improvement exist: There are indications that a climate for inclusion can buffer the disadvantages dissimilar employees face. Such a climate for inclusion is characterized by an environment where efforts to eliminate biases are actively implemented, differences among employees are valued, and diverse perspectives of all employees are actively sought and integrated — even if those perspectives challenge the status quo (Nishii, 2013). In this inclusive

atmosphere, subgroups within a team may foster positive attitudes and behaviors towards each other, particularly towards minorities.

Although the importance of a climate for inclusion for diverse teams has received some scholarly attention (Nishii, 2013; Shore et al., 2018), the significance of such a climate for individual employees is less clear. Some studies have shown that gender-dissimilar employees experience less inclusion and higher absenteeism if they perceive the diversity climate —a related but distinct concept—to be negative (Jansen et al., 2017). Yet, it remains unclear whether these findings extend to employees who differ on other dimension, or whether other interpersonal processes besides inclusion are influenced by climate for inclusion. This knowledge gap underscores the need for further research to explore the conditions under which dissimilarity may not adversely affect employees. A better understanding of the role of climate for inclusion holds promise for enriching both the scientific literature and practical applications for organizations aiming to foster more inclusive workplaces.

OVERVIEW OF THE CHAPTERS

In this dissertation, I offer a comprehensive understanding of the relationship between dissimilarity and inclusion in the workplace.

First, in Chapter 2, I investigate the prevailing perspectives on diversity within Dutch public and private organizations, mapping out the lay of the land. The dimensions of diversity that organizations typically focus on in their diversity statements are mainly surface-level and demographic, which does not fully capture the diverse dimensions that contribute to perceived dissimilarity and inclusion (Chapters 4, 5 and 6). I argue that the prevailing understanding of diversity in organizations does not match with our understanding about which employees experience dissimilarity and perceive less inclusion than others.

Second, in Chapter 3, I demonstrate a causal relationship between dissimilarity and inclusion by conducting an experimental study. I show that participants who were induced to feel dissimilar from (fictitious) team members anticipate less inclusion than participants induced to feel similar to team members, thereby substantiating a causal relationship between dissimilarity and inclusion.

Third, in Chapter 4, I reveal that deep-level dissimilarity, rather than surface-level dissimilarity, is negatively related to perceptions of inclusion and various work outcomes such as job satisfaction and work-related stress.

Fourth, in Chapter 5, I propose that the field of relational demography needs to recognize and further explore the effects of multidimensional dissimilarity and demonstrate that employees who perceive dissimilarity on multiple dimensions report lower levels of perceived inclusion.

Fifth, in Chapter 6, I uncover the complexity of the relationship between dissimilarity and perceived inclusion. I demonstrate that four distinct mechanisms among colleagues - uncertainty, trust, disapproval and initiation of interactions - play unique roles in this relationship.

Sixth, in Chapters 4, 5 and 6, I emphasize the critical role of a climate for inclusion. I present evidence that a positive climate for inclusion often mitigates the negative relationship between various types of dissimilarity and perceived inclusion (Chapters 4 and 5), as well as between dissimilarity and the four mechanisms as described in Chapter 6. A summary of the goal, methods and results of all chapters can be found in Table 1.

Table 1 Summary of the Research Questions, Methods and Results per Chapter

	Chapter 2	Chapter 3	Chapter 4	Chapter 5	Chapter 6
Research questions	1) How do Dutch public and private organizations conceptualize diversity? 2) Do public and private organizations conceptualize diversity differently?	1) Does dissimilarity have a causal effect on inclusion? 2) Do intergroup emotions play a role in this effect? 3) Does dissimilarity affect authenticity and belonging differently?	1) How do surface-level and deep-level dissimilarity relate to inclusion? 2) Does inclusion explain how dissimilarity relates to work outcomes? 3) Does climate for inclusion buffer the dissimilarity-inclusion relationship?	1) How does dissimilarity on specific dimensions (e.g., personality, ethnicity) relate to inclusion? 2) Does dissimilarity on multiple dimensions have an additive effect on inclusion? 3) Does climate for inclusion buffer the relationships between dissimilarity on specific dimensions and inclusion?	1) What are the general mechanisms theorized to explain the dissimilarity-inclusion relationship? 2) Do these mechanisms explain the dissimilarity-inclusion relationship? 3) Does climate for inclusion buffer the relationships between dissimilarity and the theorized mechanisms?
Method	Desk study	Experimental	Cross-sectional	Cross-sectional	Literature review Cross-sectional

Table 1 Summary of the Research Questions, Methods and Results per Chapter **(continued)**

	Chapter 2	Chapter 3	Chapter 4	Chapter 5	Chapter 6
Results	Diversity is most often conceptualized using a combination of surface-level and deep-level dimensions, with a tendency towards more surface-level dimensions. Majority groups are often not explicitly mentioned. Public and private organizations conceptualize diversity in similar ways.	Dissimilarity negatively affects inclusion. This effect is explained by positive (rather than negative) intergroup emotions. Dissimilarity does not differentially affect authenticity and belonging, the two subdimensions of inclusion.	Deep-level dissimilarity, in contrast to surface-level dissimilarity, negatively relates to inclusion. The relationship between deep-level dissimilarity and work outcomes is explained by inclusion. Climate for inclusion buffers the negative relationship between dissimilarity and inclusion.	Dissimilarity in personality, ethnicity/cultural background, age, level of education, work experience, and disability negatively relate to inclusion. Employees that perceive dissimilarity on more dimensions have increasingly lower perceptions of inclusion. Climate for inclusion buffers most negative relationships between dissimilarity on specific dimensions and inclusion.	The effect of dissimilarity is theorized to be explained by: uncertainty, trust, disapproval, and initiated interaction among colleagues. All four mechanisms uniquely explain part of the dissimilarity-inclusion relationship. Climate for inclusion buffers the relationships between dissimilarity and the four mechanisms.

Chapter 2: Organizations Conceptualize Diversity Most Often in Terms of Gender and Culture, as is Evident from Their Diversity Statements

In Chapter 2, I analyzed diversity statements of 83 Dutch private (n = 55) and public (n = 28) organizations and coded the statements based on three factors: 1) whether they included specific dimensions or used a general definition of diversity, 2) whether statements predominantly focused on a single type of dissimilarity (surface-level or deep-level), and 3) whether majority group members were considered in the conceptualization of diversity. The findings revealed that most organizations used a combination of both surface-level and deep-level dimensions in their statements. However, the results also revealed that on average, statements included a greater number of surface-level dimensions compared to deep-level ones. A closer examination of the specific dimensions showed that at least one-third of the organizations conceptualized diversity in terms of gender, culture, sexual orientation, age, disability, and ethnicity (in descending order of frequency), which are mostly surface-level and demographic dimensions. Dimensions such as perspectives, religion, nationality, education level, social economic status and political orientation were less often part of their understanding of diversity, which are more often deep-level dimensions. The overwhelming majority of organizations did not include majority groups in their conceptualization of diversity. Finally, there were minimal differences between how public and private organizations conceptualized diversity. These results shed light on the dimensions of diversity that are prioritized in organizational policies, aligning with those commonly addressed in diversity policies (SER, n.d.).

Chapter 3: Manipulating Dissimilarity: Dissimilarity Affects Anticipated Inclusion in an Experimental Study

The findings from Chapter 2 underscore that organizations often conceptualize diversity in terms of surface-level and demographic dimensions. However, other differences among colleagues, such as nondemographic or deep-level differences, may also negatively affect dissimilar employees. Recognizing this, it becomes essential to examine how various types of dissimilarity relate to employees' perceptions of inclusion. A critical step in this exploration is to test the assumption of causality that underpins most relational demography studies, as many of these investigations are merely correlational. To address this, I designed two experimental studies in Chapter 3 to investigate the causal relationship between dissimilarity and inclusion, focusing on a deep-level, nondemographic dimension, which are typically overlooked in organizational conceptualizations of diversity.

The first experiment, where I manipulated 'work style' dissimilarity among participants in fictitious teams, revealed that participants in the dissimilarity condition

anticipated less inclusion. They experienced positive intergroup emotions with less intensity and negative intergroup emotions with more intensity compared to participants in the similarity condition. Additionally, the effect of dissimilarity on anticipated inclusion was mediated by the diminished experience of positive intergroup emotions, partly supporting my hypothesis. In the second experiment, I sought to manipulate 'work style' by framing it as either a competence or a value. I hypothesized that participants perceiving dissimilarity on a value would anticipate experiencing less authenticity in the team than those perceiving dissimilarity on a competence. However, the results showed no differences between the two conditions on anticipated inclusion or anticipated belonging and authenticity. The results of the first experiment demonstrated a causal effect of dissimilarity on anticipated inclusion, suggesting that dissimilar employees are aware of their status within the team and expect to be treated differently than more prototypical team members. Moreover, the findings indicated that positive and negative intergroup emotions might have distinct roles in intergroup contexts, an aspect that is underexplored in the existing literature on intergroup anxiety (Stephan, 2014).

Chapter 4: Deep-level Dissimilarity, rather than Surface-level Dissimilarity, Relates to Perceived Inclusion and Work Outcomes
The findings in Chapter 3 support the idea that dissimilarity negatively affects inclusion. Additionally, the results of Chapter 2 showed that organizations typically include surface-level and demographic dimensions their conceptualizations of diversity, while deep-level and nondemographic dimensions are often overlooked. In Chapter 4, I investigated how both surface-level and deep-level dissimilarity relate to perceptions of inclusion. I conducted a cross-sectional study in a large public service organization in the Netherlands, surveying 887 employees.

The results of the study showed that perceived deep-level dissimilarity, in contrast to surface-level dissimilarity, negatively related to perceived inclusion. Moreover, deep-level dissimilarity was negatively related to work outcomes, including job satisfaction, work-related stress, turnover intentions, career commitment and career advancement motivation, with indirect relationships through perceived inclusion. Additionally, a positive climate for inclusion—reflected in employees' perceptions of how dissimilar colleagues are treated within the organization—mitigated the relationship between deep-level dissimilarity and perceived inclusion. Interestingly, even prototypical employees perceived more inclusion in a more positive climate for inclusion. These results are particularly noteworthy since, as Chapter 2 highlighted, organizational diversity statements tend to focus more on surface-level dimensions such as gender and ethnicity, rather than on deep-level dimensions, like beliefs

and work experience. However, the findings in this chapter suggest that deep-level dissimilarity may be more critical for inclusion at the workplace than surface-level dissimilarity.

Chapter 5: Multidimensional Approach: As Employees Perceive Dissimilarity on More Dimensions, Their Perceptions of Inclusion Decrease

While previous chapters highlighted the significance of deep-level dissimilarity, the specific dissimilarity dimensions that predict social inclusion remain unclear. Additionally, the potential cumulative effect of being dissimilar on multiple dimensions on perceptions of inclusion has yet to be clarified.

In Chapter 5, I explored these aspects by conducting a cross-sectional study in a Dutch public organization (N = 6,312). The results indicated that both surface-level and deep-level dissimilarity were related to perceived inclusion, with the relationship between deep-level dissimilarity and inclusion being the stronger one. A detailed examination across 10 specific dimensions—including sexual orientation, personality, political beliefs, religion, education level, work experience, gender, age, ethnicity/cultural background, and disability—uncovered that dissimilarity in personality, ethnicity/cultural background, age, level of education, (deep-level) work experience, and disability were negatively related to perceived inclusion. Climate for inclusion buffered the relationships between inclusion and dissimilarity on personality, ethnicity/cultural background and disability. Importantly, as employees perceive dissimilarity on more dimensions, their perceptions of inclusion decrease, indicating a cumulative effect of dissimilarity on multiple dimensions on perceived inclusion. These findings call for a more of dissimilar employees' experiences requires, necessitating analyses that take into account the cumulative effects of dissimilarity on multiple dimensions.

Chapter 6: The Relationship between Dissimilarity and Inclusion is Explained by Uncertainty, Trust, Disapproval, and Initiated Interactions among Colleagues

In Chapters 3, 4, and 5, my research consistently uncovered a negative relationship between dissimilarity and perceived inclusion. Yet, the underlying mechanisms driving this relationship remained unclear. In Chapter 6, I aimed to clarify these mechanisms, synthesizing the theorized mechanisms from previous studies and empirically investigating their roles, all while controlling for each other's effects. A literature review of 59 empirical studies utilizing the relational demography approach identified four general mechanisms theorized to explain why dissimilarity relates to

work outcomes: uncertainty, trust, disapproval, and initiated interaction among colleagues. Following this theoretical groundwork, a survey study (N = 2,409) confirmed that dissimilarity was negatively related to perceived inclusion and demonstrated that all four mechanisms uniquely explained part of this relationship. Interestingly, the strongest indirect relationship between dissimilarity and perceived inclusion was via trust among colleagues. Consistent with findings in previous chapters, a climate for inclusion buffered the relationships between dissimilarity and the four mechanisms. As such, this chapter provides a comprehensive overview of the mechanisms that are theorized to explain why dissimilarity relates to work outcomes and provides empirical evidence for their roles in shaping perceptions of inclusion.

DISCUSSION

Contributions of this Dissertation

Social inclusion is a crucial factor for fostering employee well-being and enhancing important work outcomes. My research aims to deepen our understanding of the dissimilarity-inclusion relationship in the workplace. By exploring the nuances of this relationship, I offer six significant contributions to the study of diversity and inclusion.

First, in Chapter 2, I demonstrate that Dutch public and private organizations share similar conceptualizations of diversity, challenging the focus of previous studies that primarily examined private organizations (Jonsen et al., 2021; Kirby et al., 2023; Point & Singh, 2003). This raises questions about the generalizability of these earlier findings to public organizations. My research suggests that the diversity statements in private organizations are likely comparable to those in public sectors. Additionally, this chapter reveals that Dutch organizations predominantly frame diversity in terms of demographic and surface-level dimensions, such as gender and ethnicity/culture. They less frequently consider nondemographic, often deep-level, dimensions like perspectives and educational background. This pattern aligns with previous international studies (Jonsen et al., 2021; Point & Singh, 2003). However, it contrasts with one study analyzing the top 250 organizations in the Fortune 500, which found that these organizations mainly focused on broader definitions of diversity that exclusively included nondemographic dimensions like perspectives or skills (Kirby et al., 2023).

This discrepancy could be attributed to different cultural contexts, as their sample consisted of the largest organizations in the United States. For instance, these organizations, influenced by United States' long history of immigration and multicultur-

alism, might have progressed beyond initial discussions emphasizing demographic dimensions, thereby shifting their focus to broader, nondemographic dimensions, such as skills and perspectives. Nevertheless, this hypothesis requires further investigation. It underscores the importance of accounting for national or cultural contexts in diversity and inclusion research, highlighting the need for more nuanced studies in this field.

Second, a critical contribution of this dissertation is made in Chapter 3, where I advance the field of relational demography by establishing a causal link between dissimilarity and inclusion. Unlike previous experimental studies that employed methods like the minimal group paradigm to explore how artificial groups influence attitudes toward and identification with out-groups (Otten, 2016), my research focuses on social inclusion, which emphasizes the degree to which the group includes individuals (Jansen et al., 2014). My findings reveal that even the mere presence of dissimilarity between individuals and their team members can lead to reduced anticipation of inclusion. This not only substantiates the assumption that underpins the relational demography framework, namely that dissimilarity has important consequences for work outcomes, but also supports the notion that differences between people shape their perspectives and experiences of social inclusion.

Third, a major contribution of Chapters 4 and 5 lies in the comprehensive approach to examining the relationship between dissimilarity and perceived inclusion. While earlier studies suggested a stronger relationship between deep-level dissimilarity on work outcomes compared to surface-level dissimilarity, these studies could not explore the interaction between the two (Guillaume et al., 2012). In contrast, Chapters 4 and 5 incorporate both types of dissimilarity into the analysis, shedding light on their interrelationship with perceived inclusion. Consistent with prior findings, my research reveals that deep-level dissimilarity has a stronger relationship with perceived inclusion than its surface-level counterpart. Interestingly, no interaction was observed between the two types of dissimilarity, indicating that the relationship with perceived inclusion of one does not vary based on the presence of the other.

It is important to note that these findings are limited to the context of perceived inclusion and that the interplay between surface-level and deep-level dissimilarity might be different for other outcomes. For example, evidence suggests that collaborating with a team member who is both surface-level and deep-level dissimilar can result in more positive work outcomes than if the dissimilarity exists on just one of these types (Phillips et al., 2006; Rink & Ellemers, 2006). This phenomenon can

be explained by the Categorization-Elaboration Model (CEM; Adamovic, 2020; Van Knippenberg et al., 2004). According to CEM, perceived differences among team members can stimulate the exchange and integration of knowledge, thereby boosting team performance and creativity. This aligns with previous studies advocating for the inclusion of diverse perspectives in organizational processes (Adamovic, 2020; Bae et al., 2017). In this context, surface-level dissimilarity may set the stage for expectations of deep-level differences, thereby encouraging team members to engage in more meaningful discussions and knowledge integration (Phillips et al., 2006; Rink & Ellemers, 2006).

Fourth, I fill a notable gap in the field of relational demography by exploring the multidimensional aspects of dissimilarity in Chapters 5 and 6. While earlier research has recognized and measured multidimensionality in dissimilarity (Avery et al., 2008; Bae et al., 2017; Hobman et al., 2003; Liao et al., 2004), I examine the cumulative effects of dissimilarity across multiple dimensions. The results reveal that employees who perceive themselves as dissimilar in multiple ways also report lower levels of inclusion. This aligns with the concept of intersectional invisibility (Purdie-Vaughns & Eibach, 2008) and research on multiple stigmatized identities (Berdahl & Moore, 2006; Lavaysse et al., 2018; Remedios & Snyder, 2018; Zurbrügg & Miner, 2016). Unlike these previous studies, in which researchers identified stigmatized identities based on demographic data, my research employs self-reported measures of perceived dissimilarity. This approach adds a nuanced layer to our comprehension of the dissimilarity-inclusion relationship, emphasizing the need to account for multidimensionality in the field of relational demography.

Fifth, in Chapter 6 of this dissertation, I contribute to the existing literature by offering both a comprehensive overview and empirical test of the mechanisms that underlie the dissimilarity-inclusion relationship. I identify four key mechanisms among employees—uncertainty, trust, disapproval, and initiated interaction—that serve as the theoretical underpinnings of this relationship. Through an empirical study, I substantiate that each of these mechanisms play a unique role in explaining the dissimilarity-inclusion relationship. This not only validates assumptions in prior work but also provides a much-needed empirical foundation to the understanding of how dissimilarity relates to perceived inclusion.

Sixth, and finally, I draw together findings from Chapters 4, 5, and 6 to underscore the importance of organizational context in shaping the relationships of dissimilarity with several outcomes. I show that a positive climate for inclusion acts as a buffer, mitigating the negative effects of dissimilarity on various dimensions of perceived

inclusion, as well as on the four identified mechanisms—uncertainty, trust, disapproval, and initiated interaction—among colleagues. I furthermore show that employees who are not dissimilar also perceive more inclusion in a positive climate for inclusion. These findings both corroborate and extend our current understanding of the influence of an inclusive climate on employees (Jansen et al., 2017; Nishii, 2013).

Theoretical Implications

This dissertation holds significant implications not only for the specialized field of relational demography but also for the broader landscape of social sciences.

Multidimensional Approaches

While I demonstrate the importance of a multidimensional approach in Chapters 5 and 6, existing frameworks such as the relational demography approach and the Ingroup Projection Model (IPM) lack explicit guidelines for incorporating multidimensionality. Specifically, the IPM does not clarify how deviating from a prototype on multiple dimensions might uniquely affect employees. My dissertation fills this gap by demonstrating the utility of assessing the cumulative effect of dissimilarity on multiple dimensions. This approach aligns with previous quantitative multidimensional studies that have explored the cumulative or interactive effect of multiple identities (Berdahl & Moore, 2006; Lavaysse et al., 2018; Lee, 2021; Remedios & Snyder, 2018; Zurbrügg & Miner, 2016).

I argue that both the relational demography approach and the IPM could benefit from integrating insights from intersectionality research (Crenshaw, 1989). For example, the relational demography approach could acknowledge that employees may differ on multiple grounds and that these differences can interact or accumulate to shape relationships at the workplace. To illustrate, a disabled employee's experience with colleagues could differ based on whether they also deviate from the norm in terms of gender, sexual orientation, or personality. This nuanced understanding could lead to the identification of distinct intervention needs for different intersections of social groups (Dennissen et al., 2020; Wong et al., 2022), which may remain unexplored if the studies do not address the intersections of identities.

Similarly, the IPM could evolve by explicitly accounting for the possibility that individuals may deviate from the prototype on multiple dimensions, which could have either cumulative or distinct effects compared to deviating on just one dimension. Current IPM research typically focuses on prototypicality along a single axis—such as ethnicity, educational background, or even specific preferences like motorbike

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choice (Verkuyten & Martinovic, 2016; Waldzus et al., 2004)—leaving ample opportunity for future research on prototypicality on multiple dimensions.

The Possible Moderating Role of Interdependence in Teams

In Chapter 6, I reviewed the relational demography literature and conducted empirical research to identify four key mechanisms among colleagues—uncertainty, trust, disapproval, and initiated interactions—that elucidate why dissimilarity relates with perceptions of inclusion. Interestingly, these mechanisms closely align with processes outlined in interdependence theory as vital for fostering group (Thielmann et al., 2020; Van Lange & Balliet, 2014). In this light, my results could suggest that employees who perceive themselves as dissimilar are less likely to both engage in and encounter team attitudes and behaviors that promote interdependence within the group. Previous studies using the relational demography approach have considered interdependence as a moderating variable in the relationship between dissimilarity and various outcomes (e.g., Guillaume et al., 2012; Van der Vegt & Van de Vliert, 2005), emphasizing the role of team interdependence in understanding the impact of dissimilarity.

To illustrate these approaches with concrete examples, consider a context where an individual is dissimilar to most team members. According to the Ingroup Projection Model (IPM), team members may view this dissimilar individual as an outgroup member, thereby reducing their motivation to cooperate with them. However, if the situation necessitates close collaboration, this interdependence could either amplify or mitigate the impact of these differences, depending on the nature of the dissimilarities (Guillaume et al., 2012). Further research that integrates insights from both relational demography and interdependence theory could enhance our understanding of how dissimilarity and interdependence interact. Preliminary evidence suggests that dissimilarity and interdependence mutually affect each other, challenging the notion that 'the essence of a group is not the similarity or dissimilarity of its members, but their interdependence' (Lewin, 1948, as cited in Van Lange & Balliet, 2014, p. 65).

The Importance of Considering Contexts

Throughout my dissertation, I find that dissimilarity negatively relates to perceived inclusion. However, this is not universally true for everyone who perceives themselves as dissimilar to their colleagues. For example, in Chapter 5, I find no significant relationship between dissimilarity in gender, religion, or sexual orientation and perceptions of inclusion, while dissimilarity on other dimensions does show such a relationship. This is noteworthy, given that gender, religion, and sexual orientation

have been shown to be bases for discrimination or reduced inclusion (Jansen et al., 2017; Lloren & Parini, 2017; Schneider et al., 2022). Since the study in Chapter 5 was conducted in a single organization, the findings cannot be generalized to other organizational contexts. It is possible that in different organizations, these dimensions are stigmatized or valued differently by employees, affecting perceptions of inclusion accordingly. Further investigation is needed, but it is likely that the stigma or value assigned to a dimension varies by organization, explaining why dissimilarity on some dimensions may relate to inclusion in one organization but not in another. In conclusion, the key takeaway from these findings is not which specific dimensions of dissimilarity affect perceptions of inclusion, but rather that the context in which these studies are conducted plays a crucial role.

In addition to organizational context, national context may also be relevant. For instance, I find that ethnic/cultural dissimilarity negatively relates to perceived inclusion in Chapter 5, which was set in a public organization in the Netherlands. In contrast, my study in Chapter 6, involving employees from various organizations in the United Kingdom, does not reveal this relationship. Interestingly, political orientation emerges as a significant factor in the UK context but not in the Dutch setting. These divergent findings highlight the importance of recognizing that the interpretation and impact of differences are context dependent. They also raise questions about the underlying reasons for these contextual variations. While organizational cultures can differ significantly even within the same country, the broader socio-historical context likely influences these organizational cultures as well (Dacin et al., 1999).

For instance, ethnic/cultural differences might be less stigmatized in the UK than in the Netherlands, and differences on political orientation may be a stronger ground for polarization in the UK than in the Netherlands, potentially accounting for the differing results. Therefore, my dissertation emphasizes the pivotal role that context can play in studies concerning dissimilarity and inclusion. While the specific findings from individual organizations or societal contexts may not be universally applicable, they are invaluable for understanding the patterns and mechanisms that underlie the relationship between dissimilarity and social inclusion.

The Role of Climate for Inclusion
In Chapters 4, 5, and 6, I consistently find that a positive climate for inclusion mitigates the adverse effects of dissimilarity on perceived inclusion, reinforcing existing evidence on the crucial role of climate for inclusion in organizations (Jansen et al., 2017; Nishii, 2013). I advance these existing insights in Chapter 6 by revealing that such a climate buffers the relationship between dissimilarity and key cognitive and

behavioral processes among colleagues, such as uncertainty, trust, disapproval, and initiated interactions. By doing so, the climate for inclusion neutralizes the negative impact of dissimilarity on perceptions of inclusion. This offers initial insights into the specific interpersonal processes that a climate for inclusion can influence, emphasizing the importance of context in this line of research. It is namely not dissimilarity itself that poses challenges to employees, but rather the environment that determines whether dissimilar individuals face difficulties.

Practical Implications: Applying Insights to Build More Inclusive Organizations

In addition to the theoretical implications of my dissertation, the empirical evidence provided by my research also offers insights to be used in practice.

Chapters 4 and 5 highlight the critical role that deep-level dissimilarity can have on perceptions of inclusion. To cultivate more inclusive work environments, organizations should recognize and value differences not just on surface-level dimensions like age and ethnicity, but also on deep-level dimensions such as personality and work experience. Strategies should include efforts to appreciate diverse perspectives, affirming the importance of every employee, and creating networks for employees with less visible diversity dimensions, like LGBTQ+ employees, thus fostering a more inclusive workplace. However, these strategies should complement, rather than replace, efforts aimed at surface-level and traditionally marginalized groups. Recent research indicates that strategies affirming and valuing both marginalized identities and individual differences, including personality and work experience, are particularly effective for supporting both marginalized and otherwise dissimilar employees (Russell Pascual et al., 2024).

Furthermore, Chapter 5 highlights a critical consideration for developing strategies to improve inclusion: the perception of dissimilarity by employees often spans multiple dimensions. Furthermore, as employees perceive dissimilarity across more dimensions, their perception of inclusion decreases. This underscores the necessity of acknowledging the complexity of multidimensionality and intersectionality when evaluating employee needs and formulating strategies to address these needs (Dennissen et al., 2020; Liu et al., 2019; Wong et al., 2022). For instance, employee resource groups typically focus on a single identity, making it challenging to accommodate employees who identify with multiple dimensions and may wish to participate in multiple groups. Organizations can tackle this issue by facilitating collaboration among networks to address challenges faced by individuals belonging to several groups (Dennissen et al., 2020).

Considering the crucial role of a positive climate for inclusion in shaping perceptions of inclusion, practitioners should concentrate on methods to foster such environments. The three theoretical elements that constitute a climate for inclusion can guide organizations in creating workplaces in which both dissimilar and normative employees feel included (Nishii, 2013).

First, organizations should undertake proactive measures to reduce biases. For instance, organizations can implement practices such as anonymizing candidate identities during the hiring process and revising performance evaluation criteria to prevent bias (Schmader et al., 2022). Additionally, organizations can implement visible support measures to signal safety to employees with marginalized identities, such as gender-inclusive bathrooms (Chaney & Sanchez, 2017).

Second, organizations need to ensure that differences between employees are valued. This encompasses recognizing and valuing individual differences, such as personality and work experience, as well as acknowledging and appreciating differences stemming from social categories, including ethnicity and gender (Russell Pascual et al., 2024). Encouraging open conversations around these differences and explicitly valuing marginalized identities are critical steps towards this goal (van Laar et al., 2013). However, it is important note that acknowledging differences may inadvertently result in essentialist thinking—which attributes social differences to biological factors (Wilton et al., 2019). This pitfall can be addressed by emphasizing that such differences are largely the result of societal experiences and are mutable.

Third, it is necessary to ensure the integration of perspectives from all employees, especially those from underrepresented groups. Leadership development focused on improving the receptivity to subordinate perspectives and the introduction of feedback mechanisms like the 360-degree feedback process are instrumental in achieving this aim (Tröster & Van Knippenberg, 2012).

Recognizing the unique challenges and needs of each organization, strategies to improve the climate for inclusion must be tailored, empirically tested and refined. This iterative process is crucial for the development of effective strategies to improve the organizational climate for inclusion (Ellemers et al., 2018). Such organizational transformation requires a commitment and endurance, but is ultimately rewarding, as it fosters a workplace where all employees can thrive.

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LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

In this dissertation, I enrich the field of diversity and inclusion by employing a multi-method approach, which includes desk research (Chapter 2), experimental designs (Chapter 3) and cross-sectional analyses (Chapters 4, 5 and 6). My cross-sectional studies draw on large sample sizes, incorporating data from the Netherlands and the United Kingdom, and include employees situated within individual organizations as well as organizations dispersed around the United Kingdom. The consistency of my main findings across chapters, despite the diverse data sources, suggest that my findings hold relevance across a range of contexts.

Team Composition
My work also underscores the value of a relational demography approach in studying diversity and inclusion. While much of the existing research on diversity employs a team composition approach, focusing on group level outcomes like cohesion or desire to remain with the team (Harrison et al., 1998; Tekleab & Quigley, 2014), a relational demography perspective offers a more nuanced view. For example, a team composition study might find that greater diversity in teams negatively impacts individuals' desire to remain with the team (Tekleab & Quigley, 2014). However, a relational demography approach could reveal that within that same team, it is the dissimilar members who are particularly inclined to leave, while more prototypical members are likely to stay. My dissertation supports this, showing that dissimilar employees consistently perceive less inclusion compared to their peers, which is related to turnover intentions as shown in Chapter 3. This finding would be overlooked if one solely focused on a team composition approach.

However, one limitation of my dissertation is that I solely focused on a relational demography approach. Combining both team-composition and relational demography approaches would have offered a possibility to explore how dissimilarity interacts with perceptions of inclusion in teams with varying levels of homogeneity. One might expect a stronger relationship between dissimilarity and inclusion for individuals in homogeneous teams, where differences are more salient. Conversely, heterogeneous teams could present challenges to team cohesion because there may be more differences between employees. While my research partially captures the effects of team composition by asking participants about their degree of dissimilarity, a multi-level analysis incorporating both approaches could offer new and valuable insights.

Another avenue for future research lies in extending the focus beyond individual employees' perceptions of inclusion and the four mechanisms among colleagues—namely, uncertainty, trust, disapproval, and initiated interactions—as outlined in Chapter 6. Future studies could build on my studies by also exploring colleagues' own perceptions of how they signal inclusion, especially towards those they perceive as dissimilar. Additionally, these studies could delve into colleagues' experiences of the four mechanisms. A particularly intriguing approach would be to employ network analysis, capturing the complex interplay of individual experiences and perceptions within the team. This would allow for a more comprehensive understanding of how signals and mechanisms of inclusion operate within organizational settings.

Status and Power Differences

In research examining the relationship between dissimilarity and inclusion, it is crucial to recognize that individuals may perceive dissimilarity on the same dimension but experience it differently. For example, in my studies, participants who noted ethnic dissimilarity might belong to a societal ethnic majority but find themselves in a team primarily composed of ethnic minorities. However, the power dynamics and societal status associated with being part of a majority or minority group can lead to divergent experiences of dissimilarity. It is well-documented that sexual and ethnic minorities and women often face more negative life and workplace experiences compared to their majority counterparts and men (Bourabain, 2021; Çolak, 2020; Frost & Meyer, 2023; Waldring et al., 2015; Williams & Dempsey, 2014). Yet, the experiences of majority groups and men in contexts where they are the dissimilar ones are not fully understood.

Some studies using a relational demography approach have begun to explore these asymmetrical effects (Chattopadhyay, 1999; Guillaume et al., 2014; Ossenkop, 2015; Reinwald & Kunze, 2020). For example, dissimilarity was found to be more strongly related to work absence among women and older employees than among men and younger employees (Reinwald & Kunze, 2020). Similarly, White employees who perceived themselves as dissimilar exhibited less trust and altruistic behavior towards their peers compared to ethnic minority employees who perceived dissimilarity (Chattopadhyay, 1999). However, there is a gap in our understanding of why these asymmetrical effects occur, not just for demographic factors but also for nondemographic ones. In my own research, I found that political orientation dissimilarity negatively impacts perceptions of inclusion, but it remains unclear whether this effect is more pronounced for specific political orientations.

Theories such as Status Construction Theory (Ridgeway, 2000) and Minority Stress Theory (Frost & Meyer, 2023) offer potential explanations for these asymmetrical effects, pointing to the roles that societal status and minority stress can play. However, more empirical work is needed to validate whether these frameworks are applicable in these specific contexts.

Social-Contextual Influences

This dissertation contributes to our understanding of the relationship between dissimilarity and perceptions of inclusion by focusing on dynamics between individuals and their team members. While this focus has provided valuable insights from multiple perspectives, it has also constrained the scope to processes between individuals, leaving out broader structural factors that could also impact perceptions of inclusion. For example, public spaces named after individuals with prejudiced histories have been shown to diminish feelings of belonging and safety among Jewish and BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and People of Color) communities (Woods & Ruscher, 2023). Similarly, the presence of stereotypically masculine objects, such as posters or books, can influence women's sense of belonging in a given space (Cheryan et al., 2009, 2011). Given these considerations, future research could benefit from employing frameworks like the Social-Contextual Model of Prejudice (Murphy et al., 2018) to explore how environmental factors shape perceptions of inclusion within organizations. This would allow for a more comprehensive understanding of the multifaceted ways in which perceptions of inclusion are shaped.

Research Design

Yet, the implications of multidimensionality in dissimilarity remain an open question, particularly if the relevant dimensions are not inherently stigmatized.

While the experimental design employed in Chapter 3 was crucial in establishing a causal link between dissimilarity and inclusion, the studies in Chapters 4, 5, and 6 were correlational in nature. Consequently, the directionality of the observed effects remains uncertain, and any indirect relationships identified should be interpreted cautiously. For example, while theoretical frameworks and findings from Chapter 3 suggest that dissimilarity influences perceptions of inclusion, other research indicates that feelings of inclusion can also shape perceptions of similarity (Sacco et al., 2014). To better understand the interplay between dissimilarity and inclusion, future research should employ experimental or longitudinal methodologies.

Another avenue for future research involves conducting qualitative studies. While my studies offer generalizable patterns that likely apply across various contexts—

albeit with specific effects that may vary—a deeper qualitative exploration could provide richer insights. For instance, many participants noted perceiving dissimilarity based on personality, but it is unclear what they mean by this. They might be referring to the Big Five personality traits as understood by psychologists, or they might have a layperson's understanding of personality that diverges from academic definitions. Additionally, a qualitative approach could capture specific events or behaviors that participants believe influence their perceptions of inclusion, thereby offering a more nuanced understanding of how these perceptions are formed. Overall, while my dissertation identifies relationships between variables, a qualitative approach could offer a deeper understanding of what dissimilarity means and why it relates to perceptions of inclusion.

CONCLUSION

In summary, this dissertation makes a significant contribution to our understanding of the relationship between dissimilarity and perceived social inclusion in the workplace. Through desk research, experimental studies, and large-scale correlational studies, it addresses existing research gaps and sheds new light on the multidimensional aspects of dissimilarity. Additionally, the dissertation offers a thorough examination of the underlying mechanisms that could explain the link between dissimilarity and perceptions of inclusion, substantiating these explanations with empirical evidence. These insights not only deepen the academic conversation but also hold the potential to guide the development of policies aimed at creating more inclusive and equitable work environments.

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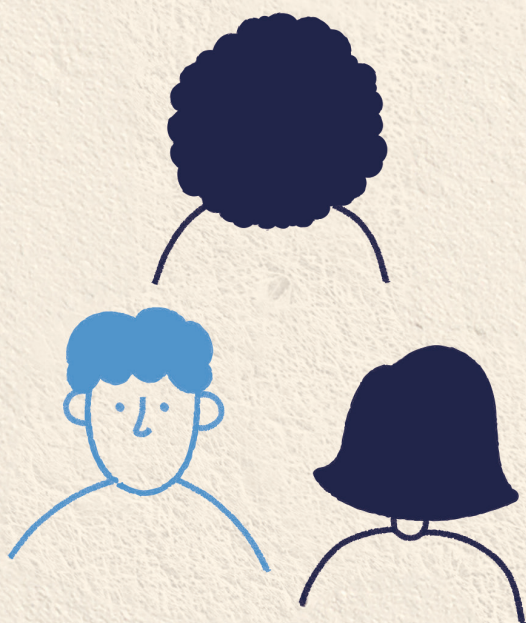
CHAPTER 2

Who is Included? A Descriptive Study of Diversity Statements in Dutch Organizations

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ABSTRACT

Organizations often use diversity statements to express their commitment to fostering diversity among their employees. While previous research has explored how organizations' diversity conceptualizations vary internationally, less attention has been given to variations within a country, especially between private and public sectors. This study investigates publicly available diversity statements of 83 Dutch organizations, analyzing their diversity conceptualizations across private and public sectors. By categorizing these statements into three distinct analytical categories, our analysis reveals that the majority of organizations: (1) specify diversity dimensions rather than make general, undefined references to diversity, (2) commonly blend both surface-level and deep-level dimensions, with a more frequent mention of surface-level dimensions, and (3) seldom include majority or higher-status groups in these conceptualizations. Additionally, our examination highlights a pronounced focus on demographic aspects, such as gender and ethnicity, as opposed to nondemographic factors, such as perspectives and educational backgrounds. Furthermore, our findings indicate only marginal differences between organizations in the private and public sectors in how they conceptualize diversity. This research bridges a gap in our understanding of organizations conceptualize diversity within the Dutch context.

Keywords: diversity, diversity statements, organizations, communication

WHO IS INCLUDED? A DESCRIPTIVE STUDY OF DIVERSITY STATEMENTS IN DUTCH ORGANIZATIONS

Many organizations want to create and maintain a diverse and inclusive workforce, but the term 'diversity' lacks a universal definition (Tatli et al., 2012). Examining how organizations articulate their perspectives on diversity in their diversity statements can illuminate their conceptualizations of diversity, shedding light on which specific groups they deem worthy of particular attention. Organizations may conceptualize diversity in terms of surface-level (i.e., readily detectable, relatively visible) dimensions like age, ethnicity, or gender, as well as deep-level (more underlying or less visible) dimensions like education, personality, or sexual orientation (Jonsen et al., 2021; Point & Singh, 2003). Notably, these conceptualizations of diversity can vary not only between countries but also among organizations within the same nation (Jonsen et al., 2021; Kirby et al., 2023; Point & Singh, 2003). Understanding how organizations within a national context perceive diversity is crucial for contextualizing broader research findings within that context. However, existing studies have notable limitations.

Firstly, current research either compares small samples across multiple countries in North America and Europe (10 to 49 organizations per country; Jonsen et al., 2021; Point & Singh, 2003) or exclusively analyzes samples in the United States (Russell Pascual et al., 2024). While these studies acknowledge the influence of national contexts on organizational perspectives on diversity (Jonsen et al., 2021), there is a dearth of knowledge regarding diversity conceptualizations in Dutch organizations, a gap that is crucial to address given the impact of diversity communication on individuals' sense of fit and interest in organizations (Russell Pascual et al., 2024).

Secondly, diversity management approaches differ between private and public organizations in the Netherlands, with public organizations often placing more emphasis on ethnic minorities (Groeneveld & Verbeek, 2012). This divergence may extend to their conceptualization of diversity. However, this aspect remains unexplored, as prior research has predominantly focused on private organizations, neglecting the public sector, which employs a significant portion of the workforce (Jonsen et al., 2021; Kirby et al., 2023; Point & Singh, 2003). The oversight in exploring how public organizations conceptualize diversity poses a potential distortion to our overall understanding of diversity conceptualizations across organizations. To bridge these gaps, our current research analyzes the diversity statements of both private and public organizations.

In the following section, we briefly discuss the existing literature on diversity state-ments, identifying gaps in the field and explaining how our study addresses them. We then discuss how different diversity ideologies may shape organizations' con-ceptualization of diversity and highlight the necessity of investigating differences between the private and public sector in their diversity conceptualizations. Finally, we report our methods and analyses, leading to a discussion of our findings and their relevance to the field of organizational communication about diversity.

ANALYTICAL CATEGORIES IN DIVERSITY STATEMENTS

Existing research on how organizations communicate about diversity presents a mixed picture. Some studies indicate that the percentage of organizations that mention diversity without explaining it varies widely, from 5% to 60%, in different countries (Point & Singh, 2003). When organizations do specify their interpretation of diversity, the predominant focus tends to be on surface-level dimensions like gender, ethnicity, age, and disability, with less attention directed towards deep-level dimensions such as education, personality, and work experience (Jonsen et al., 2021; Point & Singh, 2003).

In contrast, other studies on diversity statements in the United States indicate that a broad approach to diversity is adopted most often, emphasizing nondemographic and often deep-level, dimensions like education and personality (Kirby et al., 2023). Meanwhile, demographic factors, generally surface-level dimensions such as eth-nicity and gender, are often overlooked.

Several factors may contribute to these divergent findings. The sociohistorical, cultural, and legal context of a country can significantly shape the meaning and definition of diversity, impacting how organizations conceptualize it (Jonsen et al., 2021). For instance, the composition of the workforce, (historical) challenges faced by different social groups, and legal mandates imposed on organizations vary between countries, influencing their diversity definitions. Moreover, variations in sampling methods across studies underscore the importance of context-specific research.

Despite the challenges in predicting trends within the Dutch context due to these inconsistent findings, the methodologies employed in existing studies offer valu-able guidance. Previous research coded diversity statements based on specific dimensions and their frequency, including instances where diversity was mentioned without further specification (Jonsen et al., 2021; Point & Singh, 2003). Additionally, studies distinguished between surface-level and deep-level diversity (Jonsen et

al., 2021; Point & Singh, 2003), recognizing the theoretical significance of these two types, which are thought to trigger different processes between employees (Guillaume et al., 2012)[2].

The current study builds on this methodology, but further expands the scope of diversity. Earlier studies implicitly assumed that demographic dimensions refer only to minority groups. However, recent research investigating the effects of including majority groups in diversity statements suggests that explicitly mentioning majority groups in diversity statements positively impacts their support for diversity initiatives (Jansen et al., 2016; Plaut et al., 2011). Incorporating this literature in our study, we will also explore the extent to which organizations explicitly include majority groups in their diversity statements.

Our analyses on diversity statements will focus on three main categories, namely 1) *specificity* (whether diversity is conceptualized in general terms or by referring to specific dimensions), 2) *visibility* (whether statements refer to more surface-level and/or deep-level dimensions) and 3) *including the majority* (whether majority groups are explicitly included in diversity statements).

By focusing on these three analytical categories, we aim to provide a comprehensive understanding of how Dutch organizations conceptualize diversity in their statements. Moreover, recognizing the predominant emphasis on the private sector in existing research, our study will differentiate between private and public organizations, aiming to scrutinize potential sectoral disparities in their conceptualizations of diversity.

Diversity Conceptualizations and Ideologies

Organizations exhibit diverse approaches to diversity, often guided by diversity ideologies that function as frameworks for comprehending and managing diversity. These ideologies essentially serve as 'blueprints,' shaping how diversity is concep-

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2   A recent study differentiated between demographic and nondemographic dimensions in diversity statements (Kirby et al., 2023). According to the authors, demographic dimensions refer to protected attributes like age, disability, ethnicity, gender, religion, sexual orientation, and social class category, while nondemographic dimensions refer to individual attributes like personality, political orientation, work expertise, perspectives, and skills. Even though these dimensions largely correspond with surface-level and deep-level dimensions, which are the focus of our study, we additionally employed the coding approach as carried out by Kirby et al. to compare our findings.

tualized and discussed within the organization. They manifest in two broad forms: identity-evasive and identity-conscious ideologies (Civitillo et al., 2021; Gündemir et al., 2019; Leslie & Flynn, 2022). Identity-evasive ideologies prioritize equal treatment and highlight commonalities among individuals, often downplaying group differences. In contrast, identity-conscious ideologies actively acknowledge and appreciate the distinct experiences and challenges of different groups (Civitillo et al., 2021; Gündemir et al., 2019; Jansen et al., 2016; Leslie & Flynn, 2022). These ideologies are not merely theoretical constructs; they materialize in organizational diversity statements, which may either emphasize equality (reflecting an identity-evasive ideology) or emphasize the value of differences (indicative of an identity-conscious ideology; Apfelbaum et al., 2016).

Traditionally, diversity ideologies have been explored in experimental studies to comprehend their impact on individuals (for comprehensive overviews, see Gündemir et al., 2019; Rosenthal & Levy, 2012). However, these frameworks can also serve as analytical tools for evaluating diversity statements. In the following sections, we will discuss each analytical category that our study will focus on, establishing connections to diversity ideologies where relevant.

Specificity in Diversity Statements
Organizations can adopt two primary approaches when it comes to the specificity of diversity in their statements. They may refer to diversity in a general manner that encompasses all employee differences without highlighting specific groups. This approach is in line with identity-evasive ideologies, which seek to downplay the significance of group differences. For example, these organizations might simply express a commitment to valuing diversity without delving into the specifics of what that commitment entails.

On the other hand, organizations may opt for a more detailed approach by explicitly mentioning specific dimensions, such as gender and ethnicity, in their statements. This approach aligns more closely with identity-conscious ideologies. Such conceptualizations of diversity may serve as a foundation for policies aimed at boosting the representation of underrepresented groups, such as women and ethnic minorities (Heres & Benschop, 2010).

Visibility of Dimensions in Diversity Statements
The diversity ideologies embedded within organizations not only manifest in the specific dimensions they incorporate into their conceptualization of diversity but also in whether these dimensions are categorized as surface-level or deep-level. An

organization that predominantly views diversity through surface-level dimensions, such as ethnicity or gender, aligns with an identity-conscious approach. Rooted in the discourse around interethnic and gender diversity (Koenig & Richeson, 2010; Wolsko et al., 2000), this ideology recognizes and values the unique perspectives of minoritized groups typically associated with surface-level distinctions and highlights the differences among social groups.

Conversely, a focus on deep-level dimensions, such as personality and perspectives, might reflect an identity-evasive ideology, even if differences on these dimensions are acknowledged and valued (Kirby et al., 2023; Leslie & Flynn, 2022). These approaches tend to overlook group-based disparities in experiences, emphasizing individual variances rather than addressing and acknowledging systemic issues like societal oppression.[3]

As a result, analyzing whether an organization's diversity statement includes surface-level and/or deep-level dimensions can offer insights into what the organization deems important. This analysis can unveil the underlying diversity ideology, particularly in cases where there is an exclusive focus on either surface-level or deep-level dimensions.

Including the Majority in Diversity Statements

While much of the existing research on diversity statements has concentrated on which dimensions are included, it often neglects whether these dimensions pertain to minority or majority group members (Jonsen et al., 2021; Kirby et al., 2023; Point & Singh, 2003). This omission is significant because majority group members may not inherently be perceived as integral to diversity. For instance, when organizations express their commitment to diversity in terms of gender, ethnicity and sexual orientation, the implicit reference may be towards women and racialized and sexual minorities. However, research suggests that individuals from non-minority or higher-status groups often do not feel included unless their specific groups are explicitly acknowledged as part of diversity (Jansen et al., 2016; Plaut et al., 2011; Stevens et al., 2008).

An all-inclusive multicultural approach, a manifestation of an identity-conscious ideology, acknowledges the role played by majority and higher-status group

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3   This example does not apply to all deep-level dimensions, because individuals can also experience marginalization based on some of these dimensions, like religion or sexual orientation.

members in fostering diversity and inclusion in the workplace (Jansen et al., 2016). Consistent with this approach, our assessment will also consider whether majority and higher-status groups are explicitly incorporated into diversity statements, providing a more comprehensive understanding of organizational approaches to diversity.

In summary, our examination of how diversity is conceptualized in diversity statements will center on three core categories: specificity (whether diversity statements refer to specific dimensions), visibility (whether the statements refer to more surface-level and/or deep-level dimensions), and inclusion of the majority (whether statements explicitly acknowledge majority groups as part of diversity).

Sectoral Differences in Specificity, Demography, Visibility, and Including the Majority

Organizations have various goals for investing in diversity and inclusion among their employees, which they may express in their diversity statements. These goals may range from enhancing team performance or creativity (the 'business case for diversity') to promoting equal opportunities and social justice (the 'moral case for diversity'; Jansen et al., 2021).

While these motivations for investing in diversity are not mutually exclusive, existing research in the Netherlands shows that private organizations more frequently reference only to the business case when communicating their motives for investing in diversity. In contrast, public organizations often combine the business case with moral motives (Jansen et al., 2021). In accordance with these findings, public organizations in the Netherlands historically emphasized policies targeting gender and ethnicity to enhance representativeness (Çelik, 2015) and implemented policies focusing on ethnic minorities more frequently than private organizations (Groeneveld & Verbeek, 2012).

Given this historical context, it is plausible that public organizations in the Netherlands more frequently reference gender, ethnicity and other demographic dimensions in their diversity statements compared to private organizations. Furthermore, in alignment with their moral commitment to social justice, public organizations might spotlight visible minority groups while excluding majority groups in their statements. However, it is also possible that due to private organizations' business-case focus on improving diversity, they prioritize dimensions believed to contribute to organizational economic outcomes, such as gender and ethnicity (Shabbir, 2021). With empirical evidence on sectoral differences in how diversity is

conceptualized in organizational statements being limited, our research will explore potential distinctions between private and public organizations in the three key areas of our analysis: specificity, visibility, and the inclusion of majority groups in their diversity statements. This investigation is crucial for a comprehensive understanding of potential sectoral differences in approaching diversity conceptualization.

METHOD

Sample of Organizations and Design

In this study, we examined publicly available diversity statements from the year 2019 of 195 Dutch private and public organizations that have signed the Dutch version of the *Diversity Charter*, a declaration of intent that shows their commitment to improve diversity and inclusion in their workplace (SER, n.d.). We deliberately included organizations that signed the charter in our study, since they would likely have public statements on diversity in their organization.

Out of the 195 organizations, 16 were subsidiary organizations that had the same diversity statement as their parent companies. These were only counted once in the final analyses, resulting in a dataset of 182 unique organizations. Among these, 121 (66.5%) were private organizations and 61 (33.5%) were public organizations.

We collected the organizations' diversity statements by searching their websites for pages about their vision, available positions, and news about the organization. Of the 182 organizations, 60 organizations (32.97%) did not have a statement regarding diversity on their websites and were therefore excluded from the final dataset. Additionally, 39 (21.43%) organizations had statements regarding diversity in news articles or attached annual reports on organizations' websites, rather than on their website, and were also not included in the final dataset. In total, our analyses were conducted on 83 statements, of which 55 (66.27%) belonged to private organizations and 28 (33.73%) belonged to public organizations.

Coding Procedure

Two researchers within our team conducted the coding independently using the scheme outlined in Appendix A. First, they identified whether organizations were in the public or private sector (see Appendix A). Next, they coded how organizations conceptualized diversity, specifically by coding the three main categories: specificity,

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visibility and including the majority. Finally, coders noted and counted every specific diversity dimension that was mentioned in each statement.[4]

Coding Specificity

The coding for the 'specificity' category was based on whether statements discussed specific dimensions or referred to diversity in a general sense. A statement was categorized as 'specific' only if it not only mentioned a particular dimension, such as ethnicity and gender, but also elaborated on it. This elaboration could encompass explanations of how diversity on this dimension contributes to the organization, the organization's commitment to enhancing diversity in that area, or specifics of policies associated with it. Coders recorded which dimensions were discussed, and this information was utilized to quantify how frequently specific dimensions were incorporated into diversity statements.

In contrast, statements that merely mentioned a dimension without further exploration or detail were classified as 'general'. This approach was adopted to ensure that our 'specific' coding truly captured engagement with diversity dimensions and did not encompass statements that merely mentioned dimensions as a superficial checklist item.

If statements made mention of diversity but not in connection to the organizations' (prospective) employees, it was coded as 'not applicable'. This approach was taken because our focus was on understanding organizations' approaches to diversity with regards to their employees, while some organizations discussed diversity in relation to their clients or products.

Coding Visibility

The 'visibility' category drew upon the diversity types described by Jackson and Joshi (2011), who differentiated diversity on visible (surface-level) dimensions, such as gender, age and ethnicity, from more invisible (deep-level) dimensions, such as personality, experience, and sexual orientation.

This category involved coding by determining whether statements included surface-level and/or deep-level dimensions. If a statement predominantly featured surface-level dimensions (comprising more than 70%), it was coded as 'surface-level'. If it predominantly included deep-level dimensions, it was coded as 'deep-level'. If

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4   Additionally, the statements were coded for other aspects, including whether they included business or moral reasons to invest in diversity, as discussed in Jansen et al. (2021)

there was no clear majority of surface-level and deep-level dimensions (both making up at least 30% of the total number of dimensions), it was coded as 'combination'. If a statement did not include any dimensions, for example in the case where a statement discussed diversity in a 'general' sense or discussed diversity but not in relation to their (prospective) employees, it was coded as 'not applicable'.

To illustrate, consider a statement mentioning four dimensions, such as three deep-level dimensions (education level, perspectives, and religion) and one surface-level dimension (ethnicity). In our coding system, this statement would be classified as 'deep-level.' We established a 70% threshold to determine if a statement primarily includes surface-level or deep-level dimensions. This threshold was chosen to address ambiguous cases, such as when a statement includes exactly three dimensions, making it challenging to definitively categorize it as predominantly surface-level or deep-level. However, with four or more dimensions, as in the provided example, establishing a majority becomes more straightforward. Therefore, we employed a 70% cut-off to facilitate clearer categorization. Statements that included only three dimensions with at least one surface-level and one deep-level dimension were coded as 'combination'.

Not every dimension could be easily classified as surface-level or deep-level, so the coders discussed how the dimensions would be perceived by the target audience of the statements and reached a consensus on the coding. For instance, having a certain 'culture' is an attribute that would not be readily detectable (see also Appendix A for other examples that evoked discussion among coders). However, coders agreed that when organizations mention different cultural groups in their statements, it is likely to be interpreted as referring to people from different ethnic backgrounds, which is a relatively visible attribute and was therefore coded as such.

Coding Including the Majority
The 'including the majority' category was coded based on whether statements included majority or higher-status groups (with 'higher-status' not necessarily denoting numerical prevalence but also considering power dynamics)[5] in their diversity conceptualizations. If a statement did not explicitly include at least one majority or higher-status group, it was coded as 'not included.' If it explicitly included one or more majority or higher-status groups, it was coded as 'included.' The category was

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5 Even though we coded higher-status groups (such as men, as compared to women) within this category as well, we named this category 'including the majority' (as opposed to 'including higher status groups') because it rhymes with specificity and visibility.

coded as 'not applicable' if the statements did not include any specific dimension, if they included dimensions that could not serve as bases for group memberships (such as 'perspectives' or 'different ways of thinking'), or if a statement discussed diversity but not with regards to their (prospective) employees.

INTERRATER RELIABILITY

Initially, two coders were tasked with coding the statements. As the interrater reliability indicated moderate agreement (K range = .43-.72; Landis & Koch, 1977, see Table 1), a third independent coder was brought in to analyze the statements. The first two coders resolved disagreements (see Appendix A) and provided the third coder with a briefing on the procedure. The interrater reliability between the third coder and the (resolved version of the) first two coders was substantial to almost perfect (K range = .73-.88; Landis & Koch, 1977; see Table 1). Any remaining disagreements were resolved through discussion.

Table 1 Interrater Reliabilities of the Categories after Two and Three Coders Analyzed the Data.

Category	Kappa of Two Coders	Kappa of Three Coders
Specificity	K = .46	K = .73
Visibility	K = .52	K = .88
Including the Majority	K = .43	K = .83

Coding Demographic and Nondemographic Diversity
To assess the alignment of our findings with those of Kirby et al., (2023), who employed a categorization based on demographic and broad diversity, we also used their coding scheme to categorize the dimensions. Consequently, the dimensions 'gender,' 'culture,' 'sexual orientation,' 'age,' 'disability,' 'ethnicity,' 'religion,' 'nationality,' 'social economic status,' 'refugee status holders,' and 'migration background' were coded as demographic dimensions. Meanwhile, the dimensions 'perspectives,' 'distance to labor market,' 'education level,' 'educational background,' 'veterans,' and 'political orientation' were classified as nondemographic dimensions.

RESULTS

Overview of Analyses
The results section is organized around the three primary categories: specificity of dimensions, visibility of groups, and including the majority. Additionally, we include

a section on demographic and broad approaches, aligning with recent research that examined these aspects in organizational statements (Kirby et al., 2023).

Each section begins by providing the number of excluded statements and the reason for exclusion. Subsequently, we detail the frequency of code assignments for the respective category, as presented in Table 2. Following this, we conduct tests to explore differences between private and public organizations in their communication regarding the specific category of interest. Fisher's Exact Test is employed for these associations due to instances where expected cell counts fell below five, a prerequisite for a Chi-squared test. In cases where Fisher's Exact Test results are significant, we additionally conduct Bonferroni-corrected pairwise comparisons using multiple Fisher's Exact Tests.

In the section on the specificity of dimensions, we also examine sectoral differences in the frequency of including specific dimensions, such as gender, utilizing Fisher's Exact Test. In the section on the visibility of groups, we extend our analysis to test for differences in the frequency of including surface-level and deep-level dimensions in diversity statements. Lastly, in the section on demographic and broad approaches, we investigate differences in the frequency of including demographic and nondemographic dimensions in statements.

Table 2 Specificity, Visibility, Inclusion of the Majority, and Demography in Statements per Sector (N = 71)

	Dimension	Sector n (%)		
		Public	Private	Total
Specificity	Specific	18 (85.71%)	49 (98.00%)	67 (95.37%)
	General	3 (14.29%)	1 (2.00%)	4 (5.63%)
	Total	21 (100%)	50 (100%)	71 (100%)
Visibility	Surface-level	1 (5.56%)	9 (18.37%)	10 (14.93%)
	Deep-level	3 (16.67%)	2 (4.08%)	5 (7.46%)
	Combination	14 (77.78%)	38 (77.55%)	52 (77.61%)
	Total	18 (100%)	49 (100%)	67 (100%)
Inclusion of the Majority	No reference	13 (86.67%)	45 (95.74%)	58 (93.55%)
	Included	2 (13.33%)	2 (4.26%)	4 (6.45%)
	Total	15 (100%)	47 (100%)	62 (100%)
Demography	Demographic	6 (28.57%)	24 (48.00%)	30 (42.25%)
	Broad	3 (14.29%)	1 (2.00%)	4 (5.63%)
	Combination	9 (28.57%)	24 (48.00%)	33 (46.48%)
	No dimension	3 (14.29%)	1 (2.00%)	4 (5.63%)
	Total	21	50	71

Note. Statements that did not discuss diversity in relation to the organizations' own (prospective) employees were excluded for this table.

Specificity of Dimensions

Concerning the specificity of diversity within the statements, 12 statements (14.46%) were deemed not applicable as they discussed diversity without referencing their own (prospective) employees. We excluded these statements from subsequent analyses, as our focus was on the specificity of statements regarding organizations' own employees. Including statements unrelated to diversity among their own employees could potentially distort the results. This resulted in 71 remaining statements, of which 67 (95.37%) included specific dimensions, while four (5.63%) referred to diversity in a general sense.

We conducted a Fisher's Exact Test to examine whether private and public organizations differed in their utilization of specific diversity dimensions in their statements. The results showed no significant association between sector and specificity,

p = .075, suggesting that private and public organizations share similarity in their use of specific dimensions in diversity statements[6].

Additionally, we tallied the specific dimensions explicitly included in diversity statements (excluding those not referring to their own employees), resulting in 20 specific dimensions (see Table 3). The five most frequently included dimensions were 'gender' (in 67.61% of statements), 'culture' (in 56.34% of statements), 'sexual orientation' (in 52.11% of statements), 'age' (in 50.70% of statements), and 'disability' (an umbrella category encompassing all types of disability, in 45.07% of all statements). Fisher's Exact Test was conducted to assess potential differences between private and public organizations in the specific dimensions they included in their statements. The results indicated a significant association between sectors and gender (*p* = .027, *OR* = 0.29), indicating that private organizations included gender more often in their statements than public organizations (76% vs. 48%). Since no other differences were observed between private and public organizations (*p's* > .059), these are not distinguished in Table 3.

Table 3 Specific Dimensions in Diversity Statements (N = 71)

Specific target	N (%)
Gender	48 (67.61%)
Culture	40 (56.34%)
Sexual orientation	37 (52.11%)
Age	36 (50.70 %)
Disability	32 (45.07%)
Ethnicity	29 (40.85%)
Perspectives	24 (33.80%)
Religion	17 (23.94%)
Nationality	15 (21.13%)
Distance to labor market	12 (15.49%)
Education level	6 (8.45 %)
Educational background	6 (8.45%)
Social economic status	5 (7.04%)

6   Fishers Exact Test was also conducted without excluding the 12 organizations that had statements that were not applicable, resulting in different findings. This test indicated that there was a significant association between sector and specificity of dimensions, *p* = .027. However, Bonferroni-corrected pairwise comparisons did not reveal any associations, *p's* > .132.

Table 3 Specific Dimensions in Diversity Statements (N = 71) **(continued)**

Specific target	N (%)
Status holders	3 (4.23%)
Veterans	2 (2.82%)
Political orientation	1 (1.41%)
Migration background	1 (1.41%)

Note. Statements that did not discuss diversity in relation to the organizations' own (prospective) employees were excluded for this table.

VISIBILITY OF GROUPS

Regarding the visibility of dimensions, 16 (19.28%) of the 83 statements were deemed not applicable, either because they did not discuss diversity concerning their own (prospective) employees (12 statements) or did not include specific dimensions that could be coded in terms of their visibility (four statements). These organizations were excluded from subsequent analyses for the previously stated reasons, resulting in 67 remaining statements. Among these, the majority, 52 (77.61%), included both surface-level and deep-level dimensions. A smaller portion of the statements predominantly included surface-level dimensions 10 (14.93%), while others included predominantly included deep-level dimensions (5, 7.46%).

We conducted Fisher's Exact Test to explore associations between sectors and the visibility of dimensions in their statements. The results revealed no significant association between sectors and the visibility of the dimensions in statements, p = .137, indicating that private and public organizations did not differ in the visibility of the dimensions they included in their statements.[7]

We were also interested in potential differences in how often surface-level and deep-level dimensions were on average included in the statements. The total number of surface-level and deep-level dimensions per statement was calculated, and a Wilcoxon signed-rank test was conducted to examine whether there was a difference in the number of surface-level and deep-level dimensions included

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7   Fishers Exact Test was also conducted without excluding the 16 organizations that had statements that we deemed not applicable, resulting in different findings. This test indicated that there was a significant association between sector and visibility of dimensions, p = .010. However, Bonferroni-corrected pairwise comparisons did not reveal any associations, $p's$ > .086.

in statements[8]. The results indicated that on average, statements included more surface-level dimensions (M = 2.52, SD = 1.21) than deep-level dimensions (M = 1.67, SD = 1.24), V = 1162.50, p < .001.

INCLUDING THE MAJORITY

Concerning the inclusion of majority or higher-status groups in diversity statements, 21 (25.30 %) of the statements were deemed not applicable due to the exclusion criteria in the previous analyses and because the five statements that only included deep-level dimensions referred to educational background or different perspectives. As these dimensions do not form the basis for social group memberships with a clear societal majority or status differences, these statements were not relevant for this analysis. The exclusion of these statements resulted in 62 remaining statements, of which 4 (6.45%) referred to majority or higher-status groups and 58 (93.55%) did not refer to majority or higher-status groups.

We conducted Fisher's Exact Test to assess whether there was an association between sectors and the inclusion of the majority or higher-status groups in their statements. The results did not indicate any significant association, p = .071, indicating that private and public organizations did not differ in the inclusion of majority or higher-status groups in their statements.[9]

Demographic or Broad Approaches to Diversity

Given recent work distinguishing between demographic and nondemographic dimensions in diversity statements (Kirby et al., 2023), we sought to explore differences in how often statements adopted a 'demographic' approach (solely focusing on demographic diversity), a 'broad' approach (solely focusing on nondemographic

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8   We conducted a Wilcoxon signed-rank test rather than a paired t-test because the data were not normally distributed.

9   Fishers Exact Test was also conducted without excluding the 21 statements that were deemed not applicable, resulting in different findings. This test indicated an association between sectors and the inclusion of the majority in their statements, p = .002. Bonferroni-corrected pairwise comparisons revealed that public organizations more often had statements that were deemed *not applicable* (13 out of 28 organizations, 46.43%) compared to private organizations (8 out of 55 organizations, 14.55%). Furthermore, private organizations' statements more often made no reference to majority or higher-status groups (45 out of 55 organizations, 81.82%) compared to public organizations' statements (13 out of 28 organizations, 46.43%). This finding is an example of how including statements that are not applicable in our analyses can distort results.

diversity), or a combined approach (including dimensions of both demographic and nondemographic diversity).

We again excluded 13 statements (15.47%) that were deemed not applicable as they discussed diversity without reference to their own (prospective) employees, resulting in 71 statements for subsequent analyses. Among the remaining statements, 30 (42.25%) had a demographic approach, four (5.63%) had a broad approach, 33 (46.48%) had a combination of demographic and broad approaches, while four (5.63%) statements did not include any dimensions.

To test for differences between sectors in terms of the demographic or broad approaches of the statements, we conducted Fisher's Exact Test. The results revealed no significant association between sectors and the approaches in statements, $p = .087$, indicating that there were no significant differences between private and public organizations on their use of demographic and/or broad diversity dimensions in their statements.

We were also interested in whether there were differences in how often demographic and broad diversity dimensions were included in the statements. We first calculated the total number of demographic and broad dimensions per statement and then conducted a Wilcoxon signed-rank test to assess potential differences in their frequency.[10] The results revealed that on average, statements included more demographic dimensions ($M = 3.70$, $SD = 2.18$) than nondemographic dimensions ($M = 0.70$, $SD = 0.82$), $V = 2119$, $p < .001$.

DISCUSSION

In this chapter, we explored how organizations conceptualize diversity concerning their (prospective) employees by analyzing diversity statements from 83 private and public organizations in the Netherlands. Encompassing both private and public organizations in our analyses expanded the scope of previous work (Heres & Benschop, 2010; Jonsen et al., 2021; Kirby et al., 2023; Point & Singh, 2003), thereby enriching the existing body of literature on diversity statements twofold. Firstly, we enhanced the understanding of how Dutch organizations conceptualize diversity. Secondly, we explored potential differences in how private and public organizations conceptualize

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10 We conducted a Wilcoxon signed-rank test rather than a paired t-test because the data was not normally distributed.

diversity, which increases our confidence in the generalizability of earlier findings, especially those predominantly focused on the private sector.

Specificity

Most organizations pinpointed specific dimensions in their diversity statements, with a few referring to diversity in a general sense. This suggests that these organizations might embrace an identity-conscious ideology rather than an identity-evasive one, emphasizing and valuing differences. The specific dimensions most often reported, namely gender, culture, sexual orientation, age, and disability, are typically seen as bases for marginalization of employees.

Furthermore, our results align with other findings within the Dutch context. Organizations that signed the Dutch Diversity Charter in 2019 often prioritized ethnic/cultural background in their policies (71%), followed by gender (56%), disability/chronic illness (53%), age (38%) and sexual orientation (37%) (Regioplan, 2023). These priorities reflect the dimensions often emphasized in organizations' diversity statements in our study. While our study did not investigate organizational policies, this alignment suggests that the organizations communicate about diversity in their statements can offer insights into the dimensions emphasized in their policies.

Visibility

Our analysis of the visibility of dimensions in statements revealed that most organizations included both surface-level and deep-level dimensions. Organizations emphasizing surface-level dimensions were less common, while those primarily mentioning deep-level dimensions were the rarest. Despite this mix, organizations, on average, placed more emphasis on surface-level than deep-level dimensions in their statements. This aligns with previous research on organizations' diversity statements (Jonsen et al., 2021; Point & Singh, 2003), thereby corroborating their observations in the Dutch context. While focusing on surface-level dimensions makes sense given that hiring discrimination often unfolds due to surface-level differences, workplace outcomes like social integration, conflict, and underperformance are more robustly predicted by deep-level differences among employees than by surface-level differences (Guillaume et al., 2012; Hobman et al., 2003; Phillips et al., 2006). This underscores the importance of attending to both surface-level and deep-level dimensions in organizational policies. The limited emphasis on deep-level dimensions in the statements (Table 3) suggests an opportunity for Dutch organizations to improve their management of deep-level differences among their employees.

Including the Majority

Examining whether organizations made references to majority or higher-status groups in their diversity statements revealed that very few organizations explicitly referred to these groups. This observation carries weight as members of majority or higher-status groups may feel threatened or excluded if not explicitly addressed, potentially lowering their support for diversity efforts (Cundiff et al., 2018; Jansen et al., 2015; Plaut et al., 2011). The findings suggest that many organizations may need to include these group members in their conceptualization of diversity to bolster support for diversity initiatives.

Demographic vs. Broad Diversity

Comparing our findings with Kirby et al. (2023), we coded the diversity statements according to their approach and found significant differences. Most organizations in our study employed a mix of demographic and broad approaches, with fewer adopting a demographic approach, and even fewer either not specifying dimensions or using a broad approach. On average, more demographic dimensions were included than broad dimensions. This contrasts with Kirby et al. (2023), who analyzed the top 250 organizations in the Fortune 500 and found that a broad approach to diversity was most common. This divergence might be explained by different cultural contexts between the United States and the Netherlands, impacting how organizations communicate about diversity. While our results underline the importance of considering the sociohistorical context and the size of the organization in this domain, their precise impact on how organizations conceptualize diversity remains unclear.

Private vs. Public Organizations

In addition to a general analysis of diversity statements, we examined potential differences in how private and public organizations conceptualize diversity. However, we found no discernible differences between these two sectors regarding the conceptualization of diversity in their statements. The only difference on specific dimensions was that private organizations included gender more often in their statement than public organizations. Despite this, gender emerged as one of the most commonly referenced dimensions in the diversity statements of both sectors. Consequently, our findings, drawn from an analysis of both private and public organizations' diversity statements, appear to be consistent with previous research that focused exclusively on private organizations (Jonsen et al., 2021; Kirby et al., 2023; Point & Singh, 2003).

It is important to acknowledge that the number of public organization statements we analyzed was limited, thus restricting our ability to detect statistical differences.

Nonetheless, a visual inspection of Table 2 corroborates our findings, illustrating similar patterns of communication about diversity in statements from both private and public organizations. This similarity suggests that the insights garnered from previous studies, primarily based on data from private organizations, likely extend to public organizations as well, bolstering our confidence in the generalizability of these findings.

Practical Implications

These results provide valuable insights for organizations crafting diversity statements. The quantity and nature of specific dimensions highlighted in statements play a pivotal role in shaping employees' perceptions of fit and interest in organizations. Focusing on a limited number of diversity dimensions may inadvertently tokenize certain employees, subjecting them to hypervisibility and potential negative reactions, particularly in a non-inclusive organizational climate. Such a scenario places a burden on these hypervisible employees, requiring the adoption of identity management strategies to mitigate potential adverse consequences (Dickens et al., 2019). Furthermore, concentrating on only demographic dimensions without explicitly acknowledging the role of majority groups runs the risk of eliciting feelings of threat and exclusion among majority group members (Jansen et al., 2015).

Conversely, if diversity statements exclusively emphasize nondemographic dimensions, it may diminish the appeal of these organizations to minoritized employees (Kirby et al., 2023). Preliminary evidence suggests that diversity statements encompassing both demographic and nondemographic dimensions are particularly attractive to minoritized employees. These statements are perceived as not only affirming identity safety but also recognizing and valuing the unique differences these employees bring (Russell Pascual et al., 2024). While organizations can capitalize on these insights when crafting their diversity statements, it is essential to acknowledge that this research field is still evolving, necessitating a more comprehensive examination of the impact of diversity statements.

Limitations and Future Research

While our study enriches the literature on diversity statements by shedding light on how Dutch organizations perceive diversity and investigating potential discrepancies between private and public sectors, it has a few limitations that future research should address. Firstly, our sample size, although considerable, might lack the statistical power necessary for more rigorous analyses. Future studies could enhance their analytical power by expanding datasets—in our case perhaps by incorporating organizations that signed the Diversity Charter post 2019. Despite this, the

observed patterns in how private and public organizations conceptualize diversity (refer to Table 2) suggest minimal differences between sectors, thus supporting our statistical findings. Additionally, other studies using the same dataset have found differences in how private and public organizations communicate their motives for diversity (Jansen et al., 2021), indicating the adequacy of the sample size in detecting important distinctions.

Another limitation is our exclusive focus on the textual content of diversity statements to deduce organizational conceptualizations of diversity, overlooking other expressive mediums like videos, pictures, and podcasts. Future research could broaden its scope to understand how organizations conceptualize diversity through various media formats on organizational websites.

The dynamic nature of websites, constantly being updated, poses a constraint on the longevity of our findings. However, they provide as a valuable baseline for future research aiming to track the development of diversity statements over time.

Although we can compare our findings with the dimensions organizations prioritize in their policies (SER, n.d.), future research could delve deeper by evaluating the actual policies of organizations. This exploration would facilitate a comparison between the dimensions emphasized in an organization's diversity statement and those emphasized in its policies. Analyzing whether diversity statements align or diverge from diversity approaches and objectives in policies could reveal conditions under which organizations engage in 'window dressing' or genuinely 'walk the talk' (Marques, 2010).

Lastly, beyond identifying the dimensions spotlighted in diversity statements and policies, future research should pinpoint which employee groups require attention. For instance, there is evidence indicating that employees who are different from most of their colleagues in terms of gender often perceive less inclusion compared to those who are not, a factor that significantly impacts their absenteeism (Jansen et al., 2017). Although our analysis reveals that gender is frequently addressed in diversity statements, indicating organizational awareness of its importance in diversity management, it remains to be seen how employees dissimilar in other dimensions perceive inclusion. Moreover, it is unclear if the dimensions of dissimilarity that most profoundly relate to perceptions of inclusion are the same ones that organizations prioritize in their diversity statements. In the subsequent chapters, we will investigate how dissimilarity across various dimensions is associated with employees' perceptions of social inclusion by their colleagues.

CONCLUSION

This research explores how private and public organizations in the Netherlands conceptualize diversity. Key insights from our analysis reveal that most organizations refer to specific diversity dimensions rather than using general references to diversity. They commonly include a combination of surface-level and deep-level dimensions, with surface-level dimensions being more frequently mentioned than deep-level ones. Additionally, there is a greater emphasis on demographic dimensions over nondemographic ones in these statements. Notably, majority or higher-status groups are rarely explicitly included in these conceptualizations. Interestingly, our study finds that the approach to conceptualizing diversity is similar between private and public organizations.

This research is a first deep inquiry into how organizations in the Netherlands conceptualize diversity, exploring potential distinctions between private and public organizations. Comparing our results with divergent findings in other countries underscores the need to explicitly consider the unique context of our studies. Further research is needed to comprehend the motivations behind organizations' choices in including or excluding specific dimensions in diversity statements and to discern the implications on both prospective and current employees.

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APPENDIX A

Definitions of Coding Categories Based on Organization Type, Dimensions and Communication of Diversity Statements

Coding category	Definition	Example
Organization type		
Public	State-run organization, controlled by government and paid for with public taxation.	
Private	Any person, partnership, corporation, association or agency which is not a public body.	
Conceptualizing diversity		
Specific	Specific dimensions are explicitly mentioned.	*"In practice, this means equal treatment, an open corporate culture and the promotion of the inflow, retention and promotion of employees, regardless of disability, gender, age, sexual orientation or and cultural, ethnic or religious background."*
General	Specific dimensions are either not addressed or addressed but not elaborated on.	*"We find it important that everyone can maintain their own identity and individuality in a team. [...] We work on a corporate culture in which everyone can flourish."*
Surface-level	Relatively visible and readily detectable dimensions such as gender, age, and ethnicity.	*"[Organization] strives for an inclusive business culture where both men and women can overcome stereotypes and develop to their full potential."*

Definitions of Coding Categories Based on Organization Type, Dimensions and Communication of Diversity Statements **(continued)**

Coding category	Definition	Example
Deep-level	Less visible and more underlying dimensions such as beliefs, values, educational background, personality, work experience and sexual orientation.	*"People with disabilities, of different cultures and generations, of different sexual orientations are all equally welcome in our organization. This is in line with the values we uphold: teaming and respect."*
Including the majority	People who belong to numeric majority or higher-status groups are explicitly mentioned.	*"From the theoretically to the practically educated, from the young to the old, from the creative to the precise, from the spontaneous to the thoughtful, from the generalist to the specialist, blonde, black, brown, red, straight or gay, culturally as diverse as the Netherlands is."*

APPENDIX B

Decisions Made on Inconsistencies in Coding

Coding Category	Inconsistency	Decision
Statements in general	What do we do with organizations that signed the Dutch Diversity Charter, but have a webpage for an international audience?	If an organization only has an international webpage, we include their statement in the study. If an organization has a Dutch webpage, but they only have a diversity statement on their international webpage, we do not include the statement in the study.
Statements in general	What do we do with subsidiary organizations that have similar statements?	We code the statements only to calculate the interrater reliability. However, we do not include them in the analyses as separate statements given that it would otherwise increase the 'weight' an organization would have on the results.
Targets in general	How do we code the statements of organizations (such as municipalities and job agencies) that target inhabitants of their cities/villages or clients, rather than their own employees?	If statements do not target the employees of organizations, we do not include them in the study.
Surface-level/Deep-level	Are 'professions' surface-level or deep-level?	Professions are about disciplines and/or skills that are acquired by training, which is invisible.
Surface-level/Deep-level	Is 'nationality' surface-level or deep-level?	Surface-level, see Jackson & Joshi (2011).
Surface-level/Deep-level	Is 'culture' surface-level or deep-level?	Organizations often use 'culture' to refer to ethnicity. As such, 'culture' is coded as 'surface-level'.
Majority/Minority	If an organization states that they aim to have a workforce that is representative of a city, do they include the majority group in their statement?	These statements do not include the majority, unless they explicitly mention majority or higher-status groups.

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Decisions Made on Inconsistencies in Coding **(continued)**

Coding Category	Inconsistency	Decision
Labels groups	If statements refer to racism and sexism, do we code them as referring to 'ethnicity' and 'gender'?	We code racism and sexism as referring to 'ethnicity' and 'gender' only when they refer to racism and sexism pertaining to their own employees (rather than mentioning racism and sexism in general).
Labels groups	Does *"people with a distance to the labor market"* belong to the dimension 'disability'?	We coded this as a separate dimension because this group can also refer to a distance to the labor market due to other reasons than having a disability, such as by being an ex-prisoner.
Labels groups	The following text raised a question: *"Different perspectives and ideas because of different cultural backgrounds"* It seems that cultural background is the main focus here. Do we count 'perspectives' as a separate dimension?	We only code and count dimensions when they are explicitly mentioned as a dimension that the organizations focus on. In this example, 'different perspectives and ideas' is communicated as a consequence of different cultural backgrounds and should not be coded separately.
Labels groups	Does 'nationality' belong to the group 'culture' or 'ethnicity'?	Coded as a separate dimension.
Labels groups	Do 'status holders' belong to the group 'culture' or 'nationality'?	Coded as a separate dimension.
Labels groups	Do 'people with a migration background' belong to 'culture', 'nationality' or 'ethnicity'?	Coded as a separate dimension.

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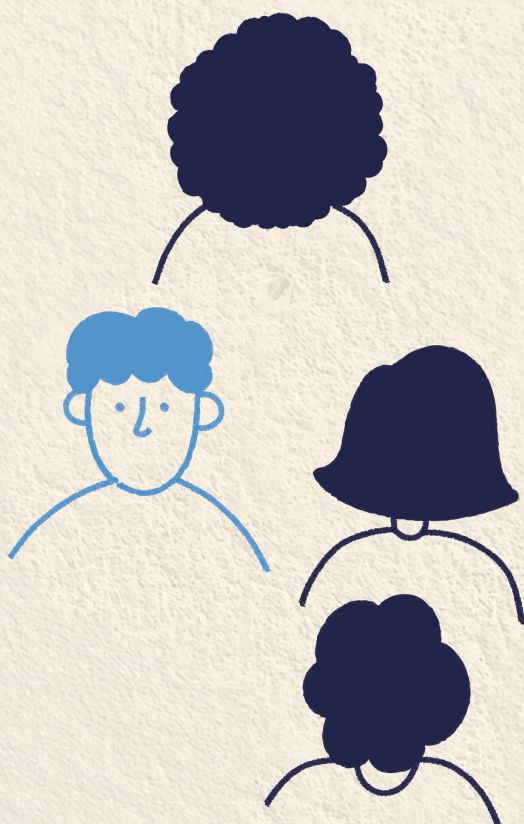
CHAPTER 3

Investigating the Causal Effect of Deep-level Dissimilarity on Anticipated Inclusion

Author Contributions:

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ABSTRACT

This research investigates the causal effects that being dissimilar to other team members has on employees' sense of inclusion. In Study 1 ($N = 128$), we experimentally manipulated respondent's (dis)similarity to other team members and tested its causal effect on anticipated social inclusion. In addition, we explored the mediating role of negative and positive emotions related to intergroup anxiety in this relationship and examined the differential impacts of dissimilarity on two subdimensions of social inclusion: authenticity and belonging. As hypothesized, dissimilarity negatively influenced anticipated inclusion. Interestingly, it did so by reducing positive emotions, rather than by increasing negative emotions. The effect of dissimilarity on authenticity did not differ from its effect on belonging. In Study 2 ($N = 196$), all participants were positioned as dissimilar in work style from their fictitious team, but work style was framed either as a value or a competency to explore whether value (vs. competence) dissimilarity had a stronger impact on anticipated authenticity, but not on anticipated belonging. Contrary to our hypothesis, there were no differences between the value and competence dissimilarity conditions on anticipated authenticity. Together, our studies provide the first empirical evidence supporting the fundamental assumption in relational demography that dissimilarity has a causal effect on inclusion and prompt a discussion of the role of positive emotions within the intergroup anxiety framework.

Keywords: dissimilarity, inclusion, intergroup anxiety, teams,

Investigating the Causal Effect of Deep-level Dissimilarity on Anticipated Inclusion

Research indicates that the degree to which employees differ from coworkers has a profound effect on their work experiences. For example, individuals who deviate from their colleagues often report higher levels of emotional exhaustion and perceive less social and organizational inclusion compared to their more similar counterparts (Adamovic, 2022; Jansen et al., 2017; Pelled et al., 1999). However, while these findings suggest a causal relationship between dissimilarity and work-related outcomes like social inclusion, the fundamental assumption that dissimilarity *leads to* decreased perceptions of inclusion remains untested.

Testing this assumption is crucial, given the possibility of an inverse relationship whereby lowered social inclusion increases perceptions of dissimilarity. While it is plausible that dissimilarity and social inclusion affect each other bidirectionally, causal evidence to date only supports the notion that social inclusion shapes perceptions of dissimilarity (Sacco et al., 2014). This underscores the necessity of empirically confirming the causal effect of dissimilarity on inclusion.

Investigating this causal relationship is not only of theoretical relevance, but also carries profound practical implications. For instance, if dissimilarity largely stems from social inclusion, efforts directed solely at fostering acceptance of diverse employees might be less impactful than initiatives targeting behaviors that foster inclusivity among colleagues. Therefore, empirically substantiating the assumption of causality is imperative for both theoretical and practical reasons. To gain a deeper understanding of how dissimilarity influences employees, we address three key gaps in current research:

Firstly, previous research on the relationship between employee dissimilarity and work-related outcomes often utilized correlational methods in real-life settings (Guillaume et al., 2012), which enhance ecological validity but fall short in testing causal relationships. Therefore, it is imperative to employ experimental or longitudinal studies to elucidate the potential cause-and-effect nature of this relationship.

Secondly, it has been theorized that dissimilarity within teams can incite intergroup dynamics, leading to feelings of uncertainty and diminished trust towards outgroup members (Chattopadhyay et al., 2011, 2020; Jansen et al., 2017; Krebs et al., 2006). The intergroup anxiety model further suggests that negative intergroup emotions may impede interactions with dissimilar others, while reducing anxiety could foster improved intergroup relations (Stephan, 2014). These mechanisms could elucidate

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why dissimilarity impacts employees' social inclusion. However, the specific role of these mechanisms, such as intergroup anxiety, in explaining the dissimilarity-inclusion relationship remains untested. Empirical investigations into these underlying mechanisms are essential to deepen our understanding of how dissimilarity affects employees.

Thirdly, dissimilarity has been linked to employees' social inclusion, which comprises two subdimensions: authenticity and belonging (Jansen et al., 2014, 2017). Since authenticity and belonging are closely intertwined, a rigid distinction between them is not always necessary. Nevertheless, delineating between them may be relevant when investigating dissimilarity on deep-level (i.e., less visible) dimensions. In such cases, individuals may downplay or mask their dissimilarity to fit into the group (i.e., to belong), thereby compromising their authenticity—a factor that could adversely impact their well-being (Ellemers & Barreto, 2006; Wright et al., 2022). Thus, it is crucial to investigate the potentially distinct effects of deep-level dissimilarity on authenticity and belonging.

There are also indications that certain deep-level differences may exert a more pronounced impact on social inclusion than others. For example, individuals whose moral values deviate from the group often experience more threat compared to those whose differences lie in competence (Van der Lee et al., 2023). It is conceivable that individuals dissimilar in terms of values may perceive less leeway to express their authentic selves compared to those dissimilar in terms of competence, as the former may pose a threat to important aspects of their team members' social identity (Pagliaro et al., 2011) and consequently face exclusion. These subtleties within deep-level differences warrant exploration to determine whether a finer distinction within deep-level dissimilarity is necessary to understand its relationship with authenticity and belonging.

The current research, comprised of two studies, aims to bridge these identified gaps through three key approaches. Firstly, we will utilize an experimental approach to examine the causal effect of dissimilarity on inclusion. Secondly, we will examine the role of affective responses that dissimilarity may evoke, specifically negative and positive intergroup emotions, thereby elucidating some of the mechanisms underlying the dissimilarity-inclusion relationship. Thirdly, we will examine the distinct effects of deep-level dissimilarity on authenticity and belonging to enhance our understanding of how these subdimensions of inclusion may be differentially affected. Furthermore, we will explore whether deep-level dissimilarity in values versus competencies may yield disparate effects on authenticity and belonging.

Effect of Dissimilarity on Social Inclusion

Experimental research employing the minimal group paradigm has investigated the impact of group memberships on attitudes and identification with various groups (Otten, 2016). However, the context under scrutiny, wherein individuals deviate from the majority within their team, differs from the contexts explored in these studies in two important ways. Firstly, according to the Ingroup Projection Model, a numerical disparity between those who are dissimilar and their team engenders a unique power dynamic, wherein the majority can dictate norms and standards (Mummendey & Wenzel, 1999; Wenzel et al., 2007). Second, dissimilarity among team members establishes an environment wherein they are united by a common team identity yet divided by their differences. This differs from conventional inter-group scenarios, where opposing group members lack a shared identity. These disparities underscore the imperative for further experimental investigation.

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Social Identity and Intergroup Anxiety

While much of the existing research on dissimilarity typically assumes a direct impact on outcomes like social inclusion, experimental studies thus far have mainly examined the reverse direction, indicating that social inclusion influences perceptions of similarity (Sacco et al., 2014). Nevertheless, our investigation into the directional relationship between dissimilarity and social inclusion is firmly grounded in theory.

The relational demography approach commonly positions dissimilarity as the catalyst for various outcomes, including social inclusion (Kaur & Ren, 2022). This perspective is further supported by Social Identity Theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1986), which suggests a natural inclination for individuals to favor ingroup members (those similar to themselves) while harboring mistrust towards outgroup members (those dissimilar). This theory implies that employees perceived as dissimilar may anticipate their colleagues not acting in their best interest, potentially leading to expectations of reduced inclusion. This presents a pivotal area for our research to delve into.

Expanding upon Social Identity Theory, the intergroup anxiety model delineates the emotional processes triggered in intergroup interactions (Stephan & Stephan, 1985). This model posits that individuals frequently experience anxiety when confronted with differences between themselves and others, particularly amid uncertainty about others' attitudes. In team settings that require close cooperation, the fear of potential backlash may compel dissimilar individuals to withhold their divergent perspectives (Phillips & Loyd, 2006). Moreover, studies indicate that heightened intergroup anxiety can lead to more negative interpretations of others' actions

(Van Zomeren et al., 2007), implying that anxious individuals may view their team's intentions or behaviors in a more negative light.

Drawing on previous work (Van Zomeren et al., 2007) and the predictions made by Social Identity Theory and the intergroup anxiety model, we expect that dissimilar individuals will anticipate less inclusion compared to those similar to their team members. Furthermore, we expect that perceptions of dissimilarity in a team setting are likely to evoke negative emotions, which, in turn, will foster negative threat assessments regarding how the team will treat the individual. Consequently, we propose that intergroup anxiety will explain why dissimilarity affects anticipated inclusion, culminating in the following hypotheses:

H1a: Dissimilarity negatively affects anticipated inclusion.
H1b: The effect of dissimilarity on anticipated inclusion is mediated by intergroup anxiety.

Deconstructing Social Inclusion: Authenticity and Belonging
Social inclusion, a multifaceted construct encompassing authenticity and belonging (Jansen et al., 2014), is at the center of our investigation into the effects of dissimilarity. The distinction between its subdimensions—where authenticity denotes one's ability to be and express oneself, and belonging reflects the motivation to have and maintain positive interpersonal connections (Brewer, 1991)—suggests that dissimilarity might impact them differently.

Unlike surface-level differences, such as in terms of ethnicity and gender, which are readily observable and relatively stable, deep-level differences pertain to identities, values and perspectives that are not immediately apparent. Research on demographic deep-level dissimilarity indicates that individuals often choose to conceal these differences in the hope of being treated more as insiders by the group (Ellemers & Barreto, 2006; Fernández et al., 2023; Wright et al., 2022). Similarly, individuals differing on deep-level, task-related dimensions also seem to grapple with expressing their true selves, apprehensive of negative judgments due to their divergence (Phillips & Loyd, 2006; Phillips et al., 2006). In essence, "a sense of belonging and the feeling of connection with others might constrain their sense of authenticity" (Fernández et al., 2023, p. 695).

Considering that deep-level dissimilar individuals often compromise their authenticity to preserve a sense of belonging within a group, deep-level dissimilarity may exert a more pronounced impact on authenticity than on belonging. Consequently,

we hypothesize that team members differing on deep-level dimensions will antici-pate experiencing diminished levels of authenticity compared to belonging:

H2: *Dissimilarity in work style has a stronger negative effect on anticipated authenticity than on anticipated belonging.*

STUDY 1

Method

Study Design
In our experimental study, we manipulated deep-level dissimilarity within a ficti-tious team to examine its effects on anticipated social inclusion. Our focus was on dissimilarity in work style, a dimension deemed pertinent to team discussions in preparation for a task. By selecting this dimension, we aimed to prompt participants to contemplate how their team members would engage with them during these discussions.

Employing a between-subjects design with two levels (work style: similar/dissim-ilar), participants were randomly assigned to one of two conditions: similarity or dissimilarity to team members.

Power Analysis
To determine the sample size for our study, we utilized the effect size between dissimilarity and inclusion obtained from a previous study (Şahin et al., 2019). This effect size (ηp^2 = .05) was converted to perform a power analysis for a t-test, using Cohen's d of .45 and a power of .80. The analysis yielded a computed sample size of 62 participants per condition (dissimilarity vs. similarity), resulting in a total of 124 recruited participants.

Participants
We recruited our participants on Prolific. Prescreeners on Prolific were employed to only include participants who were at least 18 years old and were living in the United Kingdom. Our study sample consisted of 124 participants (49.20% woman, 33.87 % men, 0.81% different gender identity, 16.13% gender unknown to the researchers), M_{age} = 30.55, SD_{age} = 10.81.

Procedure

The study was designed using the Gorilla Experiment Builder (Anwyl-Irvine et al., 2020). Participants were told that they would participate in a study on how different team compositions in terms of work style relate to creativity. They gave informed consent and were briefed on what the study would entail: they would fill out a work style questionnaire and subsequently be 'randomly paired' with three other participants for a team creativity task. They were told they would be informed of their own and each other's work style before engaging in the task together.

Participants then completed the Cooperative and Competitive Personality Scale (Lu et al., 2013), after which they encountered a loading screen informing them that their scores were being computed. True to our protocol, the study indeed calculated their scores and used these scores to determine their work style. Participants with a mean score above 4 were classified as 'cooperative', while those with a mean score below 4 were classified as 'competitive' (mean score < 4). In instances where participants obtained a mean score of exactly 4, we assigned them to a category randomly, resulting in two additional participants being classified as 'competitive'. We chose to use participants' actual scores rather than providing fictitious feedback to enhance the study's credibility and realism. Participants' work style was displayed on the screen, accompanied by a description elucidating their inclination towards either cooperation or competition in their interactions with others (see Appendix A for details).

Next, another loading screen indicated they would be connected to three other participants; After a 20-second interval, the screen automatically progressed to a screen with detailed information about the task purportedly to be undertaken with their team (see Appendix A for the full text). Additionally, participants were briefed on two possible strategies the team could adopt: fostering rivalry among team members and approaching the task competitively or opting for collaboration from the outset and working collectively. Emphasizing the common objective, participants were assured that regardless of the chosen strategy, all team members would receive an identical reward. Subsequently, participants were informed of having a few minutes to chat with fellow team members and decide on a strategy before commencing the task. To ensure comprehension, this screen could only be advanced after 60 seconds, heightening the likelihood of participants thoroughly reviewing the instructions.

Upon advancing, participants were prompted to indicate their preferred approach to the task—whether they inclined towards cooperation or competition. Following

this, participants were randomly assigned to either the 'similarity' or 'dissimilarity' condition. A visual graphic featuring icons representing their 'team members' (see Figure 1) was presented, with the work styles of these members displayed to either match or differ from the participant's style. Participants were reminded of the work style definitions and instructed to remember their team members' styles. This was followed by a screen featuring three questions, wherein participants were asked to indicate the work style of each team member as an attention check.

Figure 1 Representation of the Participants in the Dissimilar Condition with a Cooperative Work Style
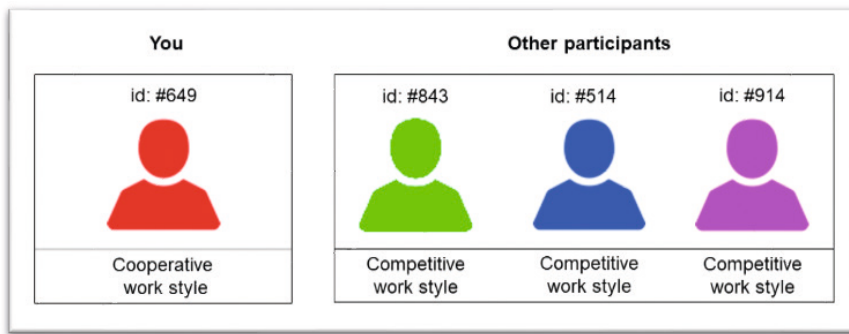
Following the identification of their team members' work styles and preceding their ostensibly interaction with them, participants were instructed to complete a set of questions assessing their sentiments about interacting with the team. They first completed the Perceived Group Inclusion Questionnaire (Jansen et al., 2014) assessing their anticipated sense of authenticity and belonging within the team. Subsequently, participants rated their emotions—both positive and negative—pertaining to the forthcoming team interaction, taken from the Intergroup Anxiety Scale (Stephan & Stephan, 1985). Following this, participants were asked to indicate how much they valued cooperation and how competent they thought they were at cooperating. Upon completion of the questionnaire, participants encountered a message indicating they had reached the end of the study and that no team interaction or tasks would ensue. Subsequently, participants were debriefed, explaining the slight deception involved and affording them an opportunity to provide feedback on the study. Finally, participants were compensated for their time.

Measures
Anticipated Inclusion. As our study design did not involve actual interaction with team members, we measured participants' anticipated social inclusion by the team

with the 16-item Perceived Group Inclusion Scale (PGIS; Jansen et al., 2014). This scale comprises two subscales assessing authenticity (which includes components related to room for authenticity and value in authenticity) and belonging (including components related to group affection and group membership). Response options ranged from 1 (*completely disagree*) to 7 (*completely agree*). The participants were asked to indicate how they think that the group would act towards them during their interaction. Example items are: "*[The other participants] will give me the feeling that I belong*" and "*... will allow me to present myself the way I am*" (α = .96).

Intergroup Anxiety. To operationalize the affective responses that individuals may have in situations in which they are dissimilar to others, we employed the Intergroup Anxiety Scale (Stephan & Stephan, 1985). Participants were asked to rate their feelings about interacting with their team members using 11 emotions (seven positive and four negative) from the Intergroup Anxiety Scale (Stephan & Stephan, 1985), with response options ranging from 1 (*not at all*) to 7 (*very much*). These emotions were: Awkward, accepted (recoded), careful, certain (recoded), confident (recoded), defensive, happy (recoded), irritated, impatient, self-conscious, suspicious. A higher score indicated more intergroup anxiety (α = .81).[11]

Attention and Validity Checks. To assess participants' attentiveness, they were asked to indicate the work styles of their fictitious team members. All participants successfully passed this check. Additionally, to verify whether participants with a cooperative work style indeed perceived greater competence in and valued cooperation more than those with a competitive work style, they were asked to rate their perceived competence in cooperation and their appreciation for cooperation on a scale ranging from 1 (*not at all*) to 7 (*very much*). Furthermore, to check whether the feedback the participants received about their workstyle corresponded with their task approach preferences, participants indicated their preference for either a cooperative or competitive approach to the task.

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11 In addition to these emotions, we also asked participants to rate their feelings using dejection-related emotions (discouraged, disappointed, sad), agitation-related emotions (uneasy, on edge, tense, agitated), quiescence-related emotions (calm, relaxed, satisfied), and one emotion that relates to a promotion-focused orientation (curious) and one emotion that relates to a prevention-focused orientation (afraid) (Shah & Higgins, 2001). However, these emotions were measured to study different research questions beyond the scope of the current study.

RESULTS

Preliminary Analyses

First, we included all items in an exploratory factor analysis (EFA) with oblique (Direct Oblimin) rotation to assess whether the items loaded on their respective factors (see Table 1 for the factor loadings). A parallel analysis indicated that four factors with significant Eigenvalues could be distinguished. The EFA showed that all but one item from the authenticity and belonging subscale loaded on their respective factors, with one item having a cross-loading between these factors. Given that social inclusion theoretically consists of these two subscales, we first test our hypotheses on the effects of dissimilarity on anticipated inclusion as a single variable. Subsequently, we test our hypothesis that dissimilarity has different effects on the two subscales.

Most positively laden intergroup emotions loaded on a single factor (*certain*, *happy*, and *confident*). One emotion, *accepted*, was removed from subsequent analyses due to only loading on the same factor as the belonging items.

Most negatively laden intergroup emotions loaded on a single factor. However, the emotions *awkward* and *self-conscious* had cross-loadings of similar size on the factors of both negative and positive emotions. Therefore, these two emotions were also removed from subsequent analyses.

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Table 1 Factor Loadings of the Exploratory Factor Analysis on the Perceived Group Inclusion Scale and the Intergroup Emotions Using a Four-Factor Solution (Principal Axis Factoring, Direct Oblimin Rotation, Factor Loadings > .30)

Item:	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3	Factor 4
Awkward			.46	.51
Careful			.44	
Suspicious			.62	
Defensive			.74	
Impatient			.70	
Irritated			.61	
Certain				.80
Happy				.58
Accepted	-.44			
Confident				.83
Self-conscious			.35	.38
Authenticity 1		.95		
Authenticity 2		.88		
Authenticity 3		.91		
Authenticity 4		.92		
Authenticity 5		.64		
Authenticity 6		.65		
Authenticity 7		.72		
Authenticity 8	.30	.67		
Belonging 1	.86			
Belonging 2	.80			
Belonging 3	.81			
Belonging 4	.80			
Belonging 5	.85			
Belonging 6	.86			
Belonging 7	.83			
Belonging 8	.77			
Eigenvalue	6.83	5.82	2.60	2.51

Next, we conducted a CFA to confirm the factor structure that was extracted in the EFA. Since multivariate normality was violated, we used the Satorra-Bentler test statistic. The specified model reached good fit, $\chi^2/df = 1.58$, $CFI = .92$, $TLI = .91$, $RMSEA = .09$, $SRMR = .09$, $AIC = 8703.90$. We additionally conducted a CFA in which all intergroup emotions loaded on a single factor rather than on separate factors

for positive and negative emotions. This model reached moderate fit, χ^2/df = 1.74, *CFI* = .87, *TLI* = .86, *RMSEA* = .10, *SRMR* = .12, *AIC* = 8826.62 and had a worse fit than the previous model with separate factors for positive and negative emotions, *p* < .001.

Given the results of the factor analyses, we created two variables for the intergroup emotions: *positive intergroup emotions*, averaging the scores of the positive emotions except *accepted* (*α* = .80), and *negative intergroup emotions*, averaging the scores of the negative emotions except *awkward* and *self-conscious* (*α* = .81). The descriptives and zero-order correlations of all variables can be found in Appendix B.

Second, to verify that participants' self-perceptions matched the work style that emerged from their questionnaire responses, we examined the data of the 124 participants—of which 10 had a competitive work style and 114 had a cooperative work style.

A MANOVA was conducted, with classified work style as the independent variable and with the following dependent variables: (1) perceived competence in cooperation and (2) perceived value of cooperation. The analysis revealed significant differences between the two work styles across these dimensions, $F_{(1, 122)}$ = 7.00, *p* = .001; Pillai's Trace = .10. Post-hoc ANOVAs demonstrated that, on average, those with a cooperative work style rated themselves more competent in cooperative tasks (*M* = 5.46, *SD* = 1.27 vs. *M* = 4.40, *SD* = 0.97; $F_{(1, 122)}$ = 6.56, *p* = .012) and placed a higher value on cooperation (*M* = 5.81, *SD* = 1.04 vs. *M* = 4.50, *SD* = 1.35; $F_{(1, 122)}$ = 13.86, *p* < .001) than those with a competitive work style.

Overall, these findings affirm that participants identified as cooperative indeed exhibited a greater inclination and self-perceived ability towards cooperation. Moreover, their assigned work style aligned with their task approach preference, validating the credibility of the feedback provided to them. These results reinforce the notion that the work style feedback was perceived as authentic by participants.

Hypotheses Tests

To test Hypothesis 1a, stating that individuals in the dissimilarity condition will anticipate less inclusion than individuals in the similarity condition, an independent samples t-test was conducted. The results showed that participants in the dissimilarity condition anticipated less social inclusion (*M* = 3.46, *SD* = 1.18) compared to participants in the similarity condition (*M* = 4.48, *SD* = 1.05), *t*(120.25) = 5.06, *p* < .001, 95% CI [-0.62; -1.41], supporting our hypothesis despite the small number of

participants with a competitive work style[12]. These results suggest that dissimilarity indeed causes reduced anticipation of inclusion.

To test Hypothesis 1b, namely that intergroup anxiety mediates the effect of dissimilarity on anticipated inclusion, a mediation analysis was conducted. As the factor analyses suggested treating positive and negative intergroup emotions as separate variables, a parallel mediation analysis tested whether dissimilarity predicted anticipated inclusion via the positive and negative emotions (see Figure 2). The 95% confidence intervals of the parameters were estimated using the Monte Carlo method with 10.000 samples (MacKinnon et al., 2004; Yzerbyt et al., 2018). The analysis revealed that dissimilarity was negatively related to anticipated inclusion (c = -0.72, SE = 0.18, 95% CI [-1.08; -0.37], p < .001) and negatively related to positive intergroup emotions (a_1 = -0.53, SE = 0.22, 95% CI [-0.95; -0.11], p = .013), while it was positively related to negative intergroup emotions (a_2 = 0.47, SE = 0.22, 95% CI [0.04; 0.89], p = .031). Furthermore, positive intergroup emotions were positively related to anticipated inclusion (b_1 = 0.28, SE = 0.07, 95% CI [0.14; 0.43], p < .001), while negative intergroup emotions were negatively related to anticipated inclusion (b_2 = -0.30, SE = 0.07, 95% CI [-0.44; -0.16], p < .001). However, the mediation analysis indicated that negative intergroup emotions did not mediate the effect of dissimilarity on anticipated inclusion (a_2b_2 = -0.14, SE = 0.07, 95% CI [-0.31; -0.01], p = .056), whereas positive intergroup emotions partially mediated this effect (a_1b_1 = -0.15, SE = 0.07, 95% CI [-0.31; -0.03], p = .037; total effect = -1.02, SE = 0.20, 95% CI [-1.42; -0.63], p < .001), partially supporting our hypothesis.

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12 We additionally conducted an ANOVA to test for an interaction between the independent variables 'dissimilarity' and 'work style' on the dependent variable 'anticipated inclusion'. The results indeed showed an interaction, $F(1, 120)$ = 10.89, p = .001, η_p^2 = 0.08. Simple effects analyses using Tukey's HSD procedure indicated that participants with a cooperative work style anticipated less inclusion in the dissimilarity condition (M = 3.44, SE = 0.14) than in the similarity condition (M= 4.64, SE = 0.14), $t(120)$ = 6.10, p < .001, while condition did not make a difference for participants with a competitive work style (M = 3.67, SE = 0.47 in the dissimilarity condition and M= 2.59, SE = 0.47 in the similarity condition, $t(120)$ = 1.63, p = .362). In addition, in the similarity condition, participants with a competitive work style anticipated less inclusion (M = 2.59, SE = 0.47) than those with a cooperative work style (M = 4.64, SE = 0.14), $t(120)$ = 4.20, p < .001. However, in the dissimilarity condition, there were no differences between participants with a competitive work style (M = 3.67, SE = 0.47) and those with a cooperative work style (M = 3.44, SE = 0.14), $t(120)$ = 0.47, p = .965. It seems that the effect of dissimilarity on anticipated inclusion is driven by the participants with a cooperative work style, which is logical given the small cell size of participants with a competitive work style (10 out of 124 participants).

Figure 2 An Overview of the Parallel Mediation Model with Unstandardized Regression Coefficients

$$a_1b_1 = -0.15*$$

Positive intergroup anxiety emotions

$$a_1 = -0.53*$$

$$b_1 = 0.28***$$

Dissimilarity

Anticipated inclusion

$$c = -0.72***$$

$$a_2 = 0.47*$$

Negative intergroup anxiety emotions

$$b_2 = -0.30***$$

$$a_2b_2 = -0.14$$

3
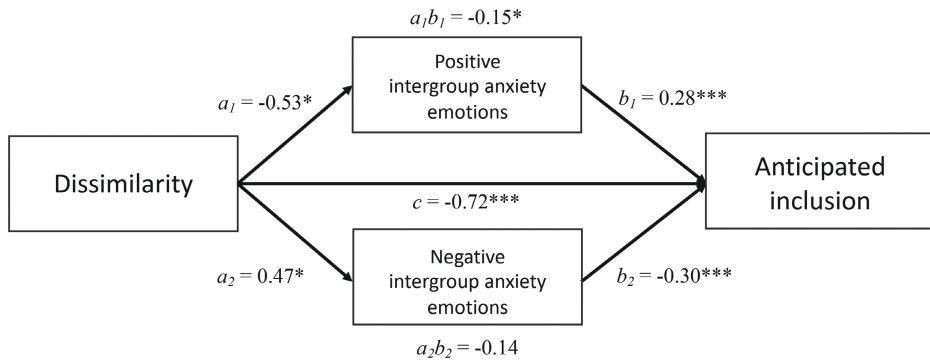
We then tested Hypothesis 2, stating that work style dissimilarity more strongly relates to anticipated authenticity than to anticipated belonging, by conducting a Wald test (Klopp, 2020) on path analyses in which anticipated authenticity and belonging were predicted by dissimilarity. The 95% confidence intervals of the parameters were again estimated using the Monte Carlo method with 10.000 samples.

The results revealed that dissimilarity was negatively related to both anticipated authenticity (b = -0.83, SE = 0.22, 95% CI [-1.26; -0.40], p < .001) and anticipated belonging (b = -1.20, SE = 0.22, 95% CI [-1.62; -0.77], p < .001). The Wald test showed that the size of the relationships between dissimilarity and anticipated authenticity and belonging did not differ from each other, W = 3.60, p = .058, contrary to our hypothesis.[13]

Discussion of Study 1

The results of Study 1 support Hypotheses 1a and 1b, demonstrating that individuals with a work style dissimilar (vs. similar) to their team members anticipate less inclusion. Moreover, our findings reveal that dissimilarity to other team members dampens the positive intergroup emotions and increases the negative intergroup emotions individuals experience as individuals anticipate interaction with their team. Interestingly, it is the decrease in positive emotions, and not the increase in negative emotions, that explains why dissimilarity relates to anticipated inclusion.

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13 We also exploratively tested whether positive and negative intergroup emotions differentially related to authenticity and belonging. Again, we found that both types of intergroup emotions did not have different relationships with the two subdimensions.

These outcomes align with predictions derived from Social Identity Theory and the intergroup anxiety model, which posit that anticipated inclusion diminishes as a result of anxiety stemming from potential reactions within the group to deviation. However, our study unveils an interesting nuance–the prominent role of positive intergroup emotions, rather than negative ones, in the relationship between dissimilarity and anticipated inclusion. This finding enriches our understanding of intergroup anxiety, suggesting a more complex structure of intergroup anxiety than previously acknowledged in the literature, which focuses on negative, but not positive, emotions in intergroup settings (Stephan, 2014).

Regarding Hypothesis 2, which posited that work style dissimilarity would more strongly impact anticipated authenticity than belonging, our analyses did not find supportive evidence. This suggests that deep-level dissimilarity may not affect these subdimensions of inclusion differently as initially hypothesized. However, an alternative explanation could be related to how we manipulated deep-level dissimilarity, namely as a value rather than a competence.

Work Style as a Value or Competence

Our hypothesis, positing that anticipated authenticity would be more strongly impacted than anticipated belonging, stemmed from prior research suggesting that dissimilar individuals suppress their authenticity in pursuit of group acceptance (Ellemers & Barreto, 2006; Fernández et al., 2023; Wright et al., 2022). This hypothesis was tested within a context where work styles were portrayed as a core value. Given the pivotal role of values in shaping social identity (Pagliaro et al., 2011), individuals within team settings may prioritize concealing differences in values more than concealing less value-laden disparities, consequently experiencing diminished authenticity. Supporting this notion, research shows that individuals feel more threatened when their behavior is morally scrutinized by the group compared to judgments based on competence (Van der Lee et al., 2023). This suggests that value-related dissimilarity could more adversely affect anticipated team reactions, potentially prompting individuals to downplay differences (thus reducing authenticity) to sustain a sense of belonging. However, our findings diverged from this expectation, as we observed that value-related dissimilarity (vs. similarity) diminished both authenticity and belonging to a similar extent.

To further explore deep-level dissimilarity effects on authenticity and belonging, we conducted a study contrasting dissimilarity in values with dissimilarity in competencies. Specifically, we were interested in the effects of value vs. competence dissimilarity on anticipated authenticity and belonging, rather than testing

whether anticipated authenticity was consistently lower than belonging. Given the higher perceived threat in groups for those dissimilar in values, and their expected tendency to want to minimize these differences, we expected a greater negative impact on authenticity for value-based dissimilarity than for competence-based dissimilarity. However, we did not expect anticipated belonging to differ between these two types of dissimilarity, as those dissimilar in values may anticipate similar levels of belonging as those dissimilar in competence as long as they suppress their authentic selves.

In sum, we predict that those dissimilar in values would anticipate experiencing lower levels of authenticity, but not necessarily a reduced sense of belonging, in comparison to those dissimilar in competence, resulting in the following hypothesis:

H3: Individuals who are dissimilar in values anticipate a lower sense of authenticity compared to those who are dissimilar in competencies. There is no difference in their anticipated sense of belonging.

STUDY 2

Method

Study Design
This experiment employed a between-subjects design with two levels (work style dissimilarity: value/competence) to test whether work style dissimilarity framed as a value or as a competence influences anticipated authenticity and belonging differently. Participants were randomly assigned to one of two conditions: value or competence dissimilarity to team members.

Power Analysis
To determine the sample size, we used the effect size of the relationships between deep-level dissimilarity and authenticity and between deep-level dissimilarity and belonging that we obtained in a previous correlational study (Şahin et al., 2019). We converted this effect size ($\eta_p^2 = .01$) to $f = 0.10$. Using a power of .80, this analysis resulted in a total required sample size of 198 participants.

Participants
We recruited 196 participants on Prolific, which is two fewer than the power analysis recommended, due to an oversight. We used the prescreeners to only include

participants who were at least 18 years old and living in the United Kingdom. We did not collect demographic information of these participants.

Procedure and Measures

The study was conducted using the Gorilla platform and closely followed the procedure outlined in Study 1. However, several differences were implemented.

Firstly, participants completed a modified version of the work style questionnaire, where the statements were rephrased to elicit low agreement from participants regarding competition. For instance, participants indicated the extent to which they agreed with statements such as '*Success is only achieved through individual effort*' and '*In the end, cooperation with others is not compatible with success*".

Secondly, all participants received false feedback indicating that their work style was "cooperative," regardless of their actual score on the work style questionnaire. Given that most participants in Study 1 were categorized as 'cooperative', this approach aimed to ensure consistency of work style across conditions.

Thirdly, since this study did not aim to investigate *whether* dissimilarity affects inclusion, but rather which type of dissimilarity affects inclusion, we decided not to manipulate dissimilarity but rather assign all participants to a dissimilarity condition where their fictitious team members consistently had a competitive work style. This study design ensured consistency across conditions and enabled significant resource savings in terms of participant numbers.

Fourthly, the feedback provided to participants regarding their work style diverged from the previous study. Participants in the value condition received feedback highlighting the importance and meaningfulness of a cooperative workstyle, whereas participants in the competence condition received feedback emphasizing capability and accomplishment in approaching tasks in a cooperative manner. This approach was used to differentiate between work style dissimilarity based on value or competence. The exact text presented to participants can be found in Appendix C.

Anticipated Inclusion. As in Study 1, the extent to which the participants anticipated social inclusion in the team was measured with the Perceived Group Inclusion Scale (PGIS; Jansen et al., 2014) ($α$ = .96).

Intergroup Anxiety. The emotions participants experienced in anticipation of the interaction with their team members were measured in the same way as in Study 1, using the scale of Stephan and Stephan (1985; $α$ = .82).

Attention and Validity Checks. To assess participants' attentiveness, they were asked to indicate the work styles of their three fictitious team members. Furthermore, they were asked to indicate whether a cooperative work style was a competence or a value, which should align with the content of the feedback they received regarding 'their' work style. All participants successfully passed these attention checks. Additionally, to test whether participants' conditions (work style: value vs. competence) influenced their perceived competence and value of cooperation, they were asked to rate the extent to which they perceived competence at cooperating and their value of cooperating, utilizing a scale ranging from 1 (*not at all*) to 7 (*very much*). Furthermore, we sought to determine participants' preferences for approaching the task in a cooperative manner, as they were all assigned a cooperative work style. Consequently, participants indicated whether they would prefer to approach the task using a cooperative or competitive approach.

RESULTS

Preliminary Analyses
As in Study 1, we first included all items of the dependent variables in an exploratory factor analysis (EFA) with oblique (Direct Oblimin) rotation (see Table 2 for the factor loadings). A parallel analysis indicated that five factors with significant Eigenvalues could be distinguished.

The EFA showed that the items from the authenticity subscale loaded on two unique factors, while all items of the belonging subscale loaded on one factor. Given that social inclusion theoretically consists of authenticity and belonging, we first tested whether the value and competence conditions differ from each other on anticipated inclusion. Subsequently, we tested our hypothesis that the value and competence conditions differ on authenticity, but not belonging (H3).

As in Study 1, most 'positive' intergroup emotions loaded on a single factor (*certain*, *happy*, and *confident*), but *accepted* was removed from subsequent analyses due to only loading on the same factor as the belonging items.

Also, like Study 1, most 'negative' intergroup emotions loaded on a single factor, except for the emotions *awkward* and *self-conscious*. These emotions had cross-load-

ings on the factors of both negative and positive emotions. Therefore, these two emotions were also deleted from subsequent analyses.

Table 2 Factor Loadings of the Exploratory Factor Analysis on the Perceived Group Inclusion Scale and the Intergroup Emotions Using a Four-Factor Solution (Principal Axis Factoring, Direct Oblimin Rotation, Factor Loadings > .30)

Item:	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3	Factor 4	Factor 5
Awkward				.41	.56
Careful				.54	
Suspicious				.78	
Defensive				.75	
Impatient				.72	
Irritated				.59	
Certain					.60
Happy					.62
Accepted	-.48				.47
Confident					.79
Self-conscious				.39	.52
Authenticity 1			.81		
Authenticity 2			.86		
Authenticity 3			.76		
Authenticity 4			.86		
Authenticity 5		.76			
Authenticity 6		.82			
Authenticity 7		.76			
Authenticity 8		.79			
Belonging 1	.89				
Belonging 2	.87				
Belonging 3	.86				
Belonging 4	.82				
Belonging 5	.75				
Belonging 6	.75				
Belonging 7	.67				
Belonging 8	.75				
Eigenvalue	6.06	3.62	3.55	2.83	2.66

Next, we conducted a CFA using the Satorra-Bentler test statistic to confirm the factor structure that was extracted in the EFA. The results showed that the speci-

fied model reached good fit, χ^2/df = 2.00, *CFI* = .92, *TLI* = .91, *RMSEA* = .09, *SRMR* = .06, *AIC* = 13247.57.

Given the results of the factor analyses, we created two variables for the intergroup emotions: *positive intergroup emotions*, averaging the scores of the positive emotions except *accepted* (α = .81), and *negative intergroup emotions*, averaging the scores of the negative emotions except *awkward* and *self-conscious* (α = .81). The descriptives and zero-order correlations of all variables can be found in Appendix B.

To assess whether the manipulation of work style as a value or a competence affected participants' perceived competence in and perceived value of cooperation, we conducted a MANOVA with condition (value vs. competence) as the independent variable and participants' perceived competence and perceived value scores as the dependent variables. The results indicated no significant difference between the conditions on these dependent variables, $F(1, 193)$ = 0.93, p = .397; Pillai's Trace = .01. Specifically, participants in the value condition did not show a higher value placed on cooperation (M = 5.59, SD = 1.14 vs. M = 5.69, SD = 1.12, p = .512) nor did they perceive themselves as less competent at cooperating (M = 5.51, SD = 1.20 vs. M = 5.72, SD = 1.14, p = .192) compared to participants in the competence condition. Given that there were no differences between the two conditions in participants' perceived competence in and perceived value of cooperation, the following results cannot be attributed to group differences on these variables, but to the framing of a cooperative work style as a value or competence.

Furthermore, we conducted a one-sample t-test (M_0 = 0.5) to examine participants' preference for a cooperative approach over a competitive one. The results revealed that participants did indeed prefer a cooperative over a competitive approach, $t(194)$ = 3.62, p < .001, M = 1.37. This finding indicates that participants' task approach preference aligned with the cooperative work style they were assigned.

Before examining differences between the value condition and competence condition on anticipated authenticity and belonging, an independent samples t-test was conducted to test for differences between the conditions on anticipated inclusion. The results did not reveal a difference on anticipated inclusion between the value condition (M = 3.41, SD = 1.10) and the competence condition (M = 3.70, SD = 1.17), $t(192.45)$ = 1.78, p = .076, 95% CI [-0.03; 0.61].

Furthermore, a Wilcoxon signed-rank test[14] was conducted to assess whether the value condition and competence condition differed on intergroup emotions. The results showed that there was no difference between the value condition (*Mdn* = 3.6, *IQR* = 1.8) and the competence condition (*Mdn* = 3.3, *IQR* = 1.8) on negative intergroup emotions (*r* = 0.07, *p* = .345). Furthermore, there was also no difference on the positive intergroup emotions between the value condition (*Mdn* = 3.7, *IQR* = 1.7) and the competence condition (*Mdn* = 4, *IQR* = 1.3, *r* = 0.06, *p* = .422). These results indicate that framing dissimilarity as a value or competence did not affect the anticipated inclusion of participants, neither did it affect the intergroup emotions they experienced in anticipation of interacting with their team members.

Hypothesis Test

To test Hypothesis 3, stating that participants in the value condition will anticipate less authenticity, but not less belonging, compared to individuals in the competence condition, we conducted a path analysis where work style dissimilarity (0 = competence, 1 = value) predicted authenticity and belonging. We estimated the 95% confidence intervals of the parameters using the Monte Carlo method with 10,000 samples (MacKinnon et al., 2004; Yzerbyt et al., 2018). The results showed no significant relationships between condition and authenticity (*b* = -0.35, *p* = .054, 95% CI [-0.55; 0.11]) or between condition and belonging (*b* = -0.23, *p* = .186, 95% CI [-0.71; 0.02]), contrary to our hypothesis. A Wald test confirmed that the size of the relationships between work style dissimilarity and anticipated authenticity and belonging did not differ from each other, *W* = 0.54, *p* = .464, contrary to our hypothesis.

Discussion of Study 2

The results of Study 2 indicate that work style dissimilarity in terms of values or competencies does not differentially affect participants' anticipated authenticity or belonging, contrary to our expectation. Moreover, we did not find differences between the conditions on anticipated inclusion or intergroup emotions. Although we did not formulate predictions regarding these latter findings, the results imply that it does not matter whether dissimilarity is perceived in terms of values or competencies for individuals' expectations of inclusion or their experiences of intergroup anxiety.

These findings suggest a potential discrepancy between how dissimilar team members anticipate being treated by their team members and how their team members

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14 A Wilcoxon signed-rank test was conducted because the normality assumption for t-tests was violated.

may treat them: Previous research has shown that those who are dissimilar on moral values experience more threat and are treated more negatively than those who differ in competence by the majority within teams (Van der Lee et al., 2017; 2023). However, our study design differs too much from these studies to draw definitive conclusions in comparison to these past findings.

GENERAL DISCUSSION

The relational demography literature often relies on correlational studies to examine workplace dissimilarity. Our research addresses this limitation by using experimental designs to investigate the causal impact of dissimilarity on social inclusion. We also enhance our understanding of the dissimilarity-inclusion relationship by investigating the explanatory role of intergroup anxiety. Furthermore, we investigate how different types of deep-level dissimilarity (based on values vs. competencies) affect inclusion and whether deep-level dissimilarity can have different effects on the two subdimensions of social inclusion––authenticity and belonging. By investigating these gaps in the literature, we advance the field in four significant ways.

First, previous correlational studies have hinted at a causal link between dissimilarity and employee outcomes, but empirical support has been insufficient. In Study 1, our experimental approach allowed us to explore the causal relationship between dissimilarity and anticipated inclusion. The results affirmed our hypothesis, offering initial empirical evidence for the causal impact of dissimilarity on workplace outcomes. These findings not only support the foundational premise of the relational demography approach—that dissimilarity plays a pivotal role in the workplace (Kaur & Ren, 2022)—but also extend this framework. Our study reveals that the mere perception of dissimilarity between individuals and their team members can diminish their expectations of inclusion within the team. This implies that perceived dissimilarity alone can trigger anticipations of differential treatment by one's team.

Second, we applied the intergroup anxiety model to understand how dissimilarity shapes inclusion perceptions. Study 1 partially supported our hypothesis that intergroup anxiety explains the effect of dissimilarity on anticipated inclusion. Notably, diminished positive intergroup emotions, rather than increased negative emotions, explained this effect.

These findings suggest that intergroup anxiety's structure is more complex than previously thought. Positive emotions, less explored in the literature (Stephan, 2014), appear to play a unique role. This nuance highlights the need for further exploration

into the dimensions of intergroup anxiety. From a practical standpoint, our findings imply that in some cases, improving intergroup relations may benefit more from enhancing positive emotions than solely focusing on reducing negative emotions.

Third, our manipulation of cooperative vs. competitive work style dissimilarity—a deep-level and concealable dimension—contributes to existing knowledge on deep-level dissimilarity, offering new insights into its relationship with inclusion and intergroup anxiety. It also enabled us to investigate how deep-level dissimilarity relates to authenticity and belonging, the two subdimensions of social inclusion. Given that individuals may downplay deep-level differences at the cost of their authenticity to maintain a sense of belonging (Ellemers & Barreto, 2006; Fernández et al., 2023; Wright et al., 2022), we expected deep-level dissimilarity to impact anticipated authenticity more than belonging. However, our results for Study 1 did not show disparate effects of dissimilarity on these two dimensions.

In Study 2, we wanted to further probe the effects of deep-level dissimilarity by presenting work style as either a value or a competence. Given that people might respond more negatively to dissimilarity in terms of values than in terms of competencies (Van der Lee et al., 2017; 2023), we expected that participants in the value condition would anticipate less authenticity than those in the competence condition. However, our findings did not support our hypothesis.

These results suggest that, although inclusion comprises distinct subdimensions, they may be challenging to separate empirically. Additionally, the effectiveness of our manipulation of deep-level dissimilarity may be questioned. Our study revealed all team members' work styles to each other, making it difficult to conceal differences completely. This may have constrained our ability to detect differential impacts on authenticity and belonging.

Strengths, Limitations and Future Studies
Our study offers initial empirical support for the hypothesis that dissimilarity causally negatively affects social inclusion, aligning with the relational demography framework. These findings emphasize the importance of effectively managing team member differences to prevent potential harm to employees' emotional well-being and workplace relationships.

While our experimental design provided valuable insights, further experimental and longitudinal studies are needed to bolster our findings. Additionally, our research has its limitations, which highlight areas for future exploration, especially consider-

ing the limited empirical evidence on the causal effects of dissimilarity. We discuss a few of these limitations, offering directions for future studies to advance the field.

First, while our focus on anticipated inclusion has revealed that inclusion perceptions can be shaped by the mere cue of dissimilarity, its limitation lies in its applicability to real group settings. In workplaces, inclusion is shaped by several cues, notably the actual behavior of colleagues. Future studies should go beyond anticipated inclusion, exploring the causal role of dissimilarity in real team interactions for a more comprehensive understanding.

Second, our decision to employ cooperative versus competitive work styles for manipulating work style dissimilarity inadvertently introduces complexity. While these styles were chosen to neutrally represent work-related differences, an over-representation of competitive styles may inadvertently reflect a masculinity contest culture (Berdahl et al., 2018). In prior studies, such a culture, characterized by the dominance of traditional masculine attributes like competition and dominance, has been associated with decreased identification (Koc et al., 2021). It is not inconceivable that a masculinity contest culture would also influence perceptions of inclusion. In Study 1, the nearly exclusive presence of cooperative work styles, combined with the uniform allocation of cooperative work style in Study 2, effectively resulted in the pairing of almost all dissimilar participants with competitive team members. This scenario might have fostered an environment resembling a masculinity contest culture, potentially impacting participants' anticipated inclusion beyond the direct influence of dissimilarity.

A noteworthy finding in Study 1 aligns with this idea. Participants with competitive styles, when matched with similar team members, anticipated lower inclusion compared to participants with cooperative work styles in the similarity condition. This anticipation of reduced inclusion within a masculinity contest culture, even among participants with competitive work styles in the similarity condition, suggests the potential influence of traits of a masculinity contest culture on inclusion expectations. However, the small size of these groups limits our ability to draw definitive conclusions from this observation.

These patterns suggest fruitful avenues for future investigation. Exploring how organizational culture or climate, such as the masculinity contest culture or a contrasting climate of inclusion (Nishii, 2013), affects the inclusion perceptions of dissimilar individuals could yield valuable insights. Furthermore, future studies could explore whether employees with varying levels of masculine or competitive

self-perceptions prefer environments that are less dominated by traits that are indicative of a masculinity contest culture. Such investigations could shed light on whether these cultural contexts benefit or harm specific subsets of employees or have broader implications.

Third, in these studies, we focused solely on dissimilarity related to work style. While our findings are promising, this narrow focus limits our understanding to a single dimension of dissimilarity. Future research could expand its scope by simultaneously examining multiple dimensions, including both surface-level and deep-level dissimilarity. Exploring the combined effects of these dimensions within a single study would provide valuable insights.

Fourth, and finally, while our studies suggest that dissimilarity impacts inclusion perceptions, there is also evidence for the reverse effect, indicating that perceptions of inclusion may shape perceptions of dissimilarity (Sacco et al., 2014). This suggests the potential for a reciprocal relationship, with dissimilarity and inclusion mutually influencing each other. Similarly, the link between intergroup anxiety and inclusion might involve a reciprocal relationship. Future research should consider investigating these further.

CONCLUSION

In two comprehensive studies, we examined the causal impact of dissimilarity on social inclusion, employing the relational demography approach and the intergroup anxiety model. Our findings affirm that dissimilarity causally affects anticipated inclusion, underscoring the significance of this factor in shaping expectations. Furthermore, our research unveils the role of intergroup anxiety in explaining this relationship. Additionally, we delved into the nuanced effects of deep-level dissimilarity on the subdimensions of social inclusion—authenticity and belonging. However, contrary to our expectations, deep-level dissimilarity did not yield differential effects on these subdimensions.

While our research provides valuable insights, it is not without limitations that warrant consideration in future studies. Robust experimental designs are essential for probing these causal relationships further, as they constitute the cornerstone of numerous investigations within the field of relational demography. Addressing these limitations will pave the way for a more comprehensive understanding of the dynamics at play in social inclusion processes.

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APPENDIX A

Feedback of Participants' Work Style and Explanation of the Task in Study 1

Your work style has been calculated.

Your work style is:

Cooperative work style

Below, you will see a description of your work style.

People with a **cooperative work style** value collaborating with others and working as a team. They believe it is important to take others' opinions into account in making decisions and find it worthwhile to work in consultation with others.

Furthermore, they find it meaningful to consider the importance of the team over their own interests and to help others. As a matter of principle, they like to distribute tasks fairly. They find it important to do work that acknowledges and rewards the shared efforts of the group.

Next

Figure A1 Feedback for Participants who were Assigned a Cooperative Work Style

Your work style has been calculated.

Your work style is:

Competitive work style

Below, you will see a description of your work style.

People with a **competitive work style** prefer to compete with others and working individually. They value having time to think for themselves before they make any decisions and believe it is important to be independent workers.

Furthermore, they find it meaningful to stand up for their own interests and be critical of their team members. They think it is important to be tough on others when needed. They like work for which their personal efforts are acknowledged and rewarded.

Next

Figure A2 Feedback for Participants who were Assigned a Competitive Work Style

While we wait for other participants to finish their work style assessment, please read the explanation of the task you will be performing together.

As a team, you will soon perform a simple creativity task in which you will see a set of cards. Each card will contain a random letter. The goal of the task is to compose as many words (of at least 6 letters) as possible as a team. It is possible to earn extra money during this task. Participants can win up to £0.50 as a bonus, on top of the regular reward.

The team will see 20 letter cards and uses these to compose a word as fast as possible entering the word in the text field. If a word is formed, all cards will be replaced with 20 new cards and the team starts again. This procedure will continue for 3 minutes. All participants will receive 5 pence for each word that has been composed. Everyone in the team will always get the same reward.

There are different strategies that can be used approach this task.

The following strategy fits your work style best. This strategy is to team up from the start and collaborate with each other in order to find as many words as possible. Some research has shown that performing the task together will result in the most optimal outcome for the team. This is the most optimal approach for people with your work style.

There is another strategy that fits participants with the other, competitive work style best. This strategy is to allow some internal rivalry by letting team members individually seek and form words for the team and keep track of their scores. There is also research showing that introducing internal rivalry to a joint task will result in the most optimal outcome for the team.

You will soon have a few minutes to discuss with the others over chat how you want to approach this task as a team.

The 'next' button will appear soon, please take your time to read the instructions

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Figure A3 Description of the Fictitious Task

APPENDIX B

Table B1 Descriptive Statistics and Zero-order Correlations between the Study Variables of Study 1

	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. Dissimilarity	-	-	-					
2. Anticipated Inclusion	3.97	1.22	-.42***	-				
3. Anticipated Authenticity	4.07	1.29	-.32***	.92***	-			
4. Anticipated Belonging	3.87	1.36	-.44***	.93***	.71***	-		
5. Negative Intergroup Emotions	3.23	1.24	.19*	-.40***	-.41***	-.32***	-	
6. Positive Intergroup Emotions	4.09	1.23	-.22*	.39***	.28**	.43***	-.13	-

Note. Dissimilarity was coded as 0 and 1. * p < .05, ** p < .01, *** p < .001 .001.

Table B2 Descriptive Statistics and Zero-order Correlations between the Study Variables of Study 2

	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. Competence vs. Value	-	-	-					
2. Anticipated Inclusion	3.55	1.14	-.13	-				
3. Anticipated Authenticity	3.78	1.30	-.14	.92***	-			
4. Anticipated Belonging	3.33	1.20	-.09	.91***	.67***	-		
5. Negative Intergroup Emotions	3.47	1.21	.07	-.20**	-.15*	-.23**	-	
6. Positive Intergroup Emotions	3.84	1.17	-.06	.53***	.45***	.52***	-.26***	-

Note. Competence dissimilarity was coded as 0, Value dissimilarity as 1. * p < .05, ** p < .01, *** p < .001 .001.

APPENDIX C

Manipulation of Work Style as a Value or Competence

Your work style has been calculated.

Your work style is:

Cooperative work style

Below, you will see a description of your work style.

People with a **cooperative work style** value collaborating with others and working as a team. They believe it is important to take others' opinions into account in making decisions and find it worthwhile to work in consultation with others.

Furthermore, they find it meaningful to consider the importance of the team over their own interests and to help others. As a matter of principle, they like to distribute tasks fairly. They find it important to do work that acknowledges and rewards the shared efforts of the group.

Next

Figure C1 Feedback for Participants in the Value Condition

Your work style has been calculated.

Your work style is:

Cooperative work style

Below, you will see a description of your work style.

People with a **cooperative work style** are good at collaborating with others and working as a team. They are skilled at taking others' opinions into account in making decisions and have the ability to work in consultation with others.

Furthermore, they have the capability to consider the importance of the team over their own interests and to help others. They are able to distribute tasks fairly. They excel in work for which the shared efforts of the group are acknowledged and rewarded.

Next

Figure C2 Feedback for Participants in the Competence Condition

CHAPTER 4

Looking Beyond Our Similarities: How Perceived (In)Visible Dissimilarity Relates to Feelings of Inclusion at Work

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ABSTRACT

We investigated how the perception of being dissimilar to others at work relates to employees' felt inclusion, distinguishing between surface-level and deep-level dissimilarity. In addition, we tested the indirect relationships between surface-level and deep-level dissimilarity and work-related outcomes, through social inclusion. Furthermore, we tested the moderating role of a climate for inclusion in the relationship between perceived dissimilarity and felt inclusion. We analyzed survey data from 887 employees of a public service organization. An ANOVA showed that felt inclusion was lower for individuals who perceived themselves as deep-level dissimilar compared to individuals who perceived themselves as similar, while felt inclusion did not differ among individuals who perceived themselves as surface-level dissimilar or similar. Furthermore, a moderated mediation analysis showed a negative conditional indirect relationship between deep-level dissimilarity and work-related outcomes through felt inclusion. Interestingly, while the moderation showed that a positive climate for inclusion buffered the negative relationship between deep-level dissimilarity and felt inclusion, it also positively related to feelings of inclusion among all employees, regardless of their perceived (dis)similarity. This research significantly improves our understanding of how perceived dissimilarity affects employees by distinguishing between surface-level and deep-level dissimilarity and by demonstrating the importance of a climate for inclusion.

Keywords: dissimilarity, inclusion, climate for inclusion, surface-level, deep-level

LOOKING BEYOND OUR SIMILARITIES: HOW PERCEIVED (IN)VISIBLE DISSIMILARITY RELATES TO FEELINGS OF INCLUSION AT WORK

The sharp increase in workforce diversity during the last decades presents important challenges for organizations and employees to overcome. A well-established finding is that dissimilarity between individuals can impede mutual trust and understanding, and challenge social integration in the workplace, which have been associated with (team) performance losses and increased employee turnover (Chattopadhyay, 1999; Garrison et al., 2010; Guillaume et al., 2012). Dissimilarity between workers has been related to surface-level (relatively visible or readily detected) attributes such as gender, age, and ethnicity, or to deep-level (less visible or underlying) attributes such as beliefs and values (Guillaume et al., 2012; Jackson & Joshi, 2011; Mor Barak et al., 2016; Phillips & Loyd, 2006). In the current research, we will not examine the objective classification of specific attributes. Instead, we will address employees' subjective perceptions of their surface-level and deep-level dissimilarity to other people at work. We will also not focus on a specific comparison group (e.g., a specific target group such as direct colleagues, supervisors or customers), but rather are interested in employees' general perception of being dissimilar to most others at work.

Even though prior work suggests that surface-level and deep-level dissimilarity are both negatively related to work outcomes, the ways in which they impact employees are likely to differ. For example, surface-level dissimilarity has been shown to have a negative effect on social integration only under low team interdependence, while deep-level dissimilarity had a stronger negative effect on social integration under high interdependence than under low interdependence (Guillaume et al., 2012). This suggests that the two types of dissimilarity can have different effects, and/or that their effects depend on different moderating factors. Yet, the correlates and implications of these different types of dissimilarity have not been systematically established. Hence, we do not yet know whether surface-level or deep-level dissimilarity is more predictive of employees' sense of inclusion and its downstream work-related consequences. We also do not know whether they operate independently, buffer, or reinforce one another. Furthermore, while previous research has indicated that an inclusive work climate buffers the negative effects of surface-level dissimilarity on inclusion (Jansen et al., 2017), it is unclear whether the negative effects of deep-level dissimilarity can be mitigated in similar ways. Answering these questions is highly important considering that employees likely differ from others at work in terms of both surface-level and deep-level dimensions. Hence, this study contributes to

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existing knowledge by investigating the separate and joint influences of surface-level and deep-level dissimilarity on social inclusion, as well as the moderating role of the work climate in these relationships.

Dissimilarity at Work

As indicated above, dissimilarity has been found to negatively affect a variety of work outcomes (Guillaume et al., 2012; Hobman et al., 2004; Liao et al., 2008). Hobman et al. (2004), for example, found that employees who perceived themselves to have a different demographic profile than their colleagues (i.e., in terms of visible and informational characteristics) were less involved in their workgroup. Liao et al. (2008), furthermore, found perceived deep-level dissimilarity on the basis of personality to be associated with worse job attitudes, less helping behavior, greater work withdrawal, and greater voluntary turnover.

There are several mechanisms through which dissimilarity is thought to affect employees. One mechanism concerns ingroup bias on the part of numerical majority members, leading them to discriminate against and otherwise mistreat those who are dissimilar to them (Drydakis, 2015; Midtbøen, 2016; Mishel, 2016; Van den Berg et al., 2017; Van Laer & Janssens, 2011; Waldring et al., 2015; Williams & Dempsey, 2014; Yavorsky, 2017). Another mechanism, observed among numerical minority members, relates to their increased monitoring of the self and the environment; Employees representing a numerical minority tend to be more engaged in monitoring their performance and the workplace for cues about who belongs and who does not. Their preoccupation with social acceptance cues diverts cognitive resources away from task performance and has important work-related consequences (Guillaume et al., 2014; Master et al., 2016; Murphy et al., 2007; see also Ståhl et al., 2012). Even cues that are not intended to exclude people, such as all-White conference speakers or pictures of male leaders in the company canteen, might undermine performance and lower feelings of inclusion among those not represented by these cues (Cheryan et al., 2014; Latu et al., 2013; Murphy et al., 2018). Furthermore, through the mechanism of similarity-attraction (Byrne, 1997), minority members may self-segregate into minority subgroups. This process is stronger in people who are more aware of their minority status (Schmader & Sedikides, 2018) and, by further detaching them from others at work, adds to the disadvantages that dissimilar people face through the mechanisms discussed above.

Of the previous work studying the relationship between dissimilarity and work outcomes, some studies used objective measures of dissimilarity (e.g., quantifying the degree of dissimilarity based on the demographic composition of work

teams, Jansen et al., 2017) while others used subjective measures (e.g., asking participants whether they feel dissimilar to other team members; Hobman et al., 2004). Because we are interested in the experiences of employees, and because several studies indicated perceived dissimilarity to have stronger effects than actual dissimilarity (Turban & Jones, 1988; Strauss et al., 2001), the current research utilizes a subjective measure of dissimilarity.

In the current study, we use the terms "surface-level" and "deep-level" to capture the full range of attributes that could lead to perceived dissimilarity in the work context, because these were used to study dissimilarity in previous research (e.g., Guillaume et al., 2012). These attributes can include age, ethnicity, gender, beliefs, values, or sexual orientation. We acknowledge it is not self-evident whether an attribute is surface-level or deep-level, or both. This can depend on many factors, such as the extent to which the attributes are expressed in overt behavior or verbally acknowledged. Furthermore, the degree to which people perceive themselves to be surface-level and/or deep-level dissimilar to others can be indicated by multiple attributes they have as well as the intersection of these attributes. For example, employees who are bisexual could perceive themselves as surface-level and/or deep-level dissimilar to their heterosexual colleagues, which may, for example, depend on whether they have a same-sex or opposite-sex partner. Transgender employees might perceive themselves to be deep-level dissimilar in terms of their gender identity, while their perception of surface-level dissimilarity may depend on the particulars of their gender expression. Both surface-level and deep-level dissimilarity were shown to have a negative relationship with important work-related outcomes, such as employee performance and turnover (Guillaume et al., 2012), work group involvement (Hobman et al., 2004) and helping behavior (Liang et al., 2015).

Even though the relationship between dissimilarity and work-related outcomes is widely studied, very little research has focused on the effects of dissimilarity on employees' sense of social inclusion at work. The construct of social inclusion refers to individuals' perception that they belong and can be their authentic selves in a particular context (Jansen et al., 2014), such as the workplace. Understanding the relationship between dissimilarity and inclusion at work is important, since inclusion has been related to several outcomes that may have far-reaching implications for both employees and organizations, such as well-being and performance (Chen & Tang, 2018; Sønderlund et al., 2017). One study that did examine the relationship between gender dissimilarity and felt inclusion is the research by Jansen et al. (2017), which demonstrated a lower sense of belonging and authenticity among

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those who diverged more (versus less) from the rest of the work team in terms of gender. This prior work is limited, however, in the sense that it addressed actual dissimilarity rather than subjectively perceived differences, and only focused on a single surface-level characteristic, namely gender. With the current research, we aim to contribute to the organizational diversity literature by examining the separate and interactive effects of perceptions of surface-level and deep-level dissimilarity on employees' feelings of inclusion. Because previous research demonstrated felt social inclusion to relate to important work outcomes (e.g., Chen & Tang, 2018; Derks et al., 2007; Jansen et al., 2017), we will not only address social inclusion, but additionally investigate its relationships with job satisfaction, work-related stress, turnover intentions, career commitment and career advancement motivation in the organization.

Whether surface-level and deep-level dissimilarity differentially affect employees and whether they reinforce one another is not only of theoretical importance but also of practical relevance because surface-level and deep-level dissimilarity are not necessarily overlapping or independent. Employees may both look different than others at work (e.g., in terms of skin color suggesting a different ethnicity) and hold different values to them, but it is also possible that they look very similar yet hold different values or that they look very different yet hold the same values. Hence, it is important to disentangle their separate and joint effects.

Based on the research summarized above, we anticipate that – in principle – both types of perceived dissimilarity will be negatively related to feelings of inclusion. As no previous work has addressed the separate and combined effects of surface-level and deep-level dissimilarity on social inclusion or examined possible differences in their predictive strength, we have no specific hypotheses regarding their relative and interactive effects. These will be investigated in an exploratory fashion.

Feeling included is theorized to satisfy two fundamental human needs, the need to belong and the need to be authentic. Accordingly, inclusion has been found to be vital for employee motivation, performance, and wellbeing (Jansen et al., 2014). More specifically, inclusion was shown to be a key predictor of work satisfaction. This may not be surprising, given that inclusion at work also implies, for example, taking part in informal events or being part of information networks (Waters & Bortree, 2012). Conversely, when employees feel excluded at work, negative effects are likely to occur. Exclusion may increase stress levels (Beekman et al., 2016; Ryan et al., 2005), and is arguably a reason for employees to leave the organization. That is, employees whose fundamental inclusion needs are frustrated may be less likely

to stay in their current situation. Preliminary evidence of this relationship comes from research showing that dissimilarity positively relates to turnover intentions, but this relationship is weaker if the organizational climate is supportive of diversity (Gonzalez & DeNisi, 2009), likely because such a climate facilitates a sense of inclusion. For these reasons, we hypothesize that feelings of inclusion will mediate the relationship between perceived dissimilarity on the one hand and job satisfaction, work-related stress and turnover intentions on the other.

Recent qualitative research on the career ambitions of women in traditionally masculine environments (i.e., making it likely that they feel dissimilar to their colleagues at work) indicated that women who reported decreased belonging and authenticity, indicating a lack of perceived inclusion, also expressed little ambition to move up the organizational ladder (Sealy & Harman, 2017). Furthermore, stigmatized groups who do feel devalued at work were found to have lowered motivation to perform and grow in the organization (Derks et al., 2007). To further explore the relationship between inclusion and career ambition, we also included the career advancement motivation in the organization as a relevant work outcome in our research. In addition, we address the implications of perceived dissimilarity and felt inclusion for the degree to which participants are committed to their career. This is based on recent findings indicating a link between inclusion and organizational commitment (Chen & Tang, 2018; Harrison et al., 1998).

In summary, we derive the following hypotheses:

H1a: Perceived surface-level and deep-level dissimilarity negatively relate to perceived inclusion.
H1b: Perceived surface-level and deep-level dissimilarity negatively relate to key work-related outcomes, namely job satisfaction, work-related stress, turnover intentions, career commitment, and career advancement motivation.
H2: Perceived inclusion mediates the relationships between perceived dissimilarity and work-related outcomes.

Climate for Inclusion
Even though a gloomy picture indicating the negative effects of dissimilarity emerges from prior research, there are also studies suggesting that dissimilarity is not necessarily detrimental to employees. Some previous work has indicated that diverse teams enjoy more beneficial work outcomes when they perceive their organizational climate as inclusive (Bodla et al., 2016; Li et al., 2017; Nishii, 2013). An inclusive climate ensures fair and unbiased treatment of employees, is open toward

and values differences between employees, and includes all employees in decision making (Nishii, 2013). There is some indication that the benefits of such an organizational climate may also apply to feelings of social inclusion. Jansen et al. (2017) found that perceiving the work environment to be open toward and appreciative of differences (i.e., as a "diversity climate") was positively associated with felt inclusion for all employees, but more strongly so for those who were highly dissimilar to most others. In fact, perceiving a positive diversity climate buffered the negative effect of gender dissimilarity on feelings of inclusion, such that dissimilarity was only related to reduced inclusion when employees perceived a negative diversity climate. These findings can likely be generalized to a climate for inclusion since the latter subsumes the diversity climate notion of openness toward and appreciation of differences. Accordingly, we expect that a positive climate for inclusion will, similarly, shield employees from the negative effects of perceived dissimilarity on inclusion.

H3a: Perceived climate for inclusion moderates the relationship between dissimilarity and perceived inclusion, such that the negative relationship between dissimilarity and perceived inclusion is weaker the more inclusive the climate is perceived to be.
H3b: Perceived climate for inclusion positively relates to perceived inclusion.
to belonging.

MATERIALS AND METHOD

Participants

This study was carried out in accordance with the recommendations of the Psychology Research Ethics Committee (PREC) at Leiden University. All participants gave informed consent in accordance with the Declaration of Helsinki. The protocol was approved by the PREC. All employees of a governmental organization in the Netherlands, approximately 4000 people, were invited to participate in our online study. Of these people, 1326 employees opened and started the questionnaire. Our study sample consisted of the 887 employees who completed the questionnaire (40.34% male, 58.53% female, 1.13% chose not to answer this question, 0.23% missing, M_{age} = *45.61, SD$_{age}$* = *11.80*). Participants had been working at the organization for 12.47 years on average (*SD* = 10.55) and worked 32.50 hours a week on average (*SD* = 5.02). Furthermore, 10.50% of participants held a senior position (0.11% missing), 4.63% were trainees (2.59% missing), and 82.64% neither held a senior position nor was a trainee. The sample was relatively highly educated, with 41.66% having completed university education, 37.74% having completed higher professional education, 16.57% having completed middle vocational education,

1.27% having completed lower vocational education and 2.76% having completed secondary education (2.03% missing).

Procedure and Measures

The organization's employees received an email with a link to our on-line survey. After providing informed consent, participants first completed a demographics form, which asked them to indicate their sex, age, educational level, tenure, number of hours work per week and whether they are a senior or trainee. These questions were followed by measures of perceived dissimilarity, perceived climate for inclusion, felt inclusion, job satisfaction, work-related stress, turnover intention, career commitment, and career advancement motivation.[15]

Dissimilarity

Perceived dissimilarity was measured using two items, which were adapted from the work by Hobman et al. (2004). To assess surface-level dissimilarity, participants were asked whether they perceived themselves to be visibly dissimilar to others at work: "In terms of visible characteristics (e.g., age, sex, ethnicity), I am different than most others at work." To assess perceived deep-level diversity, they were asked whether they perceived themselves to be invisibly different to others at work: "In terms of invisible characteristics (e.g., beliefs, preferences), I am different than most others at work." The answer options provided were "yes" and "no," resulting in the possibilities of being dissimilar in both deep-level and surface-level terms, being dissimilar in either deep-level or surface-level terms and lastly being similar to most others.[16]

Perceived Climate for Inclusion

The extent to which participants perceived the climate to be inclusive was measured using a 12-item scale that was developed to capture how people think about, talk about and treat others who are dissimilar to most others. This questionnaire was

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15 One of the objectives of this study was to validate our measure of the perceived climate for inclusion. Our survey thereto included additional measures that assessed the perceived diversity climate (Hobman et al., 2004), the perceived inclusivity of the organizational culture (Ashikali & Groeneveld, 2015), interpersonal justice (Colquitt, 2001), and social desirability (Rudmin, 1999).

16 Contrary to Hobman et al.'s approach (2004), we chose to use a single dichotomous item for each type because we wanted to clearly distinguish between employees who perceive themselves as dissimilar and employees who perceive themselves as similar to most others at work. This way, there would be no doubt that the participants intended to categorize themselves as dissimilar or similar. The implications of this choice are further discussed in the Section "Limitations and Future Research."

developed as a screener of climate for inclusion. Participants were asked to indicate how "people who are visibly or invisibly dissimilar than most others" are being treated at work. They did so on a bipolar scale by indicating the extent to which they agreed more with the statement on the left side or with the statement on the right side. The scores ranged from 1 (agreeing most with the left statement) to 7 (agreeing most with the right statement) with a higher score indicating a more inclusive climate. Examples of items are: "They are being disadvantaged at work when making decisions about tasks, salary, etc. – They are being taken into account when making decisions about tasks, salary, etc.," "They are being seen as an inconvenience – They are being seen as an asset," and "They are being treated worse than others – They are being treated as people that are valuable" (α = 0.96).

Perceived Inclusion

The extent to which participants perceived inclusion at work was measured with the Perceived Group Inclusion Scale (PGIS; Jansen et al., 2014). This 16-item scale consists of two subscales (belonging and authenticity), which in turn each comprised two components. Belonging comprised group membership (e.g., "People at work give me the feeling that I am part of this group.") and group affection (e.g., "People at work like me"). Authenticity comprised room for authenticity (e.g., "People at work allow me to be who I am.") and value in authenticity (e.g., "People at work encourage me to be who I am."). Each component consists of four items. An exploratory factor analysis (EFA) with oblique (Oblimin) rotation indicated that all items loaded highly on a single factor with all factor loadings exceeding 0.80 (see Supplementary Table A for factor loadings of the one-factor solution). In line with the theoretical components, the parallel analysis (PA) confirmed that four factors with significant Eigenvalues could be distinguished (see Supplementary Table B for the factor loadings on four factors). In the current study, we used inclusion as a single variable because the four factors (group membership, group affection, room for authenticity, and value in authenticity) are the theoretical subdimensions of inclusion (Jansen et al., 2014). The response options ranged from 1 (completely disagree) to 7 (completely agree) with a higher score indicating that participants felt more included (α = 0.97).

Job Satisfaction

The extent to which participants were satisfied with their job was assessed with the three items used by Mitchell et al. (2001): "All in all, I am satisfied with my job," "In general, I enjoy my job" and "I am very satisfied with my job." The last item was slightly adapted, as it originally referred to workplace satisfaction instead of job satisfaction. The response options ranged from 1 (*completely disagree*) to 7 (*completely agree*). A higher score indicated more job satisfaction (α = 0.92).

Work-Related Stress

We measured participants' work-related stress with a scale developed by Hadziba-jramovic et al. (2015). Participants indicated how they felt at the end of a work day, using the following six items: "calm," "rested," "relaxed," "tense," "stressed," and "pressured." The response options ranged from 1 (*not at all*) to 6 (*very much*). The last three items were reverse-coded, such that a lower score on the scale indicated more stress (α = 0.92).

Turnover Intentions

The turnover intentions of participants were measured with a scale developed by Van Velthoven and Meijman (1994), consisting of four questions that the partici-pants could answer with "yes" or "no." Example items are: "I am planning to change jobs in the coming year," and "I sometimes think about looking for a job outside this organization." The answers were coded 0 (*yes*) or 1 (*no*) and the mean score of the four items was taken as the dependent variable. A lower score corresponded to a higher intention to leave (α = 0.76).

Career Commitment

The degree to which participants were committed to their career was assessed with a modified version of a scale developed by Ellemers et al. (1998). The scale consisted of six statements, with scores ranging from 1 (*not at all*) to 7 (*very much*). Example items are: "My career plays a central role in my life" and "I think I should have a successful career." A higher score corresponded to a stronger commitment to one's career (α = 0.86).

Career Advancement Motivation Within Organization

We measured participants' career advancement motivation using a self-developed scale consisting of five statements, with scores ranging from 1 *(not at all)* to 6 (*very much*). This measure records the willingness of employees to invest in the career at, and on behalf of, the organization. The items are: "I am motivated to exploit all the career opportunities that I will get at this organization," "I am willing to invest effort to further my development in this organization," "I am willing to do my best to advance my career in this organization," "I would like to continue my career in this organization," and "It is my wish to develop my career in this organization." A higher score corresponded to a greater career advancement motivation (α = 0.87).

RESULTS

Analyses were conducted using R software 3.5.1 (R Core Team, 2018), using the Hmisc(v4.1-1; Harrell, 2018), car (v3.0-2; Fox & Weisberg, 2011), sjstats (v0,17.0; Lüdecke, 2018), and lavaan (v0.6-3; Rosseel, 2012) packages. The full code and Supplementary Materials are available at https://osf.io/exrwd/. The descriptive statistics and zero-order correlations for all variables are displayed in Table 1. A total of 551 (62.12%) participants indicated that they perceived themselves to be similar to their colleagues, 111 (12.51%) perceived themselves as only surface-level dissimilar, 147 (16.57%) perceived themselves as only deep-level dissimilar and 67 (7.55%) perceived themselves as both surface-level and deep-level dissimilar (1.24% missing).

Table 1 Descriptive Statistics and Intercorrelations

	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1. Surface-level dissimilarity	0.20	0.40	-							
2. Deep-level dissimilarity	0.24	0.43	.16***	-						
3. Perceived climate for inclusion	4.49	1.00	-.10**	-.23***	-					
4. Felt inclusion	5.26	1.09	-.08*	-.25***	.56***	-				
5. Job satisfaction	5.67	1.06	.00	-.16***	.32***	.55***	-			
6. Work-related stress	2.99	0.94	-.04	-.13***	.26***	.37***	.40***	-		
7. Turnover intention	0.36	0.34	.00	-.11**	.12***	.22***	.43***	.28***	-	
8. Career commitment	4.85	1.06	.10**	-.04	.10**	.11**	.16***	-.04	-.05	-
9. Career advancement motivation	4.46	0.87	.08*	-.03	.19***	.33***	.37***	.12***	.12***	.58***

Note. Dissimilarity was coded as 0 and 1, meaning that the mean scores reflect the percentage of people that perceived themselves as such. *p < .05, ** p < .01, ***p < .001

Preliminary Analyses

Mardia's test showed that the assumption of multivariate normality was violated. As a consequence, we used robust test statistics in our CFA and SEM analyses.

To assess whether our measures could be distinguished statistically, we conducted a series of factor analyses.[17] First, we performed a PA, which yielded nine significant factors. Subsequently, we entered all our Likert-scale measures in an EFA in which we constrained the number of extracted factors to nine (based on the aforementioned PA) and used principal axis factoring with Oblimin rotation. Almost all items loaded on the respective factors of their scales, with minimal cross-loadings of items from the measures of turnover intentions, career commitment, and career advancement motivation (see Supplementary Table E).

Next, a confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was conducted to obtain a statistical indication of the validity of our measurement model. Again, we tested the model with nine factors, as suggested by the PA. We defined the model such that all items loaded on their respective factors. Because the assumption of multivariate normality was violated, we used Satorra–Bentler test statistics and robust standard errors. The results of the CFA showed that the measurement model did not reach good fit, $\chi^2 = 5126.64$, $p < .001$, df = 1238, $\chi^2/df = 4.14$, RMSEA = 0.07, CFI = 0.89, TLI = 0.88. Based on the cross-loadings in the EFA, we deleted two items from the measures, after which our CFA did indicate good fit, $\chi^2 = 4490.84$, $p < .001$, df = 1139,

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17 For employees who perceive themselves as dissimilar, both the measure of climate for inclusion and the measure of felt inclusion tap into how employees who are dissimilar are treated at work. In contrast, for employees who perceive themselves as similar, there is a difference between the two measures, as felt inclusion does not tap into the treatment of someone who is dissimilar. This might raise the question whether climate for inclusion and felt inclusion are different constructs for those who perceive themselves as dissimilar. To answer this question, we tested whether there was a distinction between perceived climate for inclusion and felt inclusion for both employees who perceived themselves as similar or dissimilar (surface-level and/or deep-level). We first performed a PA to determine the number of significant factors, which resulted in four factors. Afterward, we conducted two EFAs, using principal axis factoring with Oblimin rotation and only retained factor loadings that exceeded 0.30. The results were similar for participants who perceived themselves as similar and dissimilar, in that all items of perceived climate for inclusion loaded on a single factor and the items of felt inclusion loaded on the three remaining factors (see Supplementary Tables C, D). This is in line with Jansen et al. (2014) who found that items for the subdimensions authenticity and belonging loaded on separate factors.

χ^2/df = 3.94, RMSEA = 0.07, CFI = 0.90, TLI = 0.90. Accordingly, we used all measures as separate outcome variables. The deleted items were omitted from all analyses.

Hypothesis Testing

In order to test the first part of our first hypothesis (H1a), we conducted a 2 (deep-level dissimilarity: yes vs. no) × 2 (surface-level dissimilarity: yes vs. no) between-subjects ANOVA, with inclusion as the dependent variable.[18] The descriptive statistics can be found in Supplementary Table F. We obtained a main effect of deep-level dissimilarity, $F(1, 872)$ = 46.08, p < .001, $\eta p2$ = 0.05, which indicated that participants who perceived themselves to be deep-level dissimilar to most others at work scored lower on felt inclusion (M = 4.79, SD = 1.31) compared to those who perceived themselves to be deep-level similar (M = 5.42, SD = 0.95). We obtained no main effect of perceived surface-level dissimilarity on inclusion, $F(1, 872)$ = 2.99, p = .084. Furthermore, we obtained no interaction between deep-level dissimilarity and surface-level dissimilarity, $F(1, 872)$ = 1.22, p = .269, suggesting that the influence of perceived deep-level dissimilarity on felt inclusion was not dependent on whether participants perceived themselves to be surface-level dissimilar to most others at work.[19] These results partially support our hypothesis (H1a), as only deep-level dissimilarity was related to felt inclusion. The analyses of simple effects using Tukey's HSD procedure indicated that participants who perceived themselves as only deep-level dissimilar scored lower on inclusion (M = 4.89, SD = 1.05) than those who perceived themselves as similar in both ways (M = 5.43, SD = 0.95), $t(872)$ = 5.52, p < .001, and also scored lower than those who perceived only surface-level dissimilarity (M = 5.37, SD = 0.99), $t(872)$ = 3.63, p = .002. Furthermore, participants who perceived themselves as only surface-level dissimilar did not differ in inclusion from those who perceived similarity in both ways, $t(872)$ = 0.54, p = 0.949. Participants who perceived both deep-level and surface-level dissimilarity scored lower on inclusion (M = 4.62, SD = 1.74) than those who perceived themselves as similar in both terms, $t(872)$ = 5.94, p < .001, and those who perceived themselves as only surface-level dissimilar, $t(872)$ = 4.60, p < .001. Lastly, there was no difference between participants who perceived them-

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18 This analysis was repeated after removal of outliers (+3 SD), yielding similar results. Furthermore, in the Supplementary Materials, we report an ANCOVA, which we conducted to test the main and interactive effects of deep-level and surface-level dissimilarity on inclusion, while controlling for sex, age, education level, tenure, senior position and junior position, yielding similar results.

19 We also examined whether perceived (in)visible dissimilarity differentially influenced felt belonging and felt authenticity, the two subdimensions of inclusion. These analyses can be found in the Supplementary Materials.

selves as only deep-level dissimilar and those who perceived themselves as both deep-level and surface-level dissimilar, $t(872) = 1.74$, $p = 0.306$.

To test our remaining hypotheses, we initially treated the five dependent variables independently. This means we first tested Hypothesis 1b using a MANOVA. In order to test Hypotheses 2, 3a, and 3b, we conducted mediation, moderation and moderated mediation analyses using PROCESS (Hayes, 2013). The results of these analyses are presented in the Supplementary Materials. For simplicity of presentation, per the suggestion of the editor, here we present results from two structural equation models that capture the five dependent variables in a single latent variable "work-related outcomes." For these models we used the lavaan package in R. To fit parsimonious models, we created item parcels as indicators for all work-related variables except for job satisfaction, because job satisfaction consisted of only three items. Parcels have shown to produce more reliable latent variables than individual items and are particularly useful when the measurement model is not of direct interest (Little et al., 2013), as is the case for us. The models we constructed did not reach good fit, but this is less of a concern for us given that our primary goal was to test our hypotheses using our theoretical structural equation models. Furthermore, as the assumption of multivariate normality was violated, we used robust estimation methods ("MLM" option in lavaan) for all analyses.

The first model tested Hypothesis 1b – namely, that dissimilarity would predict work-related outcomes – using a 2 (deep-level dissimilarity: yes vs. no) × 2 (surface-level dissimilarity: yes vs. no) between-subjects ANOVA with the latent variable work-related outcomes as our dependent variable, $\chi^2 = 455.23$, $p < .001$, $df = 69$, $\chi^2/df = 6.60$, $RMSEA = 0.09$, $CFI = 0.90$, $TLI = 0.88$. We obtained a main effect of deep-level dissimilarity, $b = -0.09$, $SE = 0.04$, $p = .017$, 95% CI [-0.16; -0.02], which indicated that participants who perceived themselves to be deep-level dissimilar to most others at work scored lower on the work-related outcomes than those who perceived themselves to be deep-level similar. We obtained no main effect of perceived surface-level dissimilarity on work-related outcomes, $b = 0.03$, $SE = 0.03$, $p = 0.201$,

95% CI [-0.02; 0.09].[20] Furthermore, we obtained no interaction between deep-level dissimilarity and surface-level dissimilarity, b = -0.05, SE = 0.05, p = 0.337, 95% CI [-0.15; 0.05], suggesting that the influence of deep-level dissimilarity on work-related outcomes does not depend on the degree of surface-level dissimilarity. This partially supports our hypothesis (H1b), as only deep-level dissimilarity was related to work-related outcomes.[21] In order to exploratively assess the simple effects, we used the Bonferroni correction, thus resulting in an adjusted critical value of 0.008. Using this alpha as a criterion, no simple effects reached significance. These analyses can be found in the Supplementary Materials.

The second model tested Hypotheses 2, 3a, and 3b – namely that felt inclusion would mediate the relationship between dissimilarity and work-related outcomes, that a climate for inclusion would moderate the relationship between perceived dissimilarity and felt inclusion and that a climate for inclusion would positively relate to felt inclusion. We used this model with the latent dependent variable "work-related outcomes" (which was indicated by the five dependent variables), one mediator (felt inclusion), one moderator (climate for inclusion), and two independent variables (deep-level and surface-level dissimilarity), χ^2 = 990.09, p < .001, df = 130, χ^2/df = 7.62, $RMSEA$ = 0.10, CFI = 0.82, TLI = 0.78.[22] See Figure 1 for a conceptual overview of the current model and Supplementary Tables I and J for the statistics.

Supporting Hypothesis 2, the results indicated that felt inclusion mediated the relationship between perceived deep-level dissimilarity and the work-related outcomes, as shown by the significant indirect relationship, a_1b_1 = -0.22, p = .001. Perceived surface-level dissimilarity did not have an indirect relationship with work-related outcomes, a_2b_1 = 0.02, p= .827.

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20 The regular MANOVA presented in the Supplementary Materials, with job satisfaction, work-related stress, turnover intentions, career commitment, and career advancement motivation within the organization as separate dependent variables showed that deep-level dissimilarity predicted the first three work-related outcomes, but not career commitment and career advancement motivation. In contrast, surface-level dissimilarity only predicted career commitment and career advancement motivation. Interestingly, participants who perceived surface-level dissimilarity (vs. similarity) scored higher on these outcomes than those who did not perceive surface-level dissimilarity.

21 This analysis was repeated after removal of outliers (+3 SD), yielding similar results.

22 The moderated mediation analyses using PROCESS, where a separate moderated mediation was tested for each of the five dependent variables, are described in the Supplementary Materials.
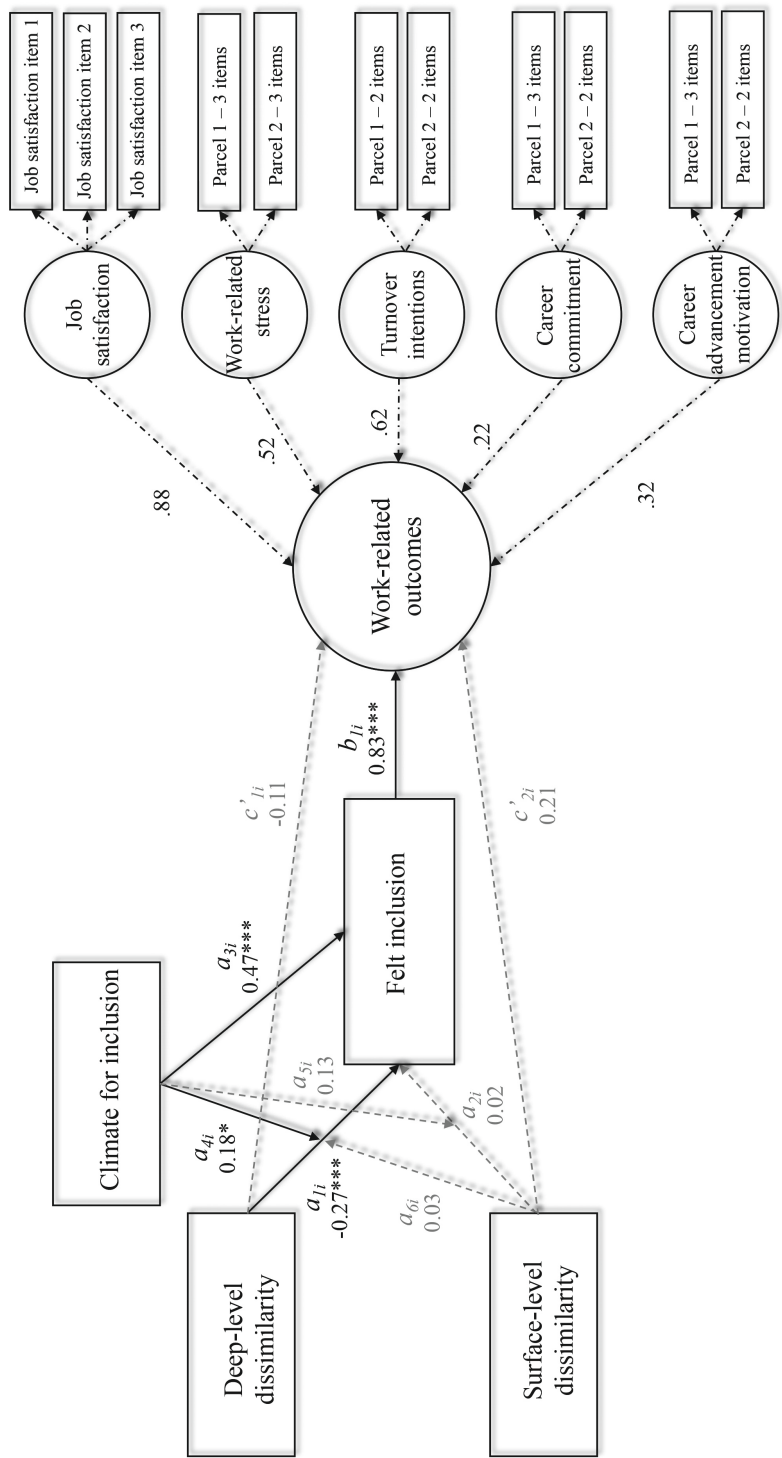
Figure 1 Conceptual Overview of the Structural Equation Model with Standardized Factor Loadings and Unstandardized Parameter Estimates

Note. ***p < .001, *p < .05

Results furthermore indicated that an inclusive climate can buffer the negative effects of deep-level dissimilarity, a_4 = 0.18, p = 0.019, which supports Hypothesis 3a. That is, participants who perceived themselves as deep-level dissimilar to most others at work felt less included compared to those who perceived themselves as deep-level similar when they perceived a negative (-1 SD; see Figure 2), a_4 = -0.45, p < .001, or average (mean), a_4 = -0.27, p < 0.001, climate for inclusion. When they perceived a positive climate for inclusion (+1 SD), however, participants who perceived themselves as deep-level dissimilar felt equally included as those who perceived themselves as deep-level similar, a_4 = -0.09, p = .369. In addition, the more positive participants perceived the climate for inclusion to be, the more included they felt. Importantly, while the latter effect was stronger among participants who perceived themselves as deep-level dissimilar, it was also present among participants who perceived themselves as similar to most others at work, reflecting the direct main effect of climate for inclusion on felt inclusion, a_3 = 0.47, p < .001. Supporting Hypothesis 3b, this suggests that a climate for inclusion is beneficial to all employees. Furthermore, because a positive climate for inclusion (+1 SD) buffered the negative relationship between deep-level dissimilarity and felt inclusion, it also neutralized the adverse indirect relationship between perceived deep-level dissimilarity and work-related outcomes, $a_1 b_1$ = -0.08, p = .375.[23]

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23 This analysis was repeated after removal of outliers (+3 SD), yielding similar results.
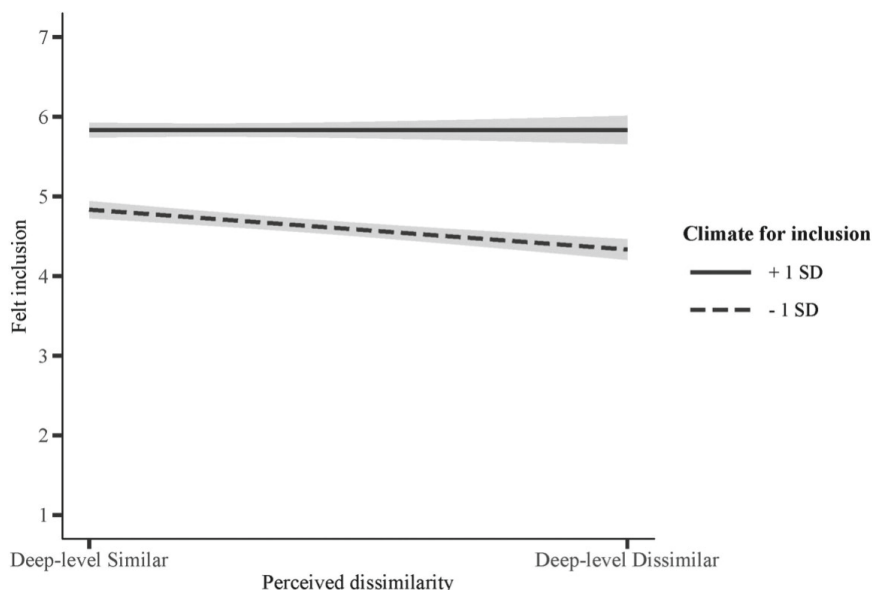
Figure 2 The Moderation Effect by Climate for Inclusion on the Relationship between Deep-level Dissimilarity and Felt Inclusion

DISCUSSION

Previous research demonstrated a relationship between employee dissimilarity, organizational climate, and inclusion at work. We replicate and extend these findings in two important ways. First, we provide a first examination of the independent and joint effects of surface-level and deep-level dissimilarity on social inclusion, thus extending previous work that has only considered the effect of surface-level dissimilarity (Jansen et al., 2017). We found that perceived deep-level (but not surface-level) dissimilarity is negatively related to felt inclusion. Since no interaction between the two types of dissimilarity was obtained, the relationship between deep-level dissimilarity and felt inclusion does not appear to depend on surface-level dissimilarity. Second, we extend the findings obtained by Jansen et al. (2017) to other work-related outcomes than absenteeism by demonstrating that felt inclusion acts as a mediator between deep-level dissimilarity and participants' job satisfaction, work-related stress, and turnover intentions. Furthermore, we showed that the negative relationship between perceived deep-level dissimilarity and felt inclusion was buffered by a perceived positive climate for inclusion in a similar way as Jansen et al. (2017) found to be the case for objective gender dissimilarity.

Our finding that only deep-level dissimilarity was related to feelings of inclusion is interesting, considering that most organizational diversity programs (e.g., from 1980–2002 in the United States; Dobbin et al., 2011) tend to focus on surface-level diversity only. In addition, the findings of Chapter 2 revealed that Dutch organizations' diversity statements more frequently refer to surface-level dimensions than to deep-level dimensions. Our findings suggest that by also focusing on deep-level dissimilarity in diversity programs, there is a potential for improvement of inclusion in organizations. This finding is also in line with earlier research. For example, Phillips and Loyd (2006) found that people who are only deep-level dissimilar, and not surface-level dissimilar, were less likely to express their deviance because they expected the social disapproval of others over it. The expectation of social disapproval is possibly related to lower feelings of inclusion among those who are deep-level dissimilar.

Furthermore, we found that a positive climate for inclusion is beneficial for the felt inclusion of employees, and consequently for their job satisfaction, work-related stress, turnover intentions, career commitment, and career advancement motivation in the organization. Importantly, a climate for inclusion was found to not only benefit the employees that perceived themselves to be "dissimilar" to most others, but also the ones that perceived themselves to be "similar." These findings suggest that both minority and majority group members are better off in an organizational climate where people who are dissimilar are being valued and accepted as they are. Majority group members may be positively affected by such a work climate because it affords them the freedom to be different as well. If they wish to deviate from the norm, they would likely still be accepted. Hence, a climate for inclusion enhances feelings of inclusion in the organization – for everyone.

While most of our hypotheses were supported, we also obtained some unexpected results. We expected surface-level dissimilarity to be negatively related to social inclusion, which was indeed reflected in the significant zero-order correlation between surface-level dissimilarity and inclusion (r = -0.08, p = .015). However, this effect disappeared when deep-level dissimilarity was simultaneously taken into account, suggesting that surface-level dissimilarity may only affect inclusion at work to the extent that it is accompanied by a sense of deep-level dissimilarity. Another explanation for the lack of a relationship between surface-level dissimilarity and inclusion is our measurement method, which did not assess the degree of perceived dissimilarity. It is possible that the degree of perceived dissimilarity was lower for those who perceived themselves as surface-level versus deep-level dissimilar. This will be discussed in the limitations section below. A second unexpected finding

(reported in our Supplementary Materials) was that surface-level dissimilarity was positively, rather than negatively, related to career commitment and career advancement motivation in the organization. A possible explanation could be that those who perceived themselves to be surface-level dissimilar to others at work are compensating for their dissimilarity through increased motivation and commitment. Indeed, previous research shows that impending discrimination can lead people to distance themselves from stereotypes in order to avoid or overcome the maltreatment (Kaiser & Miller, 2001). If the participants who reported surface-level dissimilarity differed from others on a characteristic that is stereotyped to imply lower career advancement motivation and lower career commitment (e.g., being a woman; Williams & Dempsey, 2014), then their increased motivation and commitment may have been a form of overcompensation. Another possibility is that these participants are not more motivated or committed in order to compensate for a stereotyped group image, but in order to level the playing field because being equally motivated and committed as majority employees would not help them get ahead.

Practical Implications

In this research we observed that feelings of inclusion are an important factor in the negative relationship between deep-level dissimilarity and work outcomes. This suggests that in order to limit or buffer the negative effects of dissimilarity, organizations might focus on improving employees' sense of inclusion. Doing so would likely benefit both individual outcomes (e.g., the well-being of employees) as organizational outcomes (e.g., lower turnover intentions and higher commitment of their employees). This study can potentially inspire organizations to develop and implement more effective diversity policies by focusing on the inclusion of all employees – including those who are not visibly different from others. Notwithstanding these conclusions, it is important to note that the effect sizes in our study are relatively small. While perceived dissimilarity and felt inclusion seem to be important factors in the workplace, the modest effect sizes show that a stronger sense of inclusion is not a miracle cure for work-related issues. Nonetheless, according to our results, a climate for inclusion is something worth striving toward if one wants to improve the well-being and performance of employees.

A first step in improving the organizational climate for inclusion entails a shift from a one-sided focus on surface-level differences between employees to also integrating deep-level differences in their diversity management strategies. For example, in addition to implementing policies that focus on those who are surface-level dissimilar to the majority of employees, such as special programs for women or ethnic

minorities, organizations could also consider ways to make those who are deep-level dissimilar (those with different personalities, preferences, or perspectives) feel included. For instance, organizations could benefit from actively inviting minority perspectives, communicating the worth of all employees, or establishing employee networks for groups that may be less visibly different from the norm (e.g., for LGBT+ employees).

Specifically, in prior work, three dimensions have been outlined that need to be considered by organizations striving toward a climate for inclusion (Nishii & Rich, 2013). The first dimension, which lays the groundwork for the two other dimensions, focuses on establishing a "level playing field." Making practices to combat unfair and biased actions visible to all employees will send a signal about intolerance of discrimination in the organization. Second, organizations should have an integration strategy that facilitates inclusion of all individuals in the workplace. As evident from our results, dissimilarity is negatively related to inclusion. An integration strategy is necessary in order to ensure that employees do not feel pressured to assimilate into the dominant culture, as there are many indications that being one's authentic self fosters one's well-being and performance (Schmader & Sedikides, 2018; Thomaes et al., 2017) while hiding or constraining one's identity undermines these outcomes (Ellemers & Barreto, 2006; Hewlin, 2003). Third, decision-making should be inclusive. This ensures that perspectives from employees who have not traditionally been involved in the decision-making are also heard and incorporated in the process. Sharing and integrating knowledge of everyone not only gives a voice to all employ-ees, but also results in more creativity (Men et al., 2019).

Limitations and Future Research
There are several potential limitations of this study that could be resolved in future research. A first issue regards our assessment of perceived dissimilarity. We utilized a top-down method of defining surface-level and deep-level dissimilarity by asking participants whether they felt visibly or invisibly dissimilar, while providing some examples of the two dimensions. This has the limitation that we cannot be sure that participants agreed with our typology (e.g., that gender and ethnicity could be con-sidered surface-level characteristics), and which specific characteristic participants had in mind when they indicated feeling dissimilar. For example, we do not know whether participants felt different from others in terms of their personality traits, their values, or their sexual orientation.

Furthermore, we chose to use a single dichotomous item for each type of dissimi-larity because we wanted to clearly distinguish between employees who perceive

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themselves as dissimilar and employees who perceive themselves as similar to most others at work. This way, there would be no doubt that the participants intended to categorize themselves as dissimilar or similar. The disadvantage of using dichotomous items, however, is that we do not know what the degree of perceived dissimilarity is. This information could be important, as it may be that inclusion might be affected only by a certain degree of dissimilarity.

The disadvantage of using single items is that single-item measures have lower reliability and validity compared to multi-item scales (Diamantopoulos et al., 2012). Another disadvantage of using single items is that we only have an indication of dissimilarity in a general sense, namely dissimilarity compared to most others at work. However, this doesn't allow us to differentiate the extent to which they feel dissimilar in subcontexts, such as relative to one's team members, supervisors or support staff. It is possible that the strength of the relationship between dissimilarity and inclusion differs per context. For instance, it may be possible that this relationship is stronger within one's team than in the office in general, as interdependence may be stronger in the former than the latter context.

Future studies addressing perceived dissimilarity at work could use multi-item and continuous measures of dissimilarity in order to understand the influence of the degree of dissimilarity and the significance of dissimilarity in different contexts. For the purposes of the current study, knowing whether participants perceived themselves as surface-level and/or deep-level dissimilar from others was the most important. We also note that using single items, as we have done, is not necessarily worse than using multi-item scales (Gardner et al., 1998).

Future research could, furthermore, use a bottom-up method of defining dissimilarity in order to examine more in-depth exactly what it is that makes employees feel dissimilar. Participants could indicate in what exact ways they feel dissimilar and whether they categorize these under surface- or deep-level dissimilarity. This would allow a more fine-grained analysis as to how dissimilarity on the basis of specific characteristics affects social inclusion and what patterns can be discerned. For instance, it would be interesting to investigate whether dissimilarity in characteristics indicating a stigmatized status (e.g., skin color, gender, or wearing the hijab) would be as negatively related to felt inclusion as dissimilarity in characteristics indicating non-stigmatized status. This is an interesting issue to explore in future research. Furthermore, there is some indication that gender and ethnicity might differentially affect the two subdimensions of social inclusion, authenticity, and belonging. Namely, women in engineering experience pressure to play down their

female identity (Faulkner, 2011), whereas African American students experience social exclusion (Strayhorn, 2009). Hence, the first may experience a lowered sense of inclusion through lowered authenticity and the latter through lowered belonging. It is also important to keep in mind that people may feel dissimilar in multiple ways at the same time (e.g., as a Black woman in a workplace in which White men are the majority), which might open ways to multiple disadvantages for one person. More research is needed to understand how dissimilarity in intersectional terms affects people, as it is not only theoretically relevant, but also reflects the reality in which people belong to multiple categories at the same time (Cole, 2009).

Although our CFA indicated good fit of the measurement model, our SEM models did not reach good fit. This means that we did not specify all the important relationships that the data suggest. We decided not to increase model fit by adding residual correlations or covariances between our latent variables based on the modification indices, since doing so does not add anything to the theoretical model that we wanted to test. However, it does mean that we do not yet fully understand the relationships between job satisfaction, work-related stress, turnover intentions, career commitment, and career advancement motivation within the organization. As this was not the scope of the current paper, we did not investigate this, but it is important to do so more systematically in future research.

Furthermore, as is the convention in organizational surveys, participants received the demographic questions first, including whether they perceived themselves as dissimilar to their colleagues. This could have made their dissimilarity salient and may have influenced their answers to the questions that followed. However, one could argue that this reflects the reality of situations in which people are addressed in terms of their demographic characteristics, and tend to be chronically aware of their minority status (Kim-Ju & Liem, 2003).

Lastly, research is needed to uncover what organizations can do to create and maintain a climate for inclusion at work. Even though previous research has described the characteristics of a climate for inclusion (e.g., Nishii & Rich, 2013), which policies organizations can implement to develop such a climate, or to prevent it from deteriorating over time, has not yet been examined. As the current study highlights the importance of a climate for inclusion for people who perceive themselves as deep-level dissimilar, longitudinal studies that focus on conditions that foster the development of such a climate can offer an important next step toward creating more inclusive workplaces.

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CONCLUSION

In summary, the research reported in this contribution demonstrates that subjective perceptions of dissimilarity and the extant climate for inclusion relate to employees' feelings of inclusion in important ways. Our results, furthermore, suggest that deep-level dissimilarity is an important factor in the processes that are at work in diverse groups, even more so than surface-level dissimilarity. More research is needed to pinpoint which specific surface-level or deep-level characteristics are at play in this process and to understand how a climate for inclusion can be realized in order to create and maintain inclusive workplaces.

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CHAPTER 5

More or Less Dissimilar: An Additive Approach to Dissimilarity and Inclusion at Work

This Chapter is based on:

Şahin, O., Van der Toorn, J., Jansen, W. S., & Ellemers, N. (2024). More or less dissimilar: An additive approach to dissimilarity and inclusion at work. *[under review]*

ABSTRACT

While the relational demography literature has explored the consequences of both surface-level (relatively visible traits like ethnicity and gender) and deep-level (relatively underlying attributes such as work experience) dissimilarity, there remains a lack of clarity of how being dissimilar across multiple specific dimensions concurrently affects employees' perceived inclusion. This study aims to address this gap by revealing the specific dimensions on which employees most often perceive dissimilarity, examining their relationship with inclusion, and probing whether inclusion is further impeded as the number of dissimilarity dimensions increases. Additionally, we investigate whether these effects are contingent on the perception of an organization's climate for inclusion. In a large-scale survey comprising 6,312 employees from a public service organization, our findings revealed that respondents most frequently reported perceiving dissimilarity from their co-workers in terms of personality, followed by ethnicity/culture, age, work experience, religion, sexual orientation, disability, education level, political orientation, and gender (in descending order). While not all dimensions were negatively related to perceived inclusion, we observed that as the number of dimensions on which employees perceived dissimilarity increased, their perceptions of inclusion diminished. Moreover, we found that the negative relationships between perceived dissimilarity and perceived inclusion were often mitigated by a positive perception of the climate for inclusion. Furthermore, irrespective of perceived dissimilarity, all employees reported higher levels of inclusion when they perceived the climate for inclusion to be more positive. These findings underscore the multifaceted nature of dissimilarity and its intricate interplay with perceptions of inclusion and organizational climate, shedding light on crucial factors influencing workplace dynamics and employee well-being.

Keywords: dissimilarity, inclusion, climate for inclusion, multidimensionality, surface-level, deep-level, organizations

MORE OR LESS DISSIMILAR: AN ADDITIVE APPROACH TO DISSIMILARITY AND INCLUSION AT WORK

As organizations become increasingly diverse, new challenges emerge. Within these changing workplaces a growing number of employees are or feel dissimilar to their coworkers. While existing research, alongside organizational diversity statements highlighted in Chapter 2, has predominantly focused on surface-level differences like gender and ethnicity, other dimensions such as personality or work style have garnered less attention. Nonetheless, both types of dissimilarity have been consistently linked to negative work-related outcomes, as evidenced by a meta-analysis conducted by Guillaume et al. (2012) and discussed in Chapters 3 and 4. Gaining a deeper understanding of how employees who perceive dissimilarity across a spectrum of specific dimensions experience their workplace is crucial. Hence, the aim of the current research is to explore the relationships between various specific dimensions of dissimilarity and workplace inclusion. Moreover, our goal is to pinpoint strategies that organizations can employ to mitigate the adverse impacts of workplace dissimilarity, fostering a more inclusive work environment for all employees.

Dissimilarity at Work

Despite organizations' efforts to cultivate diversity and inclusion in the workplace, ample evidence underscores the negative relationship between employees' dissimilarity to their co-workers and their well-being and performance. For example, dissimilar employees exhibit less attachment, creativity, job satisfaction, and group fit, and more turnover, absenteeism, stress, and relationship conflict (Choi, 2007; Guillaume et al., 2012; Jackson et al., 1991; Jansen et al., 2017; Jehn et al., 1997; Kirchmeyer, 1995; Tsui et al., 1992; see also Chapter 4). A crucial factor in these relationships appears to be employees' feelings of social inclusion, or the sense that they belong and can be themselves in the organization (Jansen et al., 2014, 2017; see also Chapter 4). Therefore, understanding how dissimilarity influences perceptions of inclusion is vital. To enhance our understanding, we identify and address several gaps in the existing literature:

Firstly, research on dissimilarity in relation to social inclusion has traditionally focused on broader categories of surface-level (e.g., gender and ethnicity) and deep-level (e.g., beliefs and preferences) dissimilarity, as discussed in Chapter 4. However, while studies have shown that gender dissimilarity, for instance, negatively relates to inclusion at work (Jansen et al., 2017), the relationship between dissimilarity on other specific dimensions and inclusion remains unclear. Moreover, the distinction between dimensions is often oversimplified when broadly catego-

rized as surface-level or deep-level, failing to capture meaningful differences. For instance, some dimensions may be task-oriented (e.g., work experience, education level), while others are relationship-oriented (e.g., personality, gender; Jackson & Joshi, 2011), or they may represent historically stigmatized categories (e.g., ethnicity, gender; Nkomo et al., 2019). By examining more specific dimensions of dissimilarity and how they relate to inclusion, we can gain a more fine-grained sense of how dissimilarity manifests at the workplace.

Secondly, as demonstrated in Chapter 4, our findings suggest that employees perceiving both surface-level and deep-level dissimilarity do not necessarily report lower levels of inclusion compared to those perceiving dissimilarity in only one of these types. This raises the intriguing question of whether perceiving dissimilarity across multiple specific dimensions has an additive relationship with social inclusion.

Thirdly, it remains unclear whether the moderating role of climate for inclusion on the negative relationship between deep-level dissimilarity and inclusion (Chapter 4) extends to more specific dimensions of dissimilarity.

The current study aims to address these gaps in the literature and advance existing knowledge in three distinct ways. Firstly, it contributes to the literature by investigating the individual relationships between specific dissimilarity dimensions and social inclusion. Secondly, it enhances our understanding of the relationship between dissimilarity and inclusion by investigating whether employees who perceive dissimilarity across multiple dimensions feel less included compared to those who perceive dissimilarity on a single dimension. Lastly, the study builds upon and extends the findings from Chapter 4 by investigating the moderating effect of climate for inclusion not only on the relationship between surface-level and deep-level dissimilarity and inclusion but also on the relationship between individual dissimilarity dimensions and inclusion.

Effects of Dissimilarity at Work

Just as in their personal lives, employees strive for the fulfillment of fundamental human needs within their work environments, such as authenticity and belongingness (Baumeister & Leary, 1995; Kernis & Goldman, 2006), which are the two subdimensions of social inclusion (Jansen et al., 2014). Employees who are or feel dissimilar to most others perceive less inclusion, which can have important implications for employees and the organization (Guillaume et al., 2012; Jansen et al., 2017; see also Chapter 4). As such, it is imperative that we get a more fine-grained understanding of how the experience of social inclusion varies among employees,

particularly in relation to the specific dimensions along which they perceive dissimilarity.

According to Self-Categorization Theory (SCT; Turner et al., 1987), people categorize themselves and others into in- and out-groups. This way, they define their place in society and derive a sense of self. While people can belong to multiple subgroups based on their social identities (e.g., their ethnicity and sexual orientation), employees working in the same department or organization share the so-called superordinate identity of being co-workers in the same organization. According to the ingroup projection model (Mummendey & Wenzel, 1999), people tend to perceive the prototypical superordinate group member as someone from the ingroup. Even though multiple groups can claim prototypicality if they are of equal size, the characteristics ascribed to the prototypical superordinate group member tend to predominantly derive from the majority group because of its numerical strength and higher status (Waldzus et al., 2004; Wang et al., 2018). As a result, minorities are seen as poorer representatives of the superordinate group, rendering them inferior and subjecting them to negative attitudes and even bullying at work (Glambek et al., 2020; Waldzus et al., 2004; Wang et al., 2018).

While categorization relies on salient identities, dissimilarity on deep-level dimensions can have negative consequences regardless of whether employees disclose or conceal their dissimilarity. Concealing dissimilarity has been negatively related to inclusion and job satisfaction (Ellemers & Barreto, 2006; Newheiser et al., 2017). However, if deep-level dissimilar employees would disclose their dissimilarity, they may anticipate being perceived and treated as an outgroup member, as discussed in Chapter 3. Furthermore, individuals who are dissimilar on deep-level dimensions often face challenges in forming subgroups based on these identities as these identities are not immediately visible. This is important because belonging to a group can provide support and alleviate self-related uncertainty (Wagoner et al., 2017).

Based on the predictions derived from the ingroup projection model, and in line with previous findings in Chapter 4 and the literature (Guillaume et al., 2012; Jansen et al., 2017), we expect that both perceived surface-level and deep-level dissimilarity are negatively related to perceived inclusion among employees.

H1: Perceived surface-level and deep-level dissimilarity are negatively related to perceived inclusion at work.

Moving Beyond the Distinction between Surface-level and Deep-level Dissimilarity

Even though surface-level and deep-level dimensions have been defined as relatively visible or more underlying, respectively, the complex reality is that whether a dimension is readily detectable or not does not only depend on visible characteristics, but also on expression. For example, someone can choose to express their work experience (e.g., by a title such as 'senior manager'), which can make it a surface-level dimension. Whether dimensions are readily detectable or more underlying can thus be experienced differently by people. For this reason, the current study relied on employees' own perceptions of dissimilarity at work on specific dimensions without a-priori assumptions as to whether these dimensions are surface-level or deep-level. Furthermore, while our findings in Chapter 4 suggest that deep-level dissimilarity is more prevalent than surface-level dissimilarity, it is unclear which specific dimensions people most often perceive dissimilarity on.

Although distinguishing between surface-level and deep-level categories is meaningful in studying dissimilarity, these categories lump together rather diverse dimensions (e.g., ethnicity, gender and age as surface-level dimensions and sexual orientation, work experience and personality as deep-level dimensions; Guillaume et al., 2012; Jackson & Joshi, 2011). By solely considering the surface-level versus deep-level distinction, it is impossible to take into account some other important differences between the various dimensions that people may differ on. Some dimensions, such as sexual orientation or skin color, are stigmatized; People who diverge from the White heterosexual norm tend to be historically disadvantaged in the society in which the organization is embedded (Nkomo et al., 2019). Other dimensions, such as personality or work experience, are not typically seen as stigmatized dimensions. People who are dissimilar on these dimensions might not experience the same disadvantages as people who are dissimilar on stigmatized dimensions.

Furthermore, dissimilarity on certain dimensions implies status differences (e.g., dissimilarity in education level and/or gender), whereas other dimensions do not (e.g., personality). This distinction is important because the effects of dissimilarity on individuals may vary depending on their group status. For instance, research indicates that women and older employees are more frequently absent from work due to (objective) dissimilarity compared to men and younger employees did (Reinwald & Kunze, 2020). In addition, some dimensions can be categorized as task-oriented dimensions (e.g., work experience and education level), while others are more relationship-oriented (e.g., gender and personality) (Jackson & Joshi, 2011). It is possible that task-oriented dissimilarity is positively related to social inclusion because it is

perceived as adding value to the team, whereas relationship-oriented dissimilarity may be negatively related to inclusion. However, it is also possible that work-related dissimilarity is negatively related to inclusion because deviations from the norm in work-related aspects are salient.

Given these nuances, it is evident that dimensions may relate to inclusion differently, highlighting the importance of considering specific dimensions in research to capture meaningful differences. To gain a more fine-grained understanding of how dissimilarity relates to inclusion, we propose adopting a more granular definition of dissimilarity.

To address this gap in the literature, our research examines dissimilarity across ten dimensions: personality, ethnicity/culture, age, work experience, religion, sexual orientation, disability, education level, political orientation and gender. We will explore how each of these dimensions relates to inclusion at work and investigate how perceptions of dissimilarity across multiple dimensions relate to inclusion.

5

The Additive Effect of Dissimilarity Dimensions

The relationship between dissimilarity and social inclusion has been established to some degree (Jansen et al., 2014; see also Chapter 4), but quantitative studies considering the influence of multidimensionality on social inclusion are lacking. Multidimensionality refers to individuals having multiple existing attributes and identities simultaneously (Liu et al., 2019). In quantitative psychological research, multidimensionality of social categories can be approached by examining interactions between these categories (the intersectional or multiplicative approach) or by looking at the additive effects of social categories (Else-Quest & Hyde, 2016).

Although multidimensionality is closely linked to intersectionality (Crenshaw, 1989), our study will not adopt an intersectional, multiplicative approach. Instead, our study focuses on dissimilarity dimensions rather than social groups or identities. We aim to understand employees' perceptions of dissimilarity across various dimensions, focusing on quantitative differences rather than qualitative distinctions. Given that we are examining a wide range of dissimilarity dimensions, not all of which are stigmatized, an additive approach guided by the multiple jeopardy hypothesis is more appropriate. Through this lens, we aim to explore how the number of dimensions on which an employee perceives dissimilarity is related to their perceptions of inclusion.

Previous studies using a similar approach to investigate workplace inequality have found that embodying multiple stigmatized identities is related to experiencing

more job insecurity, workplace harassment, incivility, unfair treatment, stereotype concerns, and feelings of invisibility (Berdahl & Moore, 2006; Lavaysse et al., 2018; Remedios & Snyder, 2018; Zurbrügg & Miner, 2016). These findings align with the multiple jeopardy hypothesis (Beale, 1979; King, 1988; Purdie-Vaughns & Eibach, 2008), which suggests that the relationship between the number of dissimilarity dimensions and inclusion will follow a similar pattern: as employees perceive dissimilarity on a higher number of dimensions, their perceived inclusion will decrease.

H2: The number of perceived dissimilarity dimensions is negatively related to perceived inclusion.

The Moderating Effect of Climate for Inclusion

While dissimilarity often negatively relates to social inclusion, an important question arises: what strategies can organizations employ to mitigate this effect? Research suggests that when colleagues from diverse backgrounds collaborate and gain specific, personal insights about each other, it diminishes reliance on generalized expectations based on (demographic) categories (Guillaume et al., 2012). This process enables individuals to be seen as unique entities rather than mere representatives of their social groups. One strategy to promote inclusion involves increasing access to such individuating information. However, this approach has limitations: individuating information must be readily available, and in its absence, dissimilarity may continue to pose challenges. Moreover, this strategy may not be equally effective for all types of dissimilarity, especially more stigmatized identities.

Another approach for fostering inclusion is to cultivate a climate that values and appreciates everyone, regardless of the differences between employees. Extensive research demonstrates the benefits of a climate for inclusion (Jansen et al., 2017; Mor Barak et al., 2016; Nishii, 2013; Shore et al., 2018). Specifically, in a positive climate for inclusion, the natural diversity within teams is appreciated and valued, reducing conflicts and enhancing job satisfaction (Nishii, 2013). Studies have shown that a positive climate for inclusion buffers the negative relationship between dissimilarity and perceived inclusion: In such an environment, employees who perceive dissimilarity feel as included as those who perceive similarity (Jansen et al., 2017; Chapter 4). Moreover, perceived climate for inclusion is directly related to perceived inclusion: The more positive employees perceive the climate for inclusion, regardless of perceived differences from coworkers, the more included they feel. It is conceivable that people who are similar to most others (i.e., majority group members) also feel more included in a positive climate for inclusion because they perceive environments that value and appreciate differences as morally good. After

all, people have been shown to like to be associated with groups they perceive as moral (Ellemers et al., 2013).

While we have some understanding of the moderating role of climate for inclusion, it is primarily in broader terms of surface-level and deep-level dissimilarity. It is possible that some dimensions are more receptive to the benefits of a climate for inclusion than others, perhaps because employees who perceive dissimilarity on specific dimensions feel overlooked. It is imperative to comprehend how climate for inclusion affects the relationships between specific dissimilarity dimensions and perceived inclusion, as some dimensions related to inclusion may be unaffected by the climate for inclusion and require different approaches. We expect to replicate our findings from Chapter 4, predicting a moderating role of climate for inclusion on the relationship between dissimilarity and inclusion. Furthermore, we will explore whether climate for inclusion moderates the relationships between separate dissimilarity dimensions and perceived inclusion. In summary, we hypothesize:

H3: Perceived climate for inclusion moderates the relationship between dissimilarity and perceived inclusion, such that the negative relationship between dissimilarity and perceived inclusion is diminished among employees who perceive a more positive climate for inclusion.

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METHOD

Participants
All employees of a governmental organization in the Netherlands, approximately 16000 people, were invited to participate in our study. A total of 6312 participants completed the study (2987 men, 3246 women, 70 identified neither as man nor woman, 9 missing, M_{age} = 47.19, SD_{age} = 11.36).

Procedure and Measures
Employees received an email with a link to our survey. Those without access to a computer at work (*N* = 225) received a paper-based questionnaire. After providing informed consent, participants first filled out demographic information, including their gender, age, education level, years of tenure, number of hours work per week, whether they held a supervisory position, and their contract status (temporary/indefinite). Next, they completed the following measures in the order in which they are listed:

Perceived Climate for Inclusion. We operationalized the perceived climate for inclusion as the way in which employees who are surface-level or deep-level dissim-

ilar are generally being perceived and treated within the organization (Boezeman et al., 2024), and assessed it using six items from the Netherlands Inclusiveness Screener (Boezeman et al., 2024), measuring participants' perceptions of the ways in which people in the organization talk and think about "people who are visibly or invisibly dissimilar than most others". For each item, which utilized a bipolar scale, participants indicated the extent to which they agreed more with the statement on the left side or with the statement on the right side. The scores ranged from 1 (agreeing most with the left statement) to 7 (agreeing most with the right statement) with a higher score indicating a more positive climate for inclusion. Examples of items are: "They are being disadvantaged at work when making decisions about tasks, salary, etc. – They are being taken into account when making decisions about tasks, salary, etc.," "They are being seen as an inconvenience – They are being seen as an asset," and "They are being treated worse than others – They are being treated as people that are valuable" (α = 0.92).

Perceived dissimilarity. Perceived surface-level and deep-level dissimilarity were measured with one item each. These items were based on how Hobman et al. (2003) measured dissimilarity. First, participants were asked to indicate whether they perceived themselves to be dissimilar to others at work: "*I think I am different from most colleagues at work*". The answer options were "*yes*" and "*no*". Participants who agreed with this statement were asked to indicate in which way they perceived themselves to be dissimilar to most others. They were able to tick one or more of the following eleven options: Sexual orientation, personality, political beliefs, religion, education level, work experience, gender, age, ethnicity/cultural background, disability, and other (with the option to give an answer in a text field). Perceived invisible (deep-level) dissimilarity was assessed in a similar fashion, with the first item being: "In terms of invisible characteristics (e.g., beliefs, preferences), I am different than most others at work." Those who agreed with this statement were then asked to indicate in which way they perceived themselves to be dissimilar to most others, with the same answer options as in the question assessing surface-level dissimilarity. Thus, people could indicate that they think they are both surface-level and deep-level dissimilar or similar, or either surface-level or deep-level dissimilar or similar to most others.

Perceived inclusion. The extent to which the participants perceived inclusion at work was measured with a 12-item version of the Perceived Group Inclusion Scale (PGIS; Jansen et al., 2014). This scale consists of two subscales (belonging and authenticity), each comprising two components (group membership and group affection; room for authenticity and value in authenticity). Each component consists of three items with response options ranging from 1 (*completely disagree*) to 7

(*completely agree*; α = 0.97). Example items are: "[organizational unit] gives me the feeling that I belong" and "… encourages me to be who I am."

A parallel analysis (PA) confirmed that four factors with significant Eigenvalues could be distinguished, in line with the four theoretical components of inclusion (see Table 1). In the current study, we used inclusion as a single variable, as an exploratory factor analysis (EFA) with oblique (Direct Oblimin) rotation indicated that all items highly loaded on a single factor, with all factor scores exceeding .81 (see Table 2 for the factor loadings of the one-factor solution).

Table 1 Factor Loadings of the Exploratory Factor Analysis on the Perceived Group Inclusion Scale Using a Four-Factor Solution (Principal Axis Factoring, Direct Oblimin Rotation, Factor Loadings > .30)

Item: The unit I work in…	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3	Factor 4
"gives me the feeling that I belong."	.97			
"gives me the feeling that I am part of this group."	.89			
"gives me the feeling that I fit in."	.77			
…likes me."		.49		
…appreciates me."		.42		
…is pleased with me."		1.00		
…allows me to be authentic."			.74	
…allows me to be who I am."			.94	
…allows me to present myself the way I am."			.90	
…encourages me to be authentic."				.90
…encourages me to be who I am."				.88
…encourages me to present myself the way I am."				.88
Eigenvalue	2.83	1.79	2.61	2.73

Table 2 Factor Loadings of the Exploratory Factor Analysis on the Perceived Group Inclusion Scale Using a One-Factor Solution (Principal Axis Factoring, Direct Oblimin Rotation, Factor Loadings > .30)

Item: "The unit I work in…	Factor
…gives me the feeling that I belong."	.89
…gives me the feeling that I am part of this group."	.86
…gives me the feeling that I fit in."	.89
…likes me."	.81
…appreciates me."	.85
…is pleased with me."	.84

Table 2 Factor Loadings of the Exploratory Factor Analysis on the Perceived Group Inclusion Scale Using a One-Factor Solution (Principal Axis Factoring, Direct Oblimin Rotation, Factor Loadings > .30) **(continued)**

Item: "The unit I work in...	Factor
...allows me to be authentic."	.87
...allows me to be who I am."	.88
...allows me to present myself the way I am."	.88
...encourages me to be authentic."	.83
...encourages me to be who I am."	.86
...encourages me to present myself the way I am."	.85
Eigenvalue	8.87

RESULTS

Plan of Analysis

Analyses were conducted using R software 4.0.3 (R Core Team, 2020), using the car (v. 3.0-10; Fox & Weisberg, 2019), cocor (v1.1-3; Diedenhofen & Musch, 2015), emmeans (v1.4.6; Lenth, 2020), Hmisc (v. 4.4-1; Harrell, 2020), interactions (v1.1.0; Long, 2019), sjstats (v0.18.0; Lüdecke, 2020) packages. The full code is available at https://osf.io/2whdz/.

To test Hypothesis 1, stating that perceived surface-level and deep-level dissimilarity negatively relate to perceived inclusion, we conducted a 2 (surface-level dissimilarity: yes vs. no) X 2 (deep-level dissimilarity: yes vs. no) between-subjects ANOVA.

To explore which specific dissimilarity dimensions relate to perceived inclusion, we conducted a multiple regression analysis. Before doing so, however, we conducted statistical comparisons of dependent overlapping correlations. This step allowed us to test whether the dimensions that the participants listed after indicating surface-level dissimilarity had a different relationship with perceived inclusion than the same dimensions listed after indicating deep-level dissimilarity. Based on the results of this analysis, we made a distinction between surface-level and deep-level dimensions or collapsed the two categories into one variable in our subsequent analyses. We had no specific hypothesis as to which specific dimensions would predict perceived inclusion nor specific expectations regarding their relative magnitude.

We also conducted multiple regression analyses to test Hypothesis 2, stating that the number of perceived dissimilarity dimensions negatively relates to perceived inclusion, and Hypothesis 3, stating that the positive relationship between climate

for inclusion and perceived inclusion is stronger for employees who perceive to be dissimilar from coworkers than for employees who perceive to be similar to coworkers.

Descriptive Statistics

The zero-order correlations for all study variables can be found in Table 3. The number of participants that listed each dissimilarity dimension can be found in Table 4. A total of 1288 participants (20.41%) perceived themselves as surface-level dissimilar and 1365 (21.68%) participants perceived themselves as deep-level dissimilar. There was some overlap between the two types: 474 participants (7.51%) perceived themselves as both surface-level and deep-level dissimilar. Summing the specific dimensions listed for surface-level and deep-level dissimilarity, participants most often indicated feeling dissimilar from co-workers in terms of personality, followed by (in descending order) ethnicity/culture, age, work experience, religion, sexual orientation, disability, education level, political orientation, and gender (see Figure 1). It was also common for participants to perceive dissimilarity across two or more dimensions concurrently. See Appendix A for detailed frequencies of these dyadic combinations of perceived dissimilarity dimensions.

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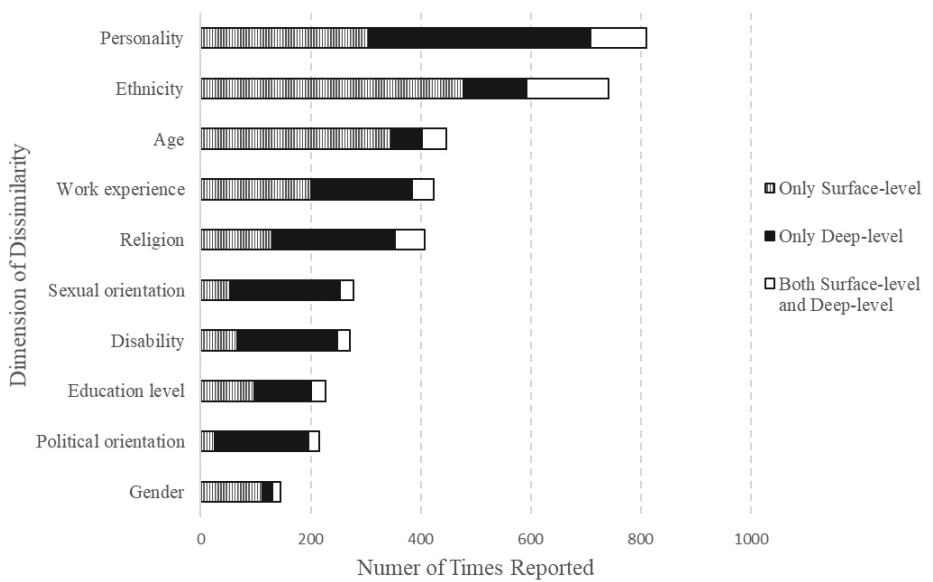
Figure 1 Frequencies of Dimensions that People Reported to be Dissimilar on

Table 3 Zero-order Correlations of Study Variables

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24
1. Inclusion	-																							
2. Climate for inclusion	.45*	-																						
3. Surface-level dissimilarity	-.17*	.14*	-																					
4. Deep-level dissimilarity	-.21*	.13*	.19*	-																				
5. Surface-level Personality	-.11*	.09*	.52*	.15*	-																			
6. Deep-level Personality	-.18*	.10*	.09*	.56*	.16*	-																		
7. S-I Ethnicity/Culture	-.15*	.15*	.66*	.16*	.27*	.09*	-																	
8. D-I Ethnicity/Culture	-.14*	.13*	.22*	.40*	.18*	.25*	.33*	-																
9. S-I Age	-.07*	.03*	.51*	.07*	.27*	.05*	.18*	.06*	-															
10. D-I Age	-.09*	.05*	.09*	.24*	.07*	.15*	.02	.11*	.20*	-														
11. S-I Work experience	-.06*	.06*	.39*	.08*	.40*	.09*	.16*	.11*	.35*	.11*	-													
12. D-I Work experience	-.11*	.08*	.09*	.36*	.12*	.33*	.09*	.17*	.09*	.25*	.14*	-												
13. S-I Religion	-.09*	-.11*	.34*	.09*	.18*	.07*	.38*	.18*	.14*	.05*	.11*	.04*	-											
14. D-I Religion	-.07*	-.07*	.11*	.41*	.10*	.14*	.13*	.27*	.04*	.10*	.05*	.12*	.21*	-										

Table 3 Zero-order Correlations of Study Variables **(continued)**

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24
15. S-I Sexual orientation	.00	-.01	.22*	.07*	.19*	.03*	.06*	.03*	.08*	.06*	.08*	.05*	.04*	.03*	-									
16. D-I Sexual orientation	-.01	-.02	-.00	.37*	.01	.09*	-.02	.04*	.02	.06*	-.01	.08*	.00	.03*	.16*	-								
17. S-I Disability	-.09*	-.07*	.24*	.05*	.09*	.03*	.07*	.04*	.07*	.04*	.08*	.01	.04*	.02	.05*	.01	-							
18. D-I Disability	-.11*	-.08*	.04*	.35*	.05*	.11*	.02*	.06*	.03*	.08*	.06*	.09*	-.00	.05*	.01	.05*	.16*	-						
19. S-I Education level	-.10*	-.08*	.28*	.09*	.31*	.08*	.19*	.11*	.23*	.08**	.32*	.10*	.08*	.05*	.05*	-.00	.13*	.04*	-					
20. D-I Education level	-.11*	-.09*	.09*	.28*	.13*	.21*	.08*	.20*	.11*	.19*	.13*	.29*	.04*	.09*	.03*	.05*	.04*	.09*	.20*	-				
21. S-I Political orientation	-.03*	-.03*	.17*	.08*	.25*	.07*	.10*	.10*	.13*	.10*	.17*	.07*	.18*	.09*	.06*	.02	.07*	.05*	.18*	.07*	-			
22. D-I Political orientation	-.07*	-.03*	.07*	.34*	.09*	.22*	.05*	.11*	.06*	.12*	.05*	.17*	.06*	.18*	.04*	.09*	.01	.06*	.10*	.14*	.21*	-		
23. S-I Gender	-.05*	-.05*	.28*	.06*	.18*	.04*	.17*	.09*	.23*	.06*	.15*	.11*	.13*	.05*	.14*	.03*	.03*	.02	.20*	.08*	.08*	.09*	-	
24. D-I Gender	-.08*	-.07*	.09*	.14*	.13*	.13*	.07*	.13*	.10*	.24*	.09*	.14*	.07*	.05*	.13*	.13*	.03*	.05*	.12*	.18*	.13*	.11*	.21*	-

Note: S-I = Surface-level, D-I = Deep-level, * $p < .05$

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Table 4 The Number and Percentage of Participants that Indicated Perceiving Surface-level Dissimilarity, Deep-level Dissimilarity, and Dissimilarity on Specific Dimensions

Dissimilarity dimension	Number of participants (% of all participants)
Total surface-level dissimilar	**1288 (20.41%)**
Surface-level dissimilarity dimensions:	
Personality	407 (6.45%)
Ethnicity/Culture	627 (9.93%)
Age	391 (6.19%)
Work experience	240 (3.80%)
Religion	184 (2.92%)
Sexual orientation	78 (1.24%)
Disability	90 (1.43%)
Education level	124 (1.96%)
Political orientation	45 (0.71%)
Gender	127 (2.01%)
Total deep-level dissimilar	**1365 (21.63%)**
Deep-level dissimilarity dimensions:	
Personality	506 (8.02%)
Ethnicity/Culture	263 (4.17%)
Age	99 (1.57%)
Work experience	223 (3.53%)
Religion	278 (4.40%)
Sexual orientation	224 (3.55%)
Disability	206 (3.26%)
Education level	130 (2.06%)
Political orientation	191 (3.03%)
Gender	32 (0.51%)

Note: The total number of listed dissimilarity dimensions exceeds the number of participants that perceived surface-level and/or deep-level dissimilarity because it was possible to list more than one dissimilarity dimension per participant. Participants could also indicate that they perceived dissimilarity on "Other". We did not include this option in our analyses or this table.

Preliminary Analyses

To assess whether our measures could be distinguished statistically, we conducted a series of factor analyses. First, we performed a Parallel Analysis (PA) on the climate for inclusion items and the perceived group inclusion items, which yielded five significant factors (climate for inclusion and the four components of the perceived

group inclusion scale). We then entered the items in an EFA in which we constrained the number of extracted factors to five (based on the aforementioned PA) and used principal axis factoring with Oblimin rotation. All items loaded on the respective factors of their scale.

To obtain a statistical indication of the validity of our measurement model, we conducted confirmatory factor analysis (CFA). We tested the model with five factors, as suggested by the PA. We defined the model such that all items loaded on their respective factors. The results of the CFA showed that $\chi2/df$ indicated a bad fit, while the other indices indicated a good fit, $\chi2 = 1169.94$, $p < .001$, $df = 125$, $\chi2/df = 9.36$, RMSEA = 0.05, CFI = 0.98, TLI = 0.98. We conclude that the measurement model did reach good fit as most indices point in this direction, and chi-square is not decisive in assessing fit (West et al., 2012). All standardized factor loadings exceeded .70.

Confirmatory and Exploratory Analyses

Hypothesis 1: Surface-level and Deep-level Dissimilarity and Inclusion
We conducted a 2 (surface-level dissimilarity: yes vs. no) X 2 (deep-level dissimilarity: yes vs. no) between-subjects ANOVA to test Hypothesis 1, stating that surface-level and deep-level dissimilarity negatively predicts perceived inclusion. We obtained a main effect of both surface-level dissimilarity, $F(1, 6285) = 95.47$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = 0.02$, and deep-level dissimilarity, $F(1, 6285) = 177.52$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = 0.03$, on perceived inclusion. These results indicated that participants who perceived themselves as surface-level dissimilar perceived less inclusion than participants who perceived themselves as surface-level similar (see Table 5 for the means and standard deviations). Furthermore, participants who perceived themselves as deep-level dissimilar perceived less inclusion than those who perceived themselves as deep-level similar. We did not obtain a significant interaction between surface-level dissimilarity and deep-level dissimilarity on inclusion, $F(1, 6285) = 1.34$, $p = .248$. Simple slopes analyses using Tukey's HSD procedure indicated that participants who perceived only surface-level dissimilarity scored lower on inclusion than participants who perceived similarity in both ways, $t(6285) = 9.75$, $p < .001$, but did not differ from those who perceived only deep-level dissimilarity, $t(6285) = 2.51$, $p = .058$. Furthermore, participants who perceived deep-level dissimilarity also scored lower on inclusion than participants who perceived similarity in both ways, $t(6285) = 14.44$, $p < .001$. Participants who perceived surface-level and deep-level dissimilarity scored lower on inclusion than participants who perceived similarity in both ways, $t(6285) = 16.34$, $p < .001$, and also scored lower than participants who indicated only surface-level, $t(6285) = 7.22$, $p < .001$, or only deep-level dissimilarity, $t(6285) = 5.20$, $p < .001$. These

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results support our hypothesis (H1), as both surface-level and deep-level dissimilarity were negatively related to perceived inclusion.

Table 5 Means and Standard Deviations of the Scores on Inclusion per Dissimilarity Type

	Inclusion	
	M	SD
Surface-level similar	5.12	1.12
Surface-level dissimilar	4.61	1.39
Deep-level similar	5.15	1.10
Deep-level dissimilar	4.53	1.37

Explorative Analyses: Separate Effects of Dissimilarity Dimensions

After participants indicated whether they perceived to be different from their coworkers on surface-level and deep-level dimensions, they reported on which specific dimensions they experienced dissimilarity. To determine whether the specific surface-level and deep-level dimensions should be treated as separate variables in subsequent analyses, or could be collapsed, we conducted statistical comparisons of dependent overlapping correlations (Diedenhofen & Musch, 2015). This way, we tested whether the dimensions that the participants listed after indicating surface-level dissimilarity had a different relationship with perceived inclusion than the same dimensions listed after indicating deep-level dissimilarity. The results showed that some dimensions had different correlations with perceived inclusion, depending on whether they were listed after indicating surface-level or deep-level dissimilarity. These dimensions are personality (surface-level $r = -.11$ vs. deep-level $r = -.18$, $p < .001$), work experience (surface-level $r = -.06$ vs. deep-level $r = -.11$, $p = .002$), and political orientation (surface-level $r = -.03$, deep-level $r = -.07$, $p = .012$; See Table 3 for all correlations between variables). For the remaining dimensions, their correlations with perceived inclusion did not depend on whether they were listed after indicating surface-level or deep-level dissimilarity. Therefore, in the following analyses, we included separate variables for surface-level and deep-level personality, work experience and political orientation, but did not make a distinction based on dissimilarity type for the remaining dimensions.

To examine the relationships between the specific dissimilarity dimensions and perceived inclusion, we then conducted a multiple regression analysis with the specific dissimilarity dimensions as predictors and inclusion as the dependent variable. Results indicated an average significant relationship between the dissimilarity dimensions and inclusion, $F(14, 6292) = 36.88$, $R^2 = .08$, $p < .001$. Closer inspection of

the individual predictors indicated that personality (both surface-level and deep-level), ethnicity/culture, age, work experience (deep-level), disability, and education level were negatively related to inclusion (See Table 6 for the coefficients).

Table 6 Regression Coefficients for the Multiple Regression Analysis Predicting Inclusion

	Inclusion		
	B	SE	p
Intercept	5.17	0.02	
Surface-level personality	-0.20	0.07	< .001**
Deep-level personality	-0.53	0.06	< .001**
Ethnicity/Culture	-0.38	0.05	< .001**
Age	-0.16	0.06	.017*
Surface-level work experience	0.12	0.09	.185
Deep-level work experience	-0.20	0.09	.031*
Religion	-0.09	0.06	.191
Sexual orientation	0.13	0.07	.102
Disability	-0.56	0.07	< .001**
Education level	-0.35	0.09	< .001**
Surface-level political orientation	0.27	0.18	.179
Deep-level political orientation	-0.20	0.09	.289
Gender	-0.16	0.10	.179

* p < .05, ** p < .001

Hypothesis 2: Additive Effect of Dissimilarity Dimensions on Inclusion

The above results suggest that specific dissimilarity dimensions, but not all, were significantly and negatively related to social inclusion. Hypothesis 2 stated that the number of dimensions the employees reported being dissimilar on would be negatively related to their feelings of inclusion. In order to test this hypothesis, we conducted hierarchical regression analyses. In the first block, we only included the dimensions that were significantly related to inclusion in the multiple regression analysis (see Table 6) by counting the number of these dimensions that people perceived dissimilarity on and including the resulting count variable to predict inclusion. In the second model, we also included the dimensions that were not significantly related to inclusion by counting the number of these dimensions that people perceived dissimilarity on and including this variable as a predictor. A statistical comparison of these models showed that the second model did not explain more variance than the first model, Δ-R^2 = .00, F(1, 6304) = 0.06, p = .801). Hence, we only looked at whether the number of dissimilarity dimensions that were shown to

predict inclusion in the multiple regression analysis is related to inclusion. Support-
ing Hypothesis 2, the results indicated that the number of dissimilarity dimensions
was negatively related to perceived inclusion, $F(1, 6305) = 374.2$, $R^2 = .06$, $b = -0.39$,
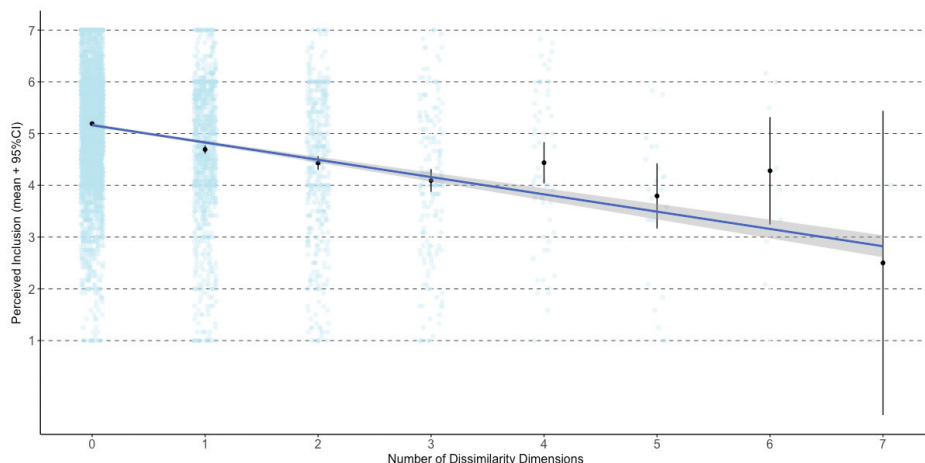$p < .001$ (see Figure 2).

Figure 2 The Relationship between the Number of Dissimilarity Dimensions and Perceived
Inclusion. Blue Dots Represent Individual Data Points

Hypothesis 3: Climate for Inclusion

To test Hypothesis 3, stating that perceived climate for inclusion is positively related
to perceived inclusion and moderates the relationship between perceived dissimi-
larity and perceived inclusion, we conducted a series of moderation analyses using
multiple regression analyses. We first conducted an analysis predicting perceived
inclusion from surface-level dissimilarity, deep-level dissimilarity, climate for inclu-
sion, and the two-way interactions between climate for inclusion and the two types
of dissimilarity, respectively. Supporting our hypothesis, we obtained a significant
main effect of climate for inclusion, $b = 0.42$, $p < .001$, indicating that regardless of
their perceived dissimilarity from coworkers, participants perceived more inclu-
sion to the extent that they perceived a more positive climate. We also obtained
a significant interaction effect between surface-level dissimilarity and climate for
inclusion on perceived inclusion, $b = 0.20$, $p < .001$. Simple slopes analysis revealed
that surface-level dissimilarity had a negative relationship with inclusion when
participants perceived a negative climate for inclusion (-1 SD; $b = -0.41$, $p < .001$).
This relationship became weaker when participants perceived an average (mean;
$b = -0.22$, $p < .001$) or positive climate for inclusion (+1 SD; $b = -0.03$, $p = .502$), with
the relationship disappearing in the latter case (See Figure 3). The same pattern of
results was found for the relationship between deep-level dissimilarity and inclu-

sion. We obtained a significant interaction effect between deep-level dissimilarity and climate for inclusion as well, $b = 0.17$, $p < .001$. The relationship between deep-level dissimilarity and inclusion became weaker as participants perceived a more positive climate for inclusion, but did not completely disappear (-1 SD: $b = -0.54$; mean: $b = -0.38$; +1 SD: $b = -0.22$, all p's < .001; See Figure 4).
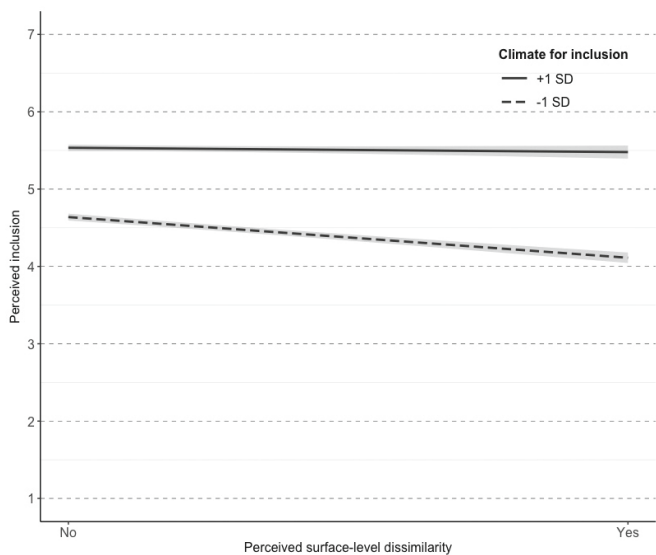

Figure 3 The Moderation Effect by Climate for Inclusion on the Relationship between Surface-level Dissimilarity and Perceived Inclusion
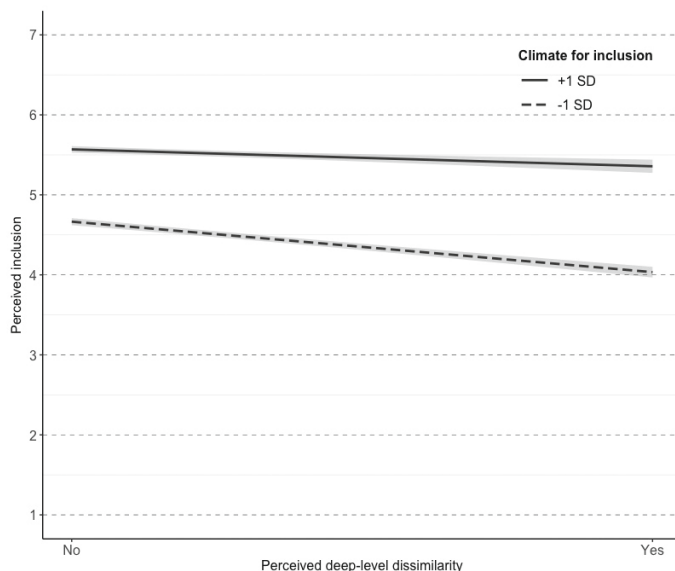
Figure 4 The Moderation Effect by Climate for Inclusion on the Relationship between Deep-level Dissimilarity and Perceived Inclusion.

Next, we tested whether the relationships between the specific dissimilarity dimensions and perceived inclusion were moderated by climate for inclusion by conducting a multiple regression analysis, predicting perceived inclusion from dissimilarity on personality (both surface-level and deep-level), education level, work experience (deep-level), age, ethnicity/culture, disability, and the two-way interactions between climate for inclusion and the specific dissimilarity dimensions. We obtained significant interaction effects between climate for inclusion and personality (deep-level), $b = 0.13$, $p = .012$, climate for inclusion and ethnicity, $b = 0.25$, $p < .001$, and climate for inclusion and disability, $b = 0.27$, $p < .001$. Simple slope analyses revealed that the negative relationships between these dimensions and inclusion became weaker as participants perceived the climate for inclusion as more positive; however, they did not always completely disappear when a positive climate for inclusion was perceived. The results of the simple slope analyses are presented in Table 7. These results are generally supportive of Hypothesis 3.

Table 7 Results of the Simple Slopes Analyses of the Interaction between Dissimilarity Dimensions and Climate for Inclusion on Perceived Inclusion. Coefficients are Reported for Perceived Negative (-1SD), Average, and Positive (+1SD) Climate for Inclusion

	Perceived Inclusion		
	b		
	-1SD (*p*)	**Average (*p*)**	**+1SD (*p*)**
Personality (Deep-level)	-0.52 (< .001***)	-0.41 (< .001***)	-0.28 (< .001**)
Ethnicity/Culture	-0.38 (< .001***)	-0.15 (.001**)	0.09 (.176)
Disability	-0.52 (< .001***)	-0.26 (<.001***)	-0.01 (.951)

* p < .05, ** p < .01, *** p < .001

DISCUSSION

Employees can perceive themselves to be dissimilar from coworkers across various dimensions, prompting our research to understand how these dimensions relate to perceptions of social inclusion and how to mitigate any negative associations. Our study contributes to existing knowledge in four key ways:

Firstly, we confirmed that both surface-level and deep-level dissimilarity are negatively related to social inclusion, aligning with earlier work on social integration (Guillaume et al., 2012). This study partially replicates the findings on dissimilarity and social inclusion in Chapter 4, with a notable difference being that surface-level dissimilarity, although weaker than deep-level dissimilarity, was also associated with inclusion in our study. This discrepancy may stem from the larger sample size in the current study, affording greater power to detect subtler effects. Indeed, effect sizes for both types of dissimilarity were smaller than observed for deep-level dissimilarity in the previous study.

Secondly, this study delves into the specific dissimilarity dimensions, revealing that personality (surface-level and deep-level), ethnicity/culture, age, work experience (deep-level), education level and disability are linked to lower social inclusion. Interestingly, not all dimensions are typically addressed in organizational diversity policies (see Chapter 2), underscoring the need to broaden perspectives on employee disadvantage for inclusive research. Our findings suggest the importance of considering a wider range of dissimilarity dimensions in fostering workplace inclusion, while ensuring that historically disadvantaged dimensions continue being acknowledged, as ample research shows that stereotypes about stigmatized groups are still prevalent at the workplace and society at large (Koch et al., 2016).

Thirdly, we demonstrated that perceiving dissimilarity across multiple dimensions was negatively related to perceived inclusion, supporting the multiple jeopardy hypothesis (King, 1988) and findings on multiple stigmatized identities (Berdahl & Moore, 2006; Lavaysse et al., 2018; Remedios & Snyder, 2018; Zurbrügg & Miner, 2016). This suggests an added burden for individuals perceiving dissimilarity on multiple dimensions, extending the literature on multidimensionality. Previous studies often coded stigmatized identities based on demographic information, but our approach, where participants indicated perceived dissimilarity themselves, underscores that the multiple jeopardy hypothesis extends beyond coded identities to perceived dissimilarity. Future research could investigate whether individuals consider dimensions on which they perceive dissimilarity as devalued parts of themselves.

Fourthly, consistent with findings in Chapter 4, we found that the relationship between both surface-level and deep-level dissimilarity and perceived inclusion was moderated by the climate for inclusion, indicating a buffering effect. Expanding on this, we revealed that this moderation extended to personality (deep-level), ethnicity/culture, and disability. While dissimilarity in personality still exhibited a negative (but weaker) relationship with inclusion, the perception of a positive climate completely mitigated the negative impact of dissimilarity in terms of ethnicity and disability. However, employees who perceived dissimilarity on personality (surface-level), age, work experience (deep-level), and education level did not benefit more from a positive climate than did employees who perceived similarity. It is possible that they did not perceive that their dimension of dissimilarity is specifically addressed by the climate, as these dimensions are not typically focused on in diversity interventions (Dobbin et al., 2011). This study extends prior findings (e.g. Jansen et al., 2017; Chapter 4) by elucidating that while a positive climate for inclusion benefits all employees, it may not always benefit those who perceive dissimilarity more than it benefits those who perceive similarity.

Descriptive Findings on Specific Dissimilarity Dimensions
Participants indicated the specific dimensions on which they perceived dissimilarity, shedding light on the prevalence of various dimensions in relation to social inclusion. Results indicated that dissimilarity was most frequently reported in terms of personality and ethnicity/culture, followed by age, work experience, religion, sexual orientation, disability, education level, political orientation, and gender. Interestingly, participants varied in their classification of dimensions as surface-level and/or deep-level. For example, when participants reported to be different on sexual orientation, this was in 20% of the cases reported as a surface-level dimension, while

sexual orientation is typically categorized as a deep-level dimension (Jackson & Joshi, 2011). Similarly, personality was reported with similar frequency as surface-level dissimilarity and deep-level dissimilarity, suggesting ambiguity in the taxonomy of dimensions used in research. This finding underscores the influence of individual expression and experience on the classification of dissimilarity dimensions. Consequently, dimensions that are typically seen as deep-level (e.g. sexual orientation or personality) may also be instigators of categorization processes, which are often attributed to typical surface-level dimensions such as gender or ethnicity.

Moreover, personality emerged as the most commonly reported dimension, often co-occurring with at least one other dimension. In about one-third of the cases in which participants perceived dissimilarity, personality was reported as well. This could indicate that people see personality as integral to their self-concept, linking it to other perceived dissimilarities. For instance, if employees perceive dissimilarity in terms of ethnicity/culture, political orientation, or gender, they might attribute some of the experienced differences (e.g. values, culture or perspectives) to personality. This highlights the complex interplay between dimensions of dissimilarity.

Practical Implications

This study illuminates the various dimensions of dissimilarity that are linked to perceptions of workplace inclusion. Beyond commonly acknowledged factors like ethnicity/culture, age, and disability, which are often the focus of diversity and inclusion initiatives, we found that dissimilarity in personality, work experience, and education level also negatively impacts perceived inclusion. Addressing these dimensions is crucial, yet it should be done alongside efforts to support marginalized social groups. For instance, organizations that include nondemographic dimensions (e.g., personality and work experience) in their diversity statements without equally focusing on demographic dimensions (e.g., ethnicity and sexual orientation) are perceived as less appealing by minoritized employees compared to those that address both types of dimensions (Kirby et al., 2023). Consequently, it is essential for organizations to foster an inclusive environment that affirms marginalized identities and appreciates and values the unique differences among all employees (Russell Pascual et al., 2024).

Crucially, our findings underscore the importance of workplaces considering multiple dimensions of perceived dissimilarity, going beyond those typically associated with historical disadvantage or stigma. Given the tendency to view majority group members as prototypical employees (Mummendey & Wenzel, 1999), organizations must foster a sense of representativeness in the 'prototypical employee' for all

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staff. Research by Alexandre et al. (2016) demonstrates that more complex and inclusive representations of superordinate categories can effectively promote equality in claiming prototypicality across both majority and minority groups. Practical approaches include openly recognizing the diversity of the organization's workforce and enhancing the perceived diversity within the organization.

Echoing these insights, previous research delineated three critical steps for effective diversity management in organizations (Linnehan & Konrad, 1999). Firstly, organizations should assess which existing structures create or perpetuate inequalities and work on initiatives to remove these structural barriers. Secondly, they should implement training programs aimed at enhancing awareness and understanding of interpersonal dynamics in diverse work settings, focusing particularly on issues related to diversity and individual dissimilarity such as prejudice and discrimination. Thirdly, support should be provided to communities facing systemic disadvantages, offering resources necessary for equitable opportunities. These steps highlight a comprehensive approach towards creating a workplace in which every employee, regardless of perceived dissimilarity, feels included and represented.

Strengths and Limitations
By conducting a survey study in a large organization, this study sheds light on real-life experiences of employees. By allowing employees to indicate the dimensions they perceive dissimilarity on, we focus on their experiences, instead of coding identities which might not be salient or important to them. Furthermore, thanks to the large number of participants in the study, we were able to test the relationships between many dissimilarity dimensions and inclusion, and the moderating role of climate for inclusion in these relationships with considerable power.

While the current study has several limitations that future studies could address, a key one is its correlational design. This approach enables us to examine relationships between variables but falls short in establishing causality. To empirically validate causal pathways, experimental or longitudinal studies would be more appropriate.

Building on this, one avenue for future research is the exploration of intersectionality, particularly through studying interactive and/or additive effects. However, a challenge in examining additive effects lies in the assumption that each dimension contributes equally to inclusion, an assumption that may not always hold true. This highlights the need for nuanced approaches in understanding the complex dynamics of intersectionality in relation to inclusion.

Additionally, our study does not specify the extent to which participants perceived dissimilarity. We have established that they perceived dissimilarity, but understanding the degree of this perception, and whether it varies based on the specific dimensions involved, would provide more insight. Future research could benefit from incorporating a continuous measure to assess the degree of perceived dissimilarity more precisely.

Moreover, the study's execution within a single organization limits the generalizability of some findings to broader contexts. The frequency with which employees perceive dissimilarity on certain dimensions may be influenced by the (demographic) makeup of the organization's workforce. Nonetheless, the link between dissimilarity and inclusion observed in this study aligns with findings from other research settings (as discussed in Chapters 3 and 4; Jansen et al., 2017), suggesting that this finding may apply to various organizational contexts.

CONCLUSION

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In summary, this research demonstrates that employees can perceive dissimilarity on multiple dimensions simultaneously. The dimensions that are related to social inclusion have a great variety, including both dimensions that are and are not typically seen as stigmatized and historically disadvantaged. Furthermore, our study shows that as the number of dimensions employees perceive dissimilarity on increases, their perception of inclusion decreases. More research is needed to understand whether the dimensions that employees can perceive dissimilarity on can reinforce and exacerbate their effects.

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APPENDIX A

Table A Frequency of Dyadic Combinations of Perceived Dissimilarity Dimensions Among Participants

First dimension (total frequency)	Second dimension	Frequency of combination
Personality (811)	Ethnicity	256
	Age	175
	Work experience	263
	Religion	136
	Sexual orientation	85
	Disability	84
	Education level	143
	Political orientation	124
	Gender	64
Ethnicity (741)	Age	132
	Work experience	142
	Religion	220
	Sexual orientation	38
	Disability	56
	Education level	99
	Political orientation	67
	Gender	68
Age (446)	Work experience	165
	Religion	75
	Sexual orientation	36
	Disability	41
	Education level	82
	Political orientation	48
	Gender	69
Work experience (424)	Religion	73
	Sexual orientation	42
	Disability	51
	Education level	112
	Political orientation	67
	Gender	59
Religion (408)	Sexual orientation	23
	Disability	29
	Education level	48

Table A Frequency of Dyadic Combinations of Perceived Dissimilarity Dimensions Among Participants **(continued)**

First dimension (total frequency)	Second dimension	Frequency of combination
	Political orientation	65
	Gender	33
Sexual orientation (278)	Disability	24
	Education level	22
	Political orientation	29
	Gender	30
Disability (272)	Education level	33
	Political orientation	23
	Gender	15
Education level (227)	Political orientation	48
Political orientation (216)	Gender	25
Gender (145)		

Note: Participants can perceive dissimilarity on more than two dimensions concurrently. Consequently, the sum of the frequency of one dimension co-occurring with other dimensions can exceed the total count of dissimilarity perceived on that dimension alone.

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CHAPTER 6

The Relationship between Dissimilarity and Perceived Inclusion Explained: Four Mechanisms at the Workplace

Author Contributions:

Onur Şahin: Writing – original draft preparation; formal analyses; conceptualization; methodology; investigation; data curation.
Wiebren S. Jansen: Writing – review and editing; supervision; conceptualization; methodology.
Jojanneke van der Toorn: Writing – review and editing; supervision; conceptualization; methodology.
Naomi Ellemers: Supervision; conceptualization.

ABSTRACT

We investigated how and when being different from colleagues (i.e., dissimilarity) negatively relates to employees' perceived social inclusion. First, we reviewed and synthesized the dissimilarity literature, which resulted in four main mechanisms that we theorized to explain effects of dissimilarity on inclusion, namely uncertainty, trust, disapproval, and initiated interaction among colleagues. Second, we empirically tested the explanatory roles of these mechanisms in the relationship between dissimilarity and perceived inclusion in a survey study (N = 2,409), which revealed that dissimilarity was negatively related to perceived inclusion and that all four mechanisms uniquely explained part of this relationship. Furthermore, we found that these negative relationships were mitigated by a perceived climate for inclusion. Together, this research advances existing dissimilarity research by offering a comprehensive overview and an empirical test of the psychological processes triggered by dissimilarity. Furthermore, our work further underlines the importance of establishing a positive climate for inclusion.

Keywords: dissimilarity, inclusion, climate for inclusion, workplace, mechanisms

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN DISSIMILARITY AND PERCEIVED INCLUSION EXPLAINED: FOUR MECHANISMS AT THE WORKPLACE

Being different from most other colleagues can negatively affect employees. For example, dissimilarity at the workplace (i.e., the degree to which a focal employee is different from most colleagues) has been found to be negatively related to work-related outcomes, such as job satisfaction and performance (for a meta-analysis, see Guillaume et al., 2012). A crucial factor explaining these relationships is employees' perceived inclusion in the group (Jansen et al., 2017; see also Chapter 4). Thus, it is imperative that we better understand why and under which conditions dissimilarity relates to perceived inclusion. To this end, the current research examines the underlying mechanisms of this relationship and the role of the organizational context in which this relationship exists.

To advance our understanding of why and under which conditions dissimilarity is related to perceived inclusion, three gaps in the literature need to be addressed. Firstly, while numerous studies discuss various psychological and behavioral mechanisms that are assumed to explain the relationship between dissimilarity and work-related outcomes (e.g., Guillaume et al., 2012; Riordan, 2000), a comprehensive overview of these mechanisms does not yet exist. Secondly, the explanatory roles of these mechanisms are rarely empirically tested, and never tested in conjunction. Thirdly, although Chapters 4 and 5 have demonstrated that a positive climate for inclusion mitigates the negative relationship between dissimilarity and perceived inclusion, it remains unclear whether this positive climate similarly dampens the relationships between dissimilarity and the underlying mechanisms. Addressing these gaps will provide valuable insights into the processes through which dissimilarity influences perceived inclusion and the conditions under which these processes operate. This, in turn, can inform the development of more effective strategies and interventions aimed at fostering inclusion in diverse workplace settings.

We set out to address these three gaps with a literature review and an empirical study. Firstly, the literature review aims to identify the mechanisms thought to underpin the relationship between dissimilarity and inclusion. Second, our empirical investigation examines the unique and joint explanatory roles of the mechanisms identified in the literature review. Thirdly, within the empirical study, we examine whether the relationships between dissimilarity and the identified mechanisms are attenuated in a positive climate for inclusion.

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How Dissimilarity Relates to Inclusion

Perceived inclusion, comprising a sense of belonging and authenticity, is pivotal for individuals' workplace experiences (Jansen et al., 2014). This perception is thought to be established by social categorization processes, where individuals categorize others as ingroup members if they perceive similarity and as outgroup members if they perceive dissimilarity (Turner et al., 1987). Cognitive and behavioral intergroup biases favor ingroup members, elucidating why individuals perceiving dissimilarity often feel less included (e.g., Jansen et al., 2017; Chapter 4).

Moreover, inclusion perceptions emerge from dynamic interactions between individuals and their colleagues (Ellemers & Jetten, 2013; Jansen et al., 2019). On the one hand, colleagues may be reluctant to include a dissimilar colleague, influencing the latter's motivation for inclusion. Conversely, dissimilar individuals can also shape group dynamics by their own behavior, affecting colleagues' inclinations to include them.

While the individual and the group mutually influence each other in establishing inclusion perceptions, the specific mechanisms governing inclusion perceptions remain elusive. Various mechanisms have been theorized to be triggered by dissimilarity and to explain the relationship between dissimilarity and perceived inclusion (Jansen et al., 2017; see also Chapters 4 and 5). To unravel these mechanisms, we adopted a two-step approach. Firstly, we conducted a literature review to delineate the mechanisms hypothesized to underpin the relationship between dissimilarity and perceived inclusion. Secondly, we empirically examined the explanatory roles of these identified mechanisms in the relationship between dissimilarity and perceived inclusion.

Literature Review

We established two inclusion criteria for our literature review. First, we exclusively considered studies employing the relational demography approach, ensuring that dissimilarity was measured in terms of an individual's variance from the group. We conducted searches for relational demography articles using academic databases, followed by a thorough examination of the references within identified articles to locate additional relevant papers. This process yielded the inclusion of 59 empirical papers on relational demography. A comprehensive summary of the review outcomes is provided in Tables 1 and 2 (see Supplementary Materials for a detailed account of the literature review process).

Table 1 delineates the psychological processes inferred from the included papers, which are believed to be triggered by dissimilarity. We categorized these processes, or mechanisms, into four overarching categories, namely: 1) uncertainty among colleagues, 2) trust among colleagues, 3) disapproval among colleagues and 4) initiated interaction among colleagues.

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Table 1 Review of the Literature: Uncertainty, Trust, Disapproval and Initiated Interaction as Mechanisms Explaining the Relationship between Dissimilarity and Outcomes at Work

Authors	Mechanisms as identified by the authors and grouped by overarching category				Mechanisms empirically tested by the authors
	Uncertainty	Trust	Disapproval	Initiated interaction	
Adamovic, 2020	Uncertainty.	Trust; Perceived unfairness.	Conflict.	Information-elaboration; Interaction.	*Direct relationships between dissimilarity and:* Trust; Information-elaboration; Perceived unfairness
Adamovic, 2022	Confirmation of beliefs and assumptions about work and life.		Conflict.	Interaction.	No.
Avery et al., 2008		Perceptions of support and fairness; Trust.			No.
Bacharach & Bamberger, 2004	Fear that out-group members will take advantage of, exploit, dominate, or negatively evaluate them.			Interpersonal interaction & communication.	No.
Bae et al., 2017	Anxiety concerning interaction.			Communication.	No.
Chatman & Flynn, 2001			Conflict.	Cooperation; Frequency of contact.	*Relationship between dissimilarity and work outcomes explained by:* Frequency of contact; Cooperation
Chatman et al., 1998		Trust.	Conflict.	Cooperation; Reluctance to interact; Communication problems.	*Direct relationships between dissimilarity and:* Conflict; Interaction with co-workers.

Table 1 Review of the Literature: Uncertainty, Trust, Disapproval and Initiated Interaction as Mechanisms Explaining the Relationship between Dissimilarity and Outcomes at Work **(continued)**

Authors	Mechanisms as identified by the authors and grouped by overarching category				Mechanisms empirically tested by the authors
	Uncertainty	Trust	Disapproval	Initiated interaction	
Chatman & Spataro, 2005				Cooperation; Frequency of communication.	*Direct relationship between dissimilarity and:* Cooperative behavior.
Chattopadhyay, 1999	Organization-based self-esteem.	Trust.		Interaction.	*Relationship between dissimilarity and work outcomes explained by:* Organization-based self-esteem; Trust.
Chattopadhyay et al., 2004	Uncertainty reduction.		Conflict.		No.
Chattopadhyay et al., 2020		Trust.	Negative perception of the differences between colleagues.	Communication; Engagement with more dissimilar colleagues.	No.
Choi, 2007		Trust.	Conflict.	Interaction.	No.
Chou, 2011		Perceived untrustworthiness, dishonesty, unattractiveness and uncooperativeness.	Conflict.	Contribution and participation in decision-making.	No.
Cunningham, 2007				Positive interactions.	No.

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Table 1 Review of the Literature: Uncertainty, Trust, Disapproval and Initiated Interaction as Mechanisms Explaining the Relationship between Dissimilarity and Outcomes at Work **(continued)**

Authors	Mechanisms as identified by the authors and grouped by overarching category				Mechanisms empirically tested by the authors
	Uncertainty	Trust	Disapproval	Initiated interaction	
David et al., 2019	Preemptively worrying about upcoming interactions with dissimilar others; Strain and emotional discomfort about interaction; Verification of people's own attitudes, beliefs and personality.	Social support.	Conflict.	Interaction.	No.
Elfenbein & O'Reilly, 2007			Conflict.		No.
Flynn et al., 2001		Perceived trustworthiness, honesty, and cooperativeness of others.			No.
Gellatly & Allen, 2012	Uncertainty about their place in the group.				No.
Goldberg et al., 2010	Uncertainty.				No.
Graves & Elsass, 2005		Trust.		Communication.	No.
Guillaume et al., 2012	Verification of values.	Perceived trustworthiness, honesty & cooperativeness of others.		Communication; Interaction.	No.

Table 1 Review of the Literature: Uncertainty, Trust, Disapproval and Initiated Interaction as Mechanisms Explaining the Relationship between Dissimilarity and Outcomes at Work **(continued)**

Authors	Mechanisms as identified by the authors and grouped by overarching category				Mechanisms empirically tested by the authors
	Uncertainty	Trust	Disapproval	Initiated interaction	
Harvey, 2015		Trust.		Communication; Information elaboration; Motivation to engage with and integrate other members' information and ideas.	*Direct relationship between dissimilarity and:* Information elaboration.
He et al., 2019			Incivility.		*Relationship between dissimilarity and work outcomes explained by:* Perceived incivility.
Henderson & Jeong, 2022	Validation of self.		Conflict; Incivility.	Communication problems.	*Direct relationship between dissimilarity and:* Perceived incivility.
Hobman & Bordia, 2006	Anxiety and discomfort; Uncertainty in predicting behavior of others.	Perceived trustworthiness, honesty, attractiveness and cooperativeness of others.	Task and relationship conflict.	Miscommunication; Social interaction.	*Direct relationship between dissimilarity and:* Conflict.
Hobman et al., 2003		Perceived trustworthiness, honesty, attractiveness and cooperativeness of others.	Conflict.	Frequency of communication; Information exchange.	*Direct relationship between dissimilarity and:* Conflict.
Hobman et al., 2004		Trust	Relationship conflict.	Communication; Exclusion of networks of information and opportunity.	No.
Jackson et al., 1991	Predictability; Uncomfortable.	Perceived trustworthiness.	Conflict.	Communication.	No.

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Table 1 Review of the Literature: Uncertainty, Trust, Disapproval and Initiated Interaction as Mechanisms Explaining the Relationship between Dissimilarity and Outcomes at Work **(continued)**

Authors	Mechanisms as identified by the authors and grouped by overarching category				Mechanisms empirically tested by the authors
	Uncertainty	Trust	Disapproval	Initiated interaction	
Jansen et al., 2017	Confirmation seeking; Uncertainty	Trust.			No.
Kammeyer-Mueller et al., 2021				Proactive behavior.	*Relationship between dissimilarity and work outcomes explained by: Proactive behavior.*
Kim et al., 2019	Uncertainty.				No.
King et al., 2017			Conflict.	Communication.	No.
Kirchmeyer, 1995		Supervisor support.		Communication.	*Direct relationship between dissimilarity and: Supervisor support.*
Krebs et al., 2006		Trust.	Conflict.	Communication.	*Direct relationship between dissimilarity and: Trust.*
Lee, 2021	Self-esteem.	Fair treatment.	Conflict.		No.
Liao et al., 2004		Cooperative relationships; Perceived coworker support; Perceived organizational support; Trust.		Effective communication.	*Relationship between dissimilarity and work outcomes explained by: Perceived organizational & coworker support.*
O'Reilly III et al., 1989				Communication.	No.
Pelled, 1996	Anxiety; Discomfort.		Conflict.	Communication.	*Direct relationship between dissimilarity and: Intragroup conflict.*
Pelled et al., 1999	Anxiety; Discomfort	Trust.		Communication.	No.
Pelled et al., 2001			Conflict.		No.

Table 1 Review of the Literature: Uncertainty, Trust, Disapproval and Initiated Interaction as Mechanisms Explaining the Relationship between Dissimilarity and Outcomes at Work **(continued)**

Authors	Mechanisms as identified by the authors and grouped by overarching category				Mechanisms empirically tested by the authors
	Uncertainty	Trust	Disapproval	Initiated interaction	
Randel & Jaussi, 2003				Communication; Reluctance to interact.	No.
Randel & Jaussi, 2008			Interpersonal tension and annoyance; Relationship conflict.		*Direct relationship between dissimilarity and:* Relationship conflict.
Reinwald & Kunze, 2020		Trust; Unfair treatment.	Conflict.	Cooperation.	No.
Riordan & Shore, 1997	Uncomfortableness.			Cooperation; Frequency of communication.	No.
Sacco & Schmitt, 2005	Maintaining high self-esteem.		Conflict.	Communication.	No.
Şahin et al., 2019	Monitoring of environment for cues of belonging.		Mistreatment.		No.
Sammara et al., 2021	Identity threat; Self-esteem.				No.
South et al., 1982		Social support.		Frequency of contact.	*Direct relationship between dissimilarity and:* Frequency of contact.
Stewart & Garcia-Prieto, 2008				Cooperation; Frequency of communication.	*Relationship between dissimilarity and work outcomes explained by:* Frequency of communication.

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Table 1 Review of the Literature: Uncertainty, Trust, Disapproval and Initiated Interaction as Mechanisms Explaining the Relationship between Dissimilarity and Outcomes at Work **(continued)**

Authors	Mechanisms as identified by the authors and grouped by overarching category				Mechanisms empirically tested by the authors
	Uncertainty	Trust	Disapproval	Initiated interaction	
Tröster & Van Knippenberg, 2012	Validation of views.	Psychological safety.	Conflict.		*Relationship between dissimilarity and work outcomes explained by:* Psychological safety.
Tsui et al., 1992				Communication.	No.
Van der Vegt & Van de Vliert, 2005	Predictability of dissimilar others; Threat.		Conflict.	Cooperation; Helping behavior; Interaction.	*Direct relationship between dissimilarity and:* Helping behavior.
Van der Vegt et al., 2003	Uncertainty; Validation of self-concepts.	Distrust.	Conflict.	Helping behavior.	*Direct relationship between dissimilarity and:* Helping behavior.
Wagner et al., 1984			Conflict.	Communication.	No.
Wiersema & Bird, 2017	Discomfort; Validation of one's perceptions, values and beliefs.		Conflict.	Quality and frequency of communication.	No.
Williams et al., 2007	Validation of one's perceptions, values, and beliefs.	Perception of other as trustworthy, honest and cooperative.	Conflict.		No.
Zenger & Lawrence, 1989				Technical communication.	*Direct relationship between dissimilarity and:* Technical communication.

Table 2 Number of Times Mechanisms Were Discussed and Tested in the 57 Reviewed Papers.

	Uncertainty	**Trust**	**Disapproval**	**Initiated interaction**
Number of papers discussing mechanism	27	27	31	42
Number of papers testing mechanism	1 explanatory test.	6, of which 3 explanatory tests.	7, of which 1 explanatory test.	11, of which 3 explanatory tests.

In the subsequent sections, we elucidate how dissimilarity relates to inclusion through each of these four mechanisms. While the literature summarized in Table 1 explains how being different from colleagues changes the focal employees' cognitions, emotions, and behaviors, we also explain how the focal employee's colleagues respond to having a dissimilar peer. This approach aligns with the recursive nature of inclusion dynamics, as detailed earlier.

Uncertainty among Colleagues
The first mechanism we identified from the literature linking dissimilarity to inclusion is the level of uncertainty among colleagues (see Table 1). This includes concepts such as 'worries about upcoming interactions with others' (e.g., Bae et al., 2017; David et al., 2018) and 'feelings of discomfort around others' (e.g., Riordan & Shore, 1997) encapsulated within the broader mechanism of uncertainty. This mechanism encompasses both norm uncertainty (e.g., regarding appropriate behavior or attire) and instrumental uncertainty (e.g., pertaining to workflow procedures).

Dissimilar employees may grapple with uncertainty regarding how to behave and dress among their colleagues, particularly if they belong to different social groups with distinct social norms. In such scenarios, dissimilar employees might struggle to anticipate the behaviors of their colleagues, triggering uncertainty (Hobman & Bordia, 2006). To cope with this uncertainty, they may heighten their vigilance for cues of belonging. However, this increased scrutiny could inadvertently lead to perceptions of favoritism toward ingroup members among colleagues, thereby diminishing their sense of inclusion (Jansen et al., 2017). Furthermore, uncertainty has been linked to outcomes such as work group identification and perceived cohesion (Goldberg et al., 2010), suggesting its potential explanatory power in elucidating the relationship between dissimilarity and perceived inclusion.

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Similarly, the presence of a dissimilar colleague may induce uncertainty among the majority of colleagues, dampening their inclination to include the dissimilar employee due to the discomfort they experience in their presence.

Taken together, our first hypothesis is:

H1: Perceived dissimilarity indirectly negatively relates to perceived inclusion, via both employees' own uncertainty and their perceptions of colleagues' uncertainty.

Trust among Colleagues

The second mechanism identified from the literature is the level of trust among colleagues (see Table 1). This includes concepts such as 'perceived support' (Liao et al., 2004) and 'perceived cooperativeness' (Guillaume et al., 2012), all of which denote certain expectations or reliance on colleagues, within the broader construct of trust (for synonyms of trust, see also Mayer et al., 1995).

Dissimilarity is thought to diminish trust between colleagues (e.g., Chattopadhyay et al., 2020, 2007; Krebs et al., 2006). One reason for this decline in trust is the prevalence of (negative) assumptions regarding the intentions of outgroup members. Additionally, dissimilar employees are more likely to experience workplace unfairness, such as inequitable treatment and misinformation (Adamovic, 2020), further eroding their trust in colleagues. As trust is instrumental in fostering positive interpersonal relationships among colleagues (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005), its reduction is anticipated to diminish perceived inclusion. Other theoretical frameworks also suggest that trust serves as a mechanism underpinning the relationship between dissimilarity and workplace outcomes (Van der Zee et al., 2009).

Similarly, colleagues of dissimilar employees may experience reduced trust. Dissimilar employees are often perceived as outgroup members, whose intentions are doubted. If colleagues harbor suspicions about whether dissimilar employees act in the team's best interest, they may be less inclined to include them.

Taken together, our second hypothesis is:

H2: Perceived dissimilarity negatively relates to perceived inclusion, via both employees' own trust and their perceptions of colleagues' trust towards them.

Disapproval among Colleagues

The third mechanism identified from the literature linking dissimilarity to inclusion is the extent of disapproval between colleagues (see Table 1). This encompasses concepts such as 'interpersonal tension and annoyance' (Randel & Jaussi, 2008) and 'conflict' (Chatman et al., 1998), within the broader construct of disapproval[24]. This mechanism captures employees' emotional and moral evaluations of the differences, whether relationship- or task-related, between themselves and their colleagues.

Dissimilar employees may disapprove of their colleagues to maintain a positive (ingroup) identity. Differences between the self (or ingroup) and the outgroup can be evaluated in a way that disadvantages the outgroup (Tajfel & Turner, 1986). Specifically, this implies that more dissimilar employees may disapprove of their colleagues' norms or workstyles. Individuals typically do not want to be associated with others they disapprove of, thereby diminishing their motivation to cultivate relationships with them.

The need to maintain a positive ingroup identity and the ensuing evaluation of differences are expected to operate similarly for the colleagues of dissimilar employees. Consequently, colleagues are likely to harbor disapproval towards the dissimilar employees as well.

Taken together, our third hypothesis is:

H3: Perceived dissimilarity indirectly negatively relates to perceived inclusion, via both employees' own disapproval and their perceptions of their disapproval.

Initiated Interaction among Colleagues

The fourth and final mechanism identified from the literature linking dissimilarity to inclusion is the degree to which colleagues initiate interaction with each other (see Table 1). This includes concepts such as 'information exchange (Hobman et al.,

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24 Even though *conflict* was the mechanism that was often discussed in the reviewed papers, we chose to focus on *disapproval* as the mechanism. One reason for this approach is that conflict is often mutual and reciprocal, which would make it difficult to distinguish between actors. Furthermore, we are interested in immediate mechanisms, while conflict can be seen as an outcome of mechanisms such as disapproval. Finally, disapproval does not necessarily result in conflict, but still might affect the relationship between employees. As such, we focused on disapproval between colleagues.

2003) and 'interpersonal interaction' (Bacharach & Bamberger, 2004), within the broader construct of initiated interaction. This includes interactions about both private and work-related matters.

Dissimilar employees are anticipated to initiate fewer interactions with their colleagues, aligning with the similarity-attraction principle (Byrne, 1971). This anticipation stems from the expectation that interacting with someone dissimilar will be more challenging compared to interacting with a more similar individual. Workplace interactions play a pivotal role in both the performance and social integration of employees (e.g., David et al., 2018; Guillaume et al., 2012; Kammeyer-Mueller et al., 2011; Zenger & Lawrence, 1989). Having accessible colleagues for both work-related and personal issues can be helpful in solving problems as well as fulfill a sense of belonging.

Similarly, colleagues of dissimilar employees are also likely to initiate fewer interactions with them. Moreover, these colleagues may anticipate that dissimilar employees may not be as adept at providing assistance if sought (Ridgeway & Correll, 2006). As a result, they may prefer reaching out to individuals perceived as more capable, thereby diminishing the likelihood of initiating interaction with dissimilar colleagues. This dynamic can significantly impact the perceived inclusion of dissimilar employees.

Taken together, our fourth hypothesis is:

H4: Perceived dissimilarity indirectly negatively relates to perceived inclusion, via both employees' and their perceptions of colleagues' initiated interaction.

The Moderating Effect of Perceived Climate for Inclusion
The extent to which dissimilarity triggers these four mechanisms appears to be contingent on the context. Previous research indicates that in work environments where employees perceive a positive climate for inclusion, dissimilarity is not associated with lower perceived inclusion (Jansen et al., 2017; Chapters 4 and 5). It is plausible that a climate for inclusion similarly influences the relationships between dissimilarity and the four mechanisms, as these mechanisms correspond to the dimensions of a climate for inclusion.

A positive climate for inclusion comprises three primary dimensions (Nishii, 2013). Firstly, it encompasses fairly implemented employment practices and measures aimed at eliminating bias. In the presence of dissimilarity, this dimension can miti-

gate uncertainty between employees, as they may perceive that their work will be evaluated impartially. Additionally, it can foster trust, as employees may believe that others will treat them equitably in such an environment. Moreover, this dimension can promote initiated interaction, as employees may perceive a reduced likelihood of biases influencing interactions.

The second dimension pertains to the integration of differences within the organization. By valuing and encouraging the expression of differences between employees, this dimension mitigates uncertainty and disapproval associated with dissimilarity. Employees feel empowered to express their differences (e.g., in their attire, behavior, and work style) without fear of judgment. Furthermore, it fosters increased initiated interaction as differences are viewed as assets rather than barriers. Additionally, employees can anticipate that expressing differences will not lead to adverse outcomes, thereby bolstering their trust that their (deviant) perspectives and interests will be considered within the workplace.

Finally, the third dimension revolves around inclusion in decision-making processes, where diverse perspectives are actively sought. In the presence of dissimilarity, this dimension increases trust among employees as it ensures that everyone's interests are considered. Moreover, it facilitates interactions among employees by encouraging the solicitation of perspectives from dissimilar colleagues.

Consequently, we anticipate that a in a positive climate for inclusion, dissimilarity will not relate to perceived inclusion. Likewise, we expect that in such a climate, dissimilarity will not relate to the four mechanisms outlined earlier.

Taken together, our fifth and sixth hypotheses are:

H5: Perceived climate for inclusion moderates the relationship between perceived dissimilarity and perceived inclusion.
H6a: Perceived climate for inclusion moderates the relationship between perceived dissimilarity and uncertainty.
H6b: Perceived climate for inclusion moderates the relationship between perceived dissimilarity and trust.
H6c: Perceived climate for inclusion moderates the relationship between perceived dissimilarity and disapproval.
H6d: Perceived climate for inclusion moderates the relationship between perceived dissimilarity and initiated interaction.

Synopsis

In summary, our literature review identifies four distinct mechanisms through which dissimilarity diminishes employees' perceived inclusion. Furthermore, drawing from prior research, we anticipate that the extent to which these mechanisms operate in response to dissimilarity hinges on employees' perceptions of inclusivity of their work environment. Notably, the empirical evidence supporting these relationships is limited, with only three studies in our review testing the assumed relations individually (Table 1). Hence, in this chapter, we aim to bridge this gap by empirically examining whether these mechanisms effectively account for the dissimilarity-inclusion relationship, both individually and collectively within a comprehensive model.

METHOD

Open Science

We pre-registered our study design, power analysis, exclusion criteria, sequential analysis, hypotheses, and analysis plan on the Open Science Framework. The pre-registration, materials, analysis code, output and supplementary materials are available at https://osf.io/xps2h/. We report all but one pre-registered analysis in this manuscript and supplementary files. This omitted analysis did confirm our pre-registered hypothesis, however, after careful consideration, we determined that its inclusion would be more appropriate for another manuscript. Additionally, we clearly marked one deviation from our analysis plan regarding an analysis reported in the supplementary materials.

Power Analysis

To determine the sample size, we used the effect sizes obtained in Chapter 5, where the relationship between dissimilarity on specific dimensions and perceived inclusion was investigated. Across our analyses, effect sizes ranged from $d = 0.14$ to $d = .48$. In order to save resources, we opted for the first effect size larger than $d = 0.20$ as our Smallest Effect Size of Interest (SESOI; Lakens, 2014). In this case, the SESOI was the effect size of dissimilarity in terms of education level on perceived inclusion, which was $d = 0.29$. As this predictor was part of a multiple regression analysis, we conducted an a-priori power analysis for linear multiple regression using Gpower: Fixed model, R^2 increase. With an f^2 of 0.002[25] (converted from the R^2 increase obtained for dissimilarity in terms of education level in the previous study), a power of .80 and an alpha of .05, the analysis indicated a required sample size of 3,240 participants.

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25 The exact effect size was $f^2 = 0.0024241$

Sequential Analysis

As attaining a sample size of 3,240 participants proved to be sizable and costly, we opted for sequential analysis (Lakens, 2014) to optimize resource allocation. Sequential analysis involves conducting an interim analysis to determine whether to halt data collection or continue based on pre-specified conditions. To accommodate sequential testing, the alpha level for interim analyses is adjusted downward. Our plan was to test hypotheses after reaching 65% of the total sample size. Hence, employing a linear spending function, we set the interim alpha to .0325 (Lakens, 2014).

However, sequential analysis necessitates a reduced alpha for the analyses, resulting in lower power for final analyses compared to the original design. To compensate for this power loss, we revised our total sample size requirement to 3,706 participants. Thus, after collecting data from 2,409 participants, we conducted the interim analysis.[26]

Participants

We recruited a total of 2,521 participants through Prolific. Utilizing the platform's prescreening tools, we ensured that all participants were residents of the United Kingdom, aged 18 years or older, and working at least 20 hours a week. Despite these prescreening measures, 37 participants were excluded due to reporting working fewer than 20 hours a week, a predetermined criterion. Additionally, 36 participants were excluded for not meeting the requirement of interacting with at least three colleagues weekly, while 31 participants were removed for failing the two attention checks. Lastly, 8 participants who did not complete the survey, including failing to indicate perceived dissimilarity, were also excluded. Our final study sample consisted of the 2,409 participants who met the inclusion criteria (65.30% women, 33.91% men, 0.37% different gender identity, 0.42% missing/rather not say), M_{age} = 35.66, SD_{age} = 10.23. Notably, 39.60% of participants held a formal supervisory role).

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26 We opted to conduct an interim analysis focused on replicating the findings underpinning our power analysis. Specifically, we aimed to replicate a multiple regression analysis wherein dissimilarity on the specific dimensions predicts perceived inclusion. If dissimilarity on at least three specific dimensions significantly predicted perceived inclusion, we would halt data collection. Conversely, if fewer than three predictors significantly predicted perceived inclusion, data collection would continue until reaching 3,706 participants. This choice was informed by our intention to leverage the collected data for a similar analysis in another research project.

Procedure and Measures

Participants first provided informed consent, after which they completed questions regarding their employment status, the number of colleagues they interact with, and whether they held a formal supervisory role. Subsequently, participants completed the following measures in the order presented[27]:

Climate for Inclusion

We operationalized the perceived climate for inclusion as employees' perceptions of how individuals who are dissimilar from the majority are generally perceived and treated within the organization (Boezeman et al., 2024). To assess this construct, we employed six items measuring participants' perceptions of the attitudes and behaviors exhibited towards "individuals who are visibly or invisibly dissimilar from most others" (Boezeman et al., 2024). For each item, which utilized a bipolar scale, participants indicated the extent to which they agreed more with the statement on the left side or with the statement on the right side. The scores ranged from 1 (agreeing most with the left statement) to 7 (agreeing most with the right statement) with a higher score indicating a more positive climate for inclusion. Examples of items are: "People who are visibly or invisibly dissimilar from most others are *….being disadvantaged at work when making decisions about tasks, salary, etc. – … being taken into account when making decisions about tasks, salary, etc.,"* and "*They are being seen as an inconvenience – They are being seen as an asset*" (α = 0.90).

Perceived Inclusion

The extent to which participants perceived social inclusion at work was measured with an eight-item version of the Perceived Group Inclusion Scale (PGIS; Jansen et al., 2014). This scale consists of two subscales (belonging and authenticity), each comprising two components (group membership and group affection; room for authenticity and value in authenticity). Each component consisted of two items with response options ranging from 1 (*completely disagree*) to 7 (*completely agree*). Example items are: "*[The people at my work] give me the feeling that I belong"* and "*... encourages me to be who I am*" (α = 0.95).

Scale Development for the Mechanism Measures

We developed scales to measure the four hypothesized mechanisms using a deductive approach (Morgado et al., 2017), drawing from the literature review and existing scales. This approach served two purposes. Firstly, we aimed to capture the

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27 See supplementary materials for all measures that were part of the same survey, but were collected for the purpose of another project.

dynamics between the individual employee and their colleagues, requiring items that specifically addressed both parties. Secondly, we anticipated that these mechanisms operate reciprocally, meaning that individual employees and their colleagues mutually influence each other. As a result, we designed scales comprising items that addressed the individual employee as well as their colleagues, acknowledging both as active participants in workplace dynamics.

To construct these scales, we adapted items from existing measures that assess the four mechanisms of interest (Bodla et al., 2018; Hobman et al., 2003; Jarvenpaa et al., 1998; Jehn, 1995; Rafferty & Griffin, 2006; Zenger & Lawrence, 1989) and modified them to incorporate both the actor and colleagues' perspectives. We ensured consistency in phrasing across the four measures and included items covering both personal and task-related topics, recognizing the significance of both aspects in relationships among colleagues.

Uncertainty among Colleagues. We operationalized the degree of uncertainty among colleagues using an eight-item scale, drawing from the uncertainty scale developed by Rafferty and Griffin (2006) and theoretical insights from Chattopadhyay et al. (2011). This scale encompassed statements addressing both task-related (instrumental) and relationship-related (norm) uncertainty. Participants rated their own and their colleagues' uncertainty on a scale from 1 (*completely disagree*) to 7 (*completely agree*). A higher score corresponded to more uncertainty. Example items are: "*I am uncertain about how to socialize with my colleagues*" and "*My colleagues are uncertain about how to collaborate with me*" (α = 0.93).

Trust among Colleagues. We measured the degree of trust among colleagues using an eight-item scale, adapted from the trust scale developed by Jarvenpaa et al. (1998) and the model proposed by Mayer et al. (1995). This scale included statements addressing both task-related and relationship-related trust. Participants rated their own and their colleagues' trust on a scale from 1 (*completely disagree*) to 7 (*completely agree*). A higher score corresponds to more trust. Example items are: "*I trust that my colleagues will help me if I encounter difficulties in my work*" and "*My colleagues trust that I will respond constructively to their personal problems*" (α = 0.89).

Disapproval among Colleagues. We measured the degree of disapproval among colleagues using an eight-item scale, adapted from the task-related and relationship-related conflict scales of Hobman et al. (2003) and Jehn (1995). Participants rated their own and their colleagues' disapproval on a scale from 1 (*completely disagree*) to 7 (*completely agree*). A higher score corresponds to more disapproval.

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Example items are: "*I disapprove of the work-related decisions of my colleagues*" and "*My colleagues disapprove of my norms and values*" (α = 0.91).

Initiated Interaction among Colleagues. We measured the degree of initiated interaction among colleagues using a 12-item scale, drawing from the knowledge sharing scale in Bodla et al. (2018) and the technical communication scale of Zenger and Lawrence (1989). This scale included items addressing both task-related and relationship-related disclosure, help-seeking behavior and interaction-seeking behavior. Participants rated their own and their colleagues' initiated interaction on a scale from 1 (*completely disagree*) to 7 (*completely agree*). A higher score corresponds to more initiated interaction. Example items are: "*I initiate social interaction with my colleagues*" and "M*y colleagues share work-related information with me*" (α = 0.89).

Perceived Dissimilarity
We assessed perceived dissimilarity using two items, similar to the approach used by Hobman et al. (2003). First, participants indicated whether they perceived themselves as dissimilar to most colleagues at work with a "yes" or "no" response to the statement: "*I think I am different from most colleagues at work*". Those who responded "yes" proceeded to rate the extent of their perceived dissimilarity on a seven-point bipolar scale ranging from 1 (*not different at all*) to 7 (*very different*). For participants who indicated "no" to the first statement, the survey concluded at this point. Participants who acknowledged their perceived dissimilarity were asked to specify the dimensions on which they perceived themselves as dissimilar. They could select one or more of the following 13 options: Age, disability, education level, ethnicity/cultural background, gender identity, parents' social background, personality, political orientation, religion, sex, sexual orientation, work experience, and an "other" category with a text field for additional specification. These 13 dimensions were considered in the interim analysis.

RESULTS

Analysis Plan
Analyses were conducted using R software 4.2.0 (R Core Team, 2022), using the *lavaan* (v0.6-11; Rosseel, 2012) and *semTools* (v0.5-6; Jorgensen et al., 2022) packages.

Plan for Interim Analysis
Consistent with our pre-registered sequential analysis approach, we conducted an interim analysis to determine whether to terminate data collection or proceed to reach our designated sample size. This analysis involved a multiple regression

analysis, where dissimilarity across the 12 specific dimensions served as predictors of perceived inclusion.

Plan for Preliminary Analyses

The interim analysis was followed up by preliminary analyses, in which we tested for multivariate normality using Mardia's test, tested whether our measures could be statistically distinguished using Exploratory Factor Analyses (EFA), and assessed the validity of our measurement model using Confirmatory Factor Analyses (CFA). In these CFAs, we specifically tested whether we could statistically distinguish between the employee and their colleagues as actors of the mechanisms.

We measured dissimilarity with two items, namely presence of dissimilarity and degree of dissimilarity. To determine the measure we would use in our following analyses, we first conducted linear regression analyses.

Plan for Hypothesis Testing

To test the hypotheses, we constructed a Structural Equation Model (SEM). Hypotheses 1 through 4 stated that perceived dissimilarity negatively relates to perceived inclusion, via employees' and colleagues' (as perceived by the employee) (H1) uncertainty, (H2) trust, (H3) disapproval and (H4) initiated interaction between colleagues. Hypothesis 5 stated that climate for inclusion moderates the relationship between dissimilarity and perceived inclusion. Hypothesis 6 stated that climate for inclusion moderates the relationships between dissimilarity and (H6a) uncertainty, (H6b) trust, (H6c) disapproval and (H6d) initiated interaction.

Plan for Explorative Analysis

We conducted Wald tests to exploratively assess the relative importance of 1) uncertainty, 2) trust, 3) disapproval and 4) initiated interaction between colleagues for perceived inclusion.

Interim Analysis

For our interim analysis, we conducted a multiple regression analysis with dissimilarity across specific dimensions as predictors and perceived inclusion as the dependent variable. We adhered to the adjusted alpha of .0325 as determined in our power analysis. Results revealed a significant relationship between dissimilarity on the specific dimensions and perceived inclusion, $F(12, 2396) = 23.65$, $R^2 = .10$, $p < .001$. Closer inspection of the individual predictors, using the Holm-Bonferroni adjusted p-values to control for multiple testing, indicated that dissimilarity related to 1) disability, 2) personality, and 3) political orientation were negatively associated

with perceived inclusion (See Table 3 for the coefficients). Thus, meeting our criteria for terminating data collection, we proceeded with our analyses.

Table 3 Regression Coefficients of the Interim Analysis

	Inclusion		
Dissimilarity on:	*B*	*SE*	*p*
Intercept	5.58	0.03	
Age	0.02	0.07	.923
Disability	-0.42	0.10	< .001
Education level	0.03	0.07	.876
Ethnicity / cultural background	-0.13	0.08	.193
Gender identity	-0.26	0.19	.263
Parents' social background	-0.19	0.08	.046
Personality	-0.54	0.06	< .001
Political orientation	-0.40	0.09	< .001
Religion	0.01	0.11	.961
Sex	-0.18	0.11	.156
Sexual orientation	0.17	0.09	.120
Work experience	0.01	0.07	.947

Preliminary Analyses

The zero-order correlations of all variables are displayed in Table 4. A total of 1,094 participants perceived themselves as dissimilar to most of their colleagues, while 1,314 participants indicated that they did not perceive themselves as dissimilar to their colleagues.

Multivariate normality of climate for inclusion, perceived inclusion, uncertainty, trust, disapproval, and initiated interaction was assessed using Mardia's test for multivariate skewness and kurtosis. The null hypothesis was rejected for both multivariate skewness and kurtosis ($p < .001$), indicating a violation of multivariate normality. Hence, robust estimators were used in the CFA and SEM analyses.

Table 4 Zero-order Correlations between the Study Variables

	1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**	**8**
1. Degree of dissimilarity	-							
2. Climate for inclusion	-.17***	-						
3. Perceived inclusion	-.32***	.46***	-					
4. Uncertainty	.31***	-.31***	-.59***	-				
5. Trust	-.28***	.38***	.70***	-.56***	-			
6. Disapproval	.32***	-.33***	-.56***	.52***	-.55***	-		
7. Initiated interaction	-.26***	.28***	.62***	-.58***	.72***	-.43***	-	

* p < .05, ** p < .01, *** p < .001.

We first conducted EFAs to test whether our theorized constructs could be statistically distinguished, followed by several CFAs to determine the factor structure we would use for the Structural Equation Model (see Supplementary Materials for the details, see Figure 1 for the final model). The final model reached moderate fit, χ^2/df = 7.93, *CFI* = .88, *TLI* = .87, *RMSEA* = .06, *SRMR* = .05, *AIC* = 324504.57. This model did result in an estimated negative variance of the factor "Colleagues' disapproval", σ^2 = -0.007, *p* = .702. This negative variance could be resolved by letting the model estimate the loading of "Colleagues' disapproval" instead of fixing it to 1. However, since the negative variance is close to zero and not significant, we decided not to alter the model.
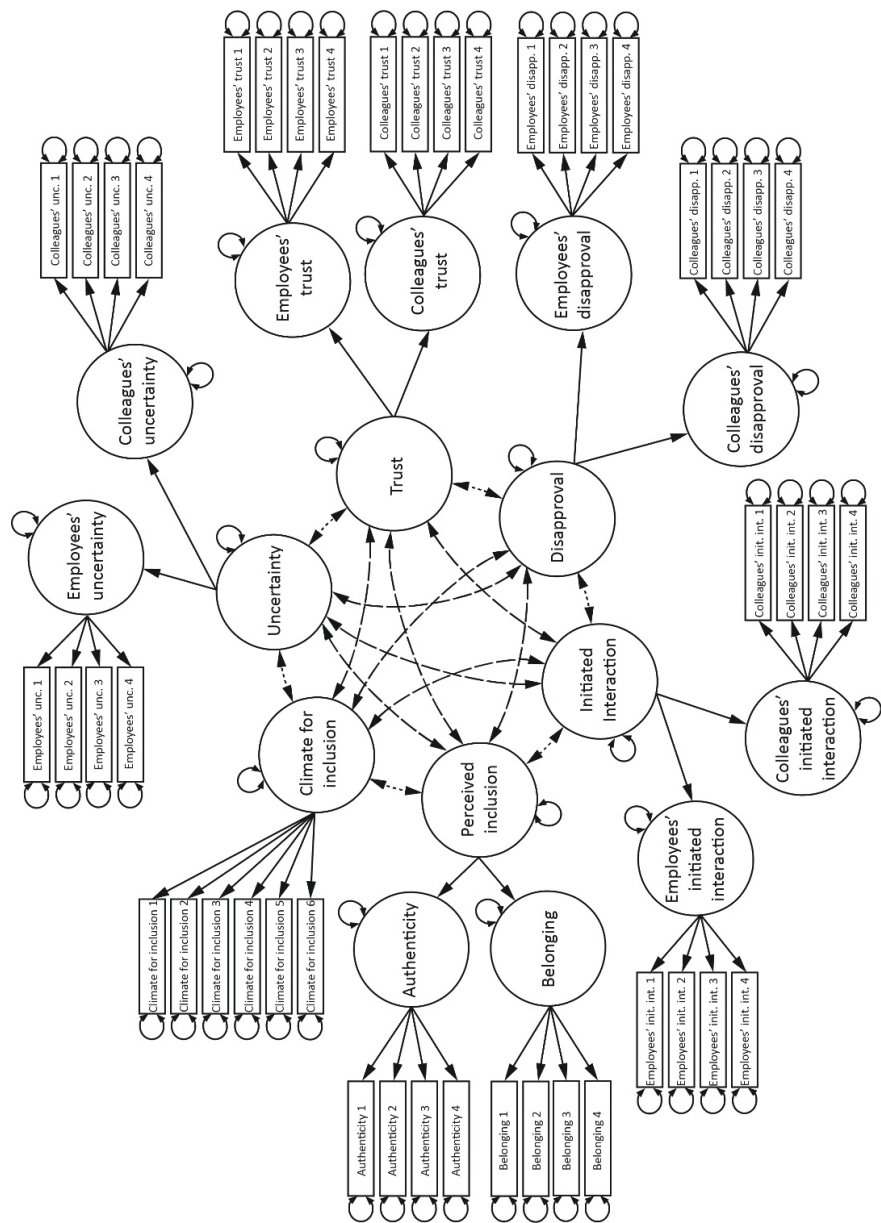
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Figure 1 The Confirmatory Factor Model with the Best Fit.

Finally, we assessed common method bias by specifying a Common Latent Factor (CLF) that is indicated by all observed variables. The model that included the CLF reached good fit, χ^2/df = 6.02, *CFI* = .92, *TLI* = .91, *RMSEA* = .05, *SRMR* = .135, *AIC* = 321209.91. We compared the standardized factor loadings of the model containing the CLF to those of the model without it. If the differences are larger than .200, indicative of common method bias, results may be compromised. Our analysis revealed notable differences in factor loadings for items related to "authenticity" and "belonging" between the two models, with several differences exceeding .200. Consequently, we retained the CLF in subsequent analyses to mitigate the impact of common method bias.

To determine the most suitable measure of dissimilarity for subsequent analyses, we conducted multiple regression analyses predicting perceived inclusion with both the presence and degree of dissimilarity as predictors. The results revealed that both presence of dissimilarity (*b* = 0.44, *SE* = .21, *p* = .038) and degree of dissimilarity (*b* = -0.11, *SE* = .03, *p* < .001) significantly and negatively predicted perceived inclusion, $F(3, 2404)$ = 100.50, R^2 = .11, *p* < .001[28]. To ascertain which predictor better explained perceived inclusion, we conducted separate regression analyses using each predictor individually. The results showed that as a single predictor, degree of dissimilarity explained 10% of the variance in perceived inclusion, $F(1, 2406)$ = 278.60, *p* < .001; *b* = -.22, *p* < .001, while presence of dissimilarity explained 9% of the variance, $F(1, 2406)$ = 226.20, *p* < .001; *b* = -.66, *p* < .001. The Vuong likelihood ratio for non-nested models (1989) indicated that the model with degree of dissimilarity had a better fit than the model with presence of dissimilarity, *p* = .008. Therefore, we used degree of dissimilarity as the measure of dissimilarity in subsequent analyses.

Hypothesis Testing

Following our CFA, which indicated that distinguishing processes by actor is statistically infeasible, we streamlined our hypotheses to simplify our model. Consequently, we framed our hypotheses in terms of how dissimilarity negatively relates to perceived inclusion via four mechanisms: uncertainty, trust, disapproval and initiated interaction between colleagues (H1-H4). Additionally, we posited that climate for inclusion moderates the relationship between dissimilarity and perceived inclusion (H5), as well as the relationships between dissimilarity and the four mechanisms (H6).

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28 Because of multicollinearity, a multiple regression analysis can result in a positive relationship between predictors and outcomes, while in single linear regression models these relationships are negative.

We tested these hypotheses with our Structural Equation Model, in which the CLF was retained (see Figure 2). In this model, uncertainty, trust, disapproval, initiated interaction and perceived inclusion were predicted by degree of dissimilarity (as the only observed variable), climate for inclusion and the interaction between degree of dissimilarity and climate for inclusion (as captured in a latent variable). In turn, uncertainty, trust, disapproval and initiated interaction predicted perceived inclusion, meaning that indirect effects between dissimilarity and perceived inclusion via these latent variables were estimated. As the assumption of multivariate normality was violated, we used the Satorra-Bentler test statistic and robust standard errors. The 95% confidence intervals of the parameters were estimated using the Monte Carlo method, using 10.000 samples (MacKinnon et al., 2004; Yzerbyt et al., 2018). The specified model reached good fit, χ^2/df = 4.96, *CFI* = .92, *TLI* = .91, *RMSEA* = .05, *SRMR* = .12, and explained 62.40% percent of the variance of perceived inclusion.
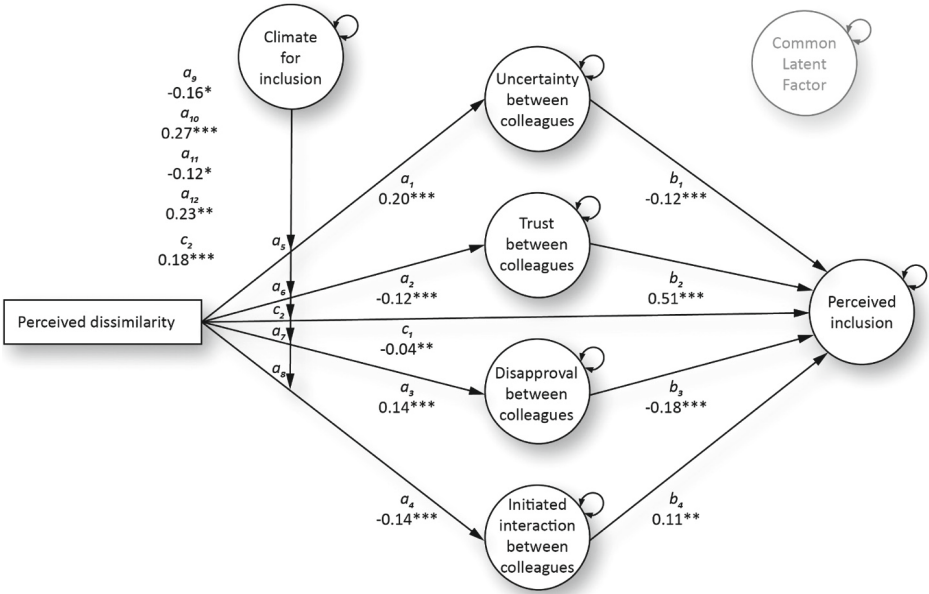

Figure 2 Simplified Overview of the Structural Equation Model with Standardized Factor Loadings and Unstandardized Parameter Estimates. Common Latent Factor is Simplified by Omitting Paths. ***p < .001, **p < .01

Our results of the SEM revealed that degree of dissimilarity was negatively related to uncertainty, trust, disapproval, and initiated interaction between colleagues (see Table 5 for the statistics). Furthermore, uncertainty, trust, disapproval and initiated interaction between colleagues were negatively related to perceived inclusion (see Table 6 for the statistics). Moreover, the results revealed indirect relationships

between degree of dissimilarity and perceived inclusion, via uncertainty (a_1b_1 = -0.02, SE = 0.01, 95% CI [-0.04;-0.02], p < .001), trust (a_2b_2 = -0.06, SE = 0.01, 95% CI [-0.08;-0.04], p < .001), disapproval (a_3b_3 = -0.02, SE = 0.01, 95% CI [-0.04;-0.01], p < .001) and initiated interaction (a_4b_4 = -0.02, SE = 0.01, 95% CI [-0.03;-0.00], p = .016) among colleagues, corroborating H1-4. Although these indirect relationships explained 76.69% of the total effect (b_{total} = -0.13, SE = 0.01, 95% CI [-0.15;-0.11], p < .001), a significant direct relationship between degree of dissimilarity and perceived inclusion persisted (c_1 = -0.04, SE = 0.01, 95% CI [-0.06;-0.02], p < .001), suggesting that other unexplored factors contribute to this relationship.

We conducted exploratory Wald tests comparing the size of the indirect relationships (see Klopp, 2020), which revealed that the indirect relationship via trust was stronger than those via uncertainty, disapproval, and initiated interaction, suggesting the pivotal role of trust in mitigating the adverse effects of dissimilarity on perceived inclusion[29].

Finally, while we did not find support for H5, indicating no interaction between dissimilarity and climate for inclusion on perceived inclusion (b = .08, SE = .05, p = .121), H6 was supported. A positive climate for inclusion attenuated the relationships between dissimilarity and (H6a) uncertainty, (H6b) trust, (H6c) disapproval, and (H6d) initiated interaction (see Tables 7 and 8 for the statistics).

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29 First, we standardized the regression coefficients to allow for comparisons. Second, we imposed equality constraints on the parameters of these relationships (a_1b_1, a_2b_2, a_3b_3 and a_4b_4) such that they were all equal. Third, we conducted six (Holm-Bonferroni corrected) Wald test to compare the parameters of the unrestricted Structural Equation Model with the restricted parameters. The results showed that the size of the indirect relationships via uncertainty and disapproval did not differ from each other (a_1b_1 vs. a_3b_3, W = 0.00, p = .986). This was also the case for the size of the indirect relationships via uncertainty and initiated interaction (a_1b_1 vs. a_4b_4, W = 1.30, p = .304) and via disapproval and initiated interaction (a_3b_3 vs. a_4b_4, W = 2.14, p = .215). The size of the indirect relationships via uncertainty and trust (a_1b_1 vs. a_2b_2, W = 11.42, p = .003), trust and disapproval (a_2b_2 vs. a_3b_3, W = 9.44, p = .004), and trust and initiated interaction (a_2b_2 vs. a_4b_4, W = 9.44, p = .003) did differ from each other.

Table 5 Unstandardized Regression Coefficients (Including 95% Confidence Intervals) and Standard Errors for the Relationships between Degree of Dissimilarity, Climate for Inclusion, Uncertainty, Trust, Disapproval and Initiated Interaction.

Antecedent		Uncertainty M_1					Trust M_2					Disapproval M_3					Initiated interaction M_4			
		Coeff	SE	p	95% CI		Coeff	SE	p	95% CI		Coeff	SE	p	95% CI		Coeff	SE	p	95% CI
X (Dissimilarity)	a_1	0.20	0.02	<.001	0.17, 0.22	a_2	-0.11	0.01	<.001	-0.14, -0.09	a_3	0.14	0.01	<.001	0.12, 0.16	a_4	-0.13	0.01	<.001	-0.16, -0.11
W (Climate for Inclusion)	a_5	-0.22	0.03	<.001	-0.28, -0.17	a_6	0.23	0.02	<.001	0.19, 0.27	a_7	-0.15	0.02	<.001	-0.18, -0.11	a_8	0.17	0.03	<.001	0.12, 0.22
X x W	a_9	-0.05	0.07	.018	-0.30, -0.03	a_{10}	0.27	0.07	<.001	0.12, 0.41	a_{11}	-0.12	0.05	.029	-0.22, -0.01	a_{12}	0.23	0.08	.002	0.09, 0.38

Table 6 Unstandardized Regression Coefficients (Including 95% Confidence Intervals) and Standard Errors for the Relationships of Degree of Dissimilarity, Climate for Inclusion, Uncertainty, Trust, Disapproval and Initiated Interaction with Perceived Inclusion

Antecedent		Y (Perceived Inclusion)			
		Coeff.	SE	p	95% CI
X (Degree of Dissimilarity)	c_1	-0.04	0.01	<.001	-0.06, -0.02
W (Climate for Inclusion)	c_2	0.18	0.02	<.001	0.14, 0.22
X x W	c_3	0.08	0.05	.121	-0.02, 0.18
M_1 (Uncertainty)	b_1	-0.12	0.02	<.001	-0.17, -0.07
M_2 (Trust)	b_2	0.51	0.07	<.001	0.38, 0.64

Table 6 Unstandardized Regression Coefficients (Including 95% Confidence Intervals) and Standard Errors for the Relationships of Degree of Dissimilarity, Climate for Inclusion, Uncertainty, Trust, Disapproval and Initiated Interaction with Perceived Inclusion **(continued)**

Antecedent		Y (Perceived Inclusion)			
		Coeff.	SE	p	95% CI
M_3 (Disapproval)	b_3	-0.18	0.04	< .001	-0.25, -0.11
M_4 (Initiated interaction)	b_4	0.11	0.04	.012	0.02, 0.20

Table 7 Unstandardized Regression Coefficients and Standard Errors for the Conditional Relationships between Degree of Dissimilarity and Uncertainty, Trust, Disapproval, and Initiated Interaction

Level of Climate for Inclusion		Uncertainty M_1				Trust M_2				Disapproval M_3				Initiated interaction M_4		
		Coeff	SE	p		Coeff	SE	p		Coeff	SE	p		Coeff	SE	p
-1 SD	a_1	0.36	0.07	< .001	a_2	-0.38	0.08	< .001	a_3	0.26	0.06	< .001	a_4	-0.37	0.08	< .001
+1 SD	a_1	0.04	0.07	.599	a_2	0.15	0.07	.044	a_3	0.02	0.05	.701	a_4	0.10	0.08	.187

Table 8 Unstandardized Regression Coefficients and Standard Errors for the Conditional Relationships between Degree of Dissimilarity and Perceived Inclusion.

Level of Climate for Inclusion		Perceived Inclusion Y		
		Coeff	SE	p
-1 SD	c_1	-0.36	0.07	< .001
+1 SD	c_1	0.04	0.07	.599

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DISCUSSION

In this paper, we narrowed the gap between theory and empirics, contributing to existing knowledge in three pivotal ways.

Firstly, we conducted a review of the dissimilarity literature, identifying and delineating four key mechanisms theorized to explain the relationship between dissimilarity and workplace outcomes. These mechanisms—uncertainty, trust, disapproval, and initiated interaction among colleagues—provided a comprehensive framework for understanding the dynamics at play.

Secondly, we conducted a pre-registered empirical study, testing the indirect relationship between dissimilarity and perceived inclusion via the four mechanisms. Our findings unveiled the unique contributions of all four mechanisms to this relationship, with trust emerging as a particularly potent mediator.

Thirdly, extending previous research, we tested the moderating role of a positive climate for inclusion on both perceived inclusion and the four underlying mechanisms. While our initial hypothesis regarding the buffering effect of inclusion climate on the direct relationship between dissimilarity and perceived inclusion was not supported, we did uncover a protective role for inclusion climate in mitigating the adverse effects of the four mechanisms. The absence of a moderating role of climate for inclusion on the direct relationship between dissimilarity and perceived inclusion is likely related to the fact that this direct effect explains little variance of the total effect of dissimilarity. Since most of the effect of dissimilarity on perceived inclusion is explained by the indirect effects via the four mechanisms, the opportunity of climate for inclusion to influence the direct effect becomes limited. This nuanced understanding sheds light on the complex interplay between dissimilarity, inclusion climate, and organizational dynamics.

Research Implications

Our findings underscore the intricate interplay between dissimilarity and key interpersonal dynamics within work settings. As employees perceive greater dissimilarity, they report heightened levels of uncertainty, diminished trust, increased disapproval, and reduced initiated interaction among colleagues. These results align closely with theoretical expectations within the relational demography literature, highlighting the pervasive influence of dissimilarity on workplace interactions. Notably, our results elucidated these mechanisms occurring "between colleagues," as

we found no statistical distinction between employees' perceptions of their own and colleagues' experiences and behaviors.

These experiences and behaviors were drawn from the relational demography literature, which tends to be grounded in social identity theory. However, three mechanisms that we extracted from the literature, namely uncertainty, trust, and initiated interactions, strongly resemble concepts crucial to establishing interdependence within groups (Thielmann et al., 2020; Van Lange & Balliet. 2015). It could be argued that dissimilarity triggers social identity processes that impede the development of interdependence in teams, thus hindering collaborative efforts. While interdependence is typically studied as a moderator in relational demography research (e.g., Guillaume et al., 2012), our findings suggest a novel avenue for inquiry: examining interdependence as an outcome of dissimilarity. By integrating insights from both social identity theory and interdependence theory, future studies can provide a more nuanced understanding of how dissimilarity shapes cooperation in groups.

Strengths, Limitations, and Future Research

This study makes important methodological contributions to dissimilarity research in two key ways. Firstly, we conducted a thorough literature review to identify and distill the mechanisms commonly theorized to underlie the effects of dissimilarity in workplace contexts. This comprehensive review provided a solid theoretical foundation for our empirical investigation, ensuring that we captured the most salient factors shaping the dissimilarity-inclusion relationship. Secondly, we employed a rigorous analytical approach by controlling for potential overlapping effects of the identified mechanisms. By testing the explanatory role of uncertainty, trust, disapproval, and initiated interaction together, we were able to discern the unique contributions of each mechanism. Notably, our exploratory analyses revealed that the indirect relationships between dissimilarity and perceived inclusion via these mechanisms were roughly equivalent in size, highlighting the multifaceted nature of the dissimilarity-inclusion relationship. Among these mechanisms, trust emerged as particularly influential, demonstrating the strongest indirect relationship with perceived inclusion.

Our results paint a complex picture of the role that dissimilarity plays at the workplace, since it relates to multiple important mechanisms. While these findings suggest that there is no singular "silver bullet" solution to enhancing perceived inclusion, they also highlight the interconnected nature of these mechanisms. Indeed, our results emphasize the need for a nuanced and multifaceted approach in future research endeavors. Addressing the interrelatedness of these mechanisms and their

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collective impact on perceived inclusion is essential for developing comprehensive strategies aimed at fostering a more inclusive workplace environment.

There are also three limitations to this study that could be addressed in future research. The first limitation pertains to the cross-sectional nature of this study, which allows only for testing correlational relationships without establishing causal relationships. Although we have assumptions about the directions of the effects, such as the triggering of the four mechanisms by dissimilarity, experimental or longitudinal approaches would provide empirical support for the assumed directionality.

The second limitation concerns the reliance on self-reports from employees. While it may be challenging to measure variables like trust through alternative means, employing different methods could help investigate whether dissimilarity yields negative consequences. For instance, utilizing cardiovascular measures or galvanic skin responses could assess whether a stress response occurs in situations where dissimilarity is salient. Moreover, incorporating qualitative and observational methods in workplace settings could offer valuable insights to complement quantitative research and guide future investigations.

The third limitation is the reliance on employees' perceptions of colleagues' uncertainty, trust, disapproval and initiated interaction, rather than assessing these variables from both the focal employee and their colleagues. While acknowledging the importance of considering employees' perceptions of colleagues' experiences and behaviors in research on perceived inclusion, adopting a social network approach could reveal any disparities between perceived and intended behaviors.

As for future research directions, it remains unclear under what circumstances and why dissimilarity on specific dimensions leads to varying outcomes. For example, dissimilarity in political orientation might negatively impact perceived inclusion in certain contexts but not in others. Understanding the cultural and societal significance of dissimilarity on specific dimensions could shed light on why and when dissimilarity relates to perceived inclusion. For instance, if workplace dissimilarity aligns with societal dissimilarity, negative experiences outside the workplace could trigger stress responses that persist in the workplace (Frost & Meyer, 2023). Employees in such situations might experience workplace uncertainty due to anticipated stigmatization and rejection from others, which could impede their inclusion in the workplace.

There are indeed indications that stigmatization plays an important role in workplace inclusion: Employees who perceive their identity as stigmatized are more likely to feel disrespected and express intentions to leave the organization (Pinel & Paulin, 2005). Moreover, the importance attached to the stigmatized or disadvantaged identity appears to matter as well. Identity centrality, reflecting the degree to which an identity is important to one's self-concept, is related to increased perceptions of discrimination and prejudice (Hinton et al., 2022; Leach et al., 2009), which could be particularly important within stigmatized identities. Hence, it is plausible that the relationship between dissimilarity and perceived inclusion hinges on whether the basis of dissimilarity is central to one's identity and perceived as stigmatized. Future research should empirically investigate this possibility.

CONCLUSION

This study establishes uncertainty, trust, disapproval and initiated interaction among colleagues as pivotal mechanisms delineating the association between dissimilarity is related to perceived inclusion. Moreover, it elucidates that a climate for inclusion partially mitigates the relationships between dissimilarity and the mechanisms, while it completely buffers the relationship between dissimilarity and perceived inclusion. While this research significantly improves our understanding of the interplay between dissimilarity and interpersonal dynamics in the workplace, further examination is warranted to ascertain the nuanced relationships between dissimilarity across various dimensions and its differential impacts on the aforementioned mechanisms and perceived inclusion.

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6

Nederlandse Samenvatting

Dutch Summary

OVER ANDERS ZIJN: HOE WERKNEMERS DIE ANDERS ZIJN DAN HUN COLLEGA'S SOCIALE INCLUSIE WAARNEMEN

Diversiteit op de werkvloer is een factor die creativiteit en prestaties kan bevorderen, mits de omstandigheden gunstig zijn (Carter & Phillips, 2017; Galinsky et al., 2015). Onder minder optimale omstandigheden kan diversiteit echter leiden tot een afname van vertrouwen en een toename van conflicten tussen collega's. Het is daarom cruciaal om te begrijpen hoe diversiteit de relaties tussen collega's beïnvloedt en wat de rol van de context hierbij is. Verder is het belangrijk om bewust te zijn van het feit dat niet alle teamleden binnen diverse teams dezelfde ervaringen hebben, maar dat sommige teamleden negatievere ervaringen hebben dan anderen.

Ook binnen diverse teams zijn er werknemers die behoren tot een 'meerderheid' op een of meerdere kenmerken, zoals geslacht, etniciteit of werkervaring. Zij delen bijvoorbeeld dezelfde etnische/culturele afkomst of hebben vergelijkbare werkervaring als hun meeste collega's en zien elkaar hierdoor als leden van dezelfde subgroep, oftewel hun *ingroup*, binnen het team (Mummendey & Wenzel, 1999; Wenzel et al., 2007). Mensen die anders zijn dan henzelf kunnen worden gezien als een *outgroup*, een andere subgroep binnen het team. Dit onderscheid tussen subgroepen binnen teams kan belangrijke gevolgen hebben, aangezien werknemers van de ingroup liever met elkaar omgaan en elkaar voortrekken. Zij kijken ook negatiever naar hun collega's die tot de outgroup behoren (Glambek et al., 2020).

Door deze processen tussen subgroepen ervaren werknemers die anders zijn dan hun collega's minder sociale inclusie – de perceptie dat je erbij hoort en de ruimte krijgt om je authentieke zelf te zijn (Jansen et al., 2014) – dan de meerderheid in het team. Sociale inclusie lijkt cruciaal te zijn op de werkvloer, aangezien de verminderde inclusie van werknemers die anders zijn negatieve gevolgen heeft voor hun gezondheid en prestaties (Guillaume et al., 2012; Jansen et al., 2017).

Anders zijn dan de meeste collega's hoeft echter niet altijd negatief uit te pakken. Een inclusief klimaat, een omgeving waarin actief wordt gewerkt aan het verminderen van bias, waarin verschillen worden gewaardeerd, en waarin verschillende perspectieven opgezocht worden, lijkt hierbij een sleutelrol te spelen. Eerder onderzoek toonde al aan dat werknemers die anders waren dan hun collega's in termen van geslacht evenveel inclusie ervoeren als de meerderheid in het team als zij een inclusief klimaat waarnamen (Jansen et al., 2017). In deze context hadden zij een vergelijkbaar ziekteverzuim als hun meeste collega's.

Het is echter nog onduidelijk in hoeverre deze bevindingen generaliseerbaar zijn naar andere diversiteitskenmerken dan geslacht en of een inclusief klimaat ook invloed heeft op andere interpersoonlijke processen dan sociale inclusie. Het doel van dit proefschrift was om beter te begrijpen hoe werknemers die anders zijn dan hun collega's op verschillende kenmerken inclusie ervaren en wat de rol van een inclusief klimaat hierbij is.

Organisaties Omschrijven Diversiteit Vaak in Termen van Geslacht en Cultuur, Blijkend uit Hun Diversity Statements

In Hoofdstuk 2 hebben wij diversity statements van 83 Nederlandse private (n = 55) en publieke (n = 28) organisaties geanalyseerd om te onderzoeken hoe zij diversiteit omschrijven en of de omschrijvingen verschillen tussen private en publieke organisaties. Wij hebben hierbij gelet op drie factoren: 1) of organisaties diversiteit omschrijven door specifieke kenmerken te benoemen, 2) of zij het voornamelijk hebben over zichtbare of onzichtbare verschillen tussen werknemers en 3) of zij ook meerderheidsgroepen benoemen in hun omschrijving van diversiteit. Wij vonden dat de meeste organisaties zowel zichtbare als onzichtbare kenmerken benoemen in hun statements, maar gemiddeld genomen wel vaker zichtbare kenmerken omschrijven. Verder bleek dat minstens een derde van de organisaties diversiteit omschreven in termen van geslacht, cultuur, seksuele oriëntatie, leeftijd, beperkingen en etniciteit, welke voornamelijk zichtbare en demografische kenmerken zijn. Kenmerken zoals perspectieven, religie, opleiding, sociaaleconomische status en politieke voorkeur werden minder vaak gebruikt in hun omschrijving van diversiteit. Organisaties benoemden verder zelden expliciet meerderheidsgroepen in hun statements. Verder vonden wij minimale verschillen in hoe private en publieke organisaties diversiteit omschrijven.

Anders Zijn dan de Meerderheid Heeft een Causaal Verband met Verwachte Inclusie in een Experimentele Studie

In Hoofdstuk 3 heb ik twee experimentele studies ontwikkeld om te onderzoeken of anders zijn dan de meerderheid een causaal verband heeft met inclusie. In het eerste experiment heb ik deelnemers willekeurig ingedeeld in twee condities. In de ene conditie hadden zij dezelfde werkstijl als al hun fictieve teamgenoten, in de andere conditie waren zij de enige met een andere werkstijl. Ik vond dat deelnemers die anders waren dan hun teamgenoten lagere verwachtingen hadden over de mate van sociale inclusie door hun team dan deelnemers die hetzelfde waren als hun teamgenoten. Ik onderzocht ook de rol van emoties en vond dat positieve emoties minder intens en negatieve emoties juist intenser ervaren werden door deelnemers die anders waren, vergeleken met deelnemers die hetzelfde waren als

hun teamgenoten. De minder intense ervaring van positieve emoties verklaarde deels de lagere verwachting van inclusie door deelnemers die anders waren.

In het tweede experiment waren alle deelnemers anders dan hun fictieve teamgenoten in termen van werkstijl. In dit experiment heb ik de betekenis van werkstijl gemanipuleerd door het te beschrijven als een competentie of als een waarde, afhankelijk van de conditie van deelnemers. Mijn hypothese was dat deelnemers die werkstijl als een waarde zien lagere verwachtingen hebben over de mate waarin hun team hen de ruimte geeft om zichzelf te zijn dan deelnemers die werkstijl als een competentie zien. Uit mijn resultaten bleek echter dat er tussen de twee condities geen verschillen waren in hoeverre deelnemers verwachtten zichzelf te kunnen zijn.

Anders Zijn op Onzichtbare Kenmerken Heeft een Verband met Waargenomen Inclusie en Werkgerelateerde Uitkomsten

Uit de resultaten van Hoofdstuk 2 bleek dat organisaties diversiteit vaker omschrijven met zichtbare dan met onzichtbare kenmerken, terwijl onzichtbare kenmerken ook relevant kunnen zijn voor sociale inclusie.

In Hoofdstuk 4 heb ik onderzocht hoe anders zijn op zichtbare (bijv. etniciteit en geslacht) en onzichtbare (bijv. persoonlijkheid en seksuele oriëntatie) kenmerken gerelateerd is aan waargenomen inclusie. Hiervoor hebben 887 werknemers van een publieke organisatie in Nederland een vragenlijst ingevuld. Uit de resultaten bleek dat werknemers die zich anders voelden op onzichtbare kenmerken minder inclusie waarnamen dan werknemers die zich niet anders voelden dan hun meeste collega's. Bij werknemers die zich anders voelden op zichtbare kenmerken was dit niet het geval. Verder vond ik dat werknemers die zich anders voelden op onzichtbare kenmerken minder tevreden waren over hun werk, minder toegewijd waren aan hun carrière, minder gemotiveerd waren om hun carrière ontwikkelen, meer werkgerelateerde stress ervoeren en meer de intentie hadden om de organisatie te verlaten, vergeleken met werknemers die zich niet anders voelden. De relatie tussen anders voelen en de werkgerelateerde uitkomsten werden verklaard door minder waargenomen inclusie, wat de cruciale rol van inclusie nogmaals benadrukt. Ik vond ook bewijs voor de belangrijke rol van de context. Als werknemers een inclusief organisatieklimaat waarnamen, dan waren er geen verschillen in waargenomen inclusie tussen werknemers die zich wel of niet anders voelen. Sterker nog, ook werknemers die zich niet anders voelden dan hun collega's namen meer inclusie waar in een inclusief organisatieklimaat dan in een minder inclusief klimaat.

Hoe Meer Kenmerken er Zijn Waarop Werknemers Zich Anders Voelen, Hoe Minder Inclusie Zij Waarnemen

In Hoofdstuk 4 kwam naar voren dat anders voelen op onzichtbare kenmerken erg belangrijk kan zijn voor de waargenomen inclusie van werknemers. Het is echter nog onduidelijk welke specifieke (on)zichtbare kenmerken relevant zijn voor inclusie. Verder is het nog onbekend of het aantal kenmerken waarop werknemers zich anders voelen dan hun collega's gerelateerd is aan de mate waarin zij inclusie waarnemen. Ik heb dit onderzocht in Hoofdstuk 5 middels een vragenlijst die ingevuld was door 6312 werknemers van een Nederlandse publieke organisatie. Ik vond dat zowel werknemers die zich anders voelden op onzichtbare kenmerken als werknemers die zich anders voelden op zichtbare kenmerken minder inclusie ervoeren dan werknemers die zich niet anders voelden. Dit verband was sterker bij werknemers die zich anders voelden op onzichtbare kenmerken. Deelnemers gaven ook aan op welke kenmerken zij zich anders voelden en konden kiezen uit: seksuele oriëntatie, persoonlijkheid, politieke voorkeur, religie, opleidingsniveau, werkervaring, gender, leeftijd, etniciteit/culturele achtergrond en beperking. Ik vond dat anders voelen op persoonlijkheid, etniciteit/culturele achtergrond, leeftijd, opleidingsniveau, werkervaring en beperking negatief gerelateerd was aan waargenomen inclusie. Verder bleek dat inclusief klimaat ook hier een belangrijke rol had, de negatieve relaties tussen inclusie en anders zijn op persoonlijkheid, etniciteit/culturele achtergrond en beperking werden niet gevonden in een inclusief klimaat. Als laatst telde ik het aantal kenmerken waarop werknemers zich anders voelden dan hun collega's en vond dat hoe meer kenmerken werknemers rapporteerden, hoe minder inclusie zij waarnamen.

Onzekerheid, Vertrouwen, Afkeuring en Initiatief tot Interactie tussen Collega's Verklaren de Relatie tussen Anders Voelen en Inclusie

In Hoofdstukken 3, 4 en 5 vond ik consistent dat anders voelen dan teamgenoten negatief samenhangt met inclusie. Er is echter nog weinig empirisch bewijs voor de psychologische mechanismes die hierbij een rol spelen. In Hoofdstuk 6 heb ik mij gericht op de vraag welke mechanismes een rol spelen bij de relatie tussen anders voelen en inclusie. Ik maakte eerst een overzicht van 59 empirische studies naar werknemers die anders zijn dan de meerderheid. De theoretische mechanismen die in deze studies beschreven worden kon ik indelen bij vier algemene mechanismes, namelijk: onzekerheid, vertrouwen, afkeuring en initiatief tot interactie tussen collega's. Hierna heb ik een empirische studie opgezet, waarbij 2409 deelnemers, allen werknemers uit het Verenigd Koninkrijk, een vragenlijst hadden ingevuld. Ik vond dat deelnemers die zich anders voelden dan hun meeste collega's minder inclusie waarnamen dan deelnemers die dat niet deden, net als in de vorige hoofdstukken.

Verder vond ik dat elk van de vier mechanismes een uniek deel van de relatie tussen anders voelen en inclusie verklaarde, waarbij vertrouwen tussen collega's als belangrijkste mechanisme naar voren kwam. Net als in hoofdstukken 4 en 5 bleek een inclusief klimaat ook hier weer een belangrijke rol te spelen. In een inclusief klimaat ervoeren deelnemers die zich anders voelden evenveel onzekerheid, vertrouwen, afkeuring en initiatief tot interactie tussen henzelf en collega's als deelnemers die zich niet anders voelden.

Conclusie
In dit proefschrift laat ik zien dat werknemers zich anders kunnen voelen op allerlei kenmerken, waarbij er ook vaak kenmerken genoemd worden die minder vaak voorkomen in diversity statements van organisaties. Verder toon ik aan dat werknemers die zich anders voelen dan hun collega's op allerlei kenmerken vaak minder inclusie waarnemen, wat relevant is voor werkgerelateerde uitkomsten. Ook is het belangrijk om rekening te houden met het feit dat werknemers minder geïncludeerd waarnemen naarmate er meer kenmerken zijn waarop zij zich anders voelen. Bovendien laat ik zien dat er vier mechanismes zijn die allen verklaren waarom werknemers die zich anders voelen minder inclusie waarnemen. Ten slotte benadrukken mijn bevindingen het belang van context. Mensen nemen niet minder inclusie waar doordat zij anders zijn dan hun meeste collega's, maar omdat zij werken in een minder inclusief klimaat. Organisaties kunnen ervoor zorgen dat al hun werknemers, ongeacht hun verschillen, tot hun recht kunnen komen door te werken aan een inclusieve omgeving.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Seven years ago, I set foot on a path named *'Academia Road'*. At the start of this road was a village called *Organisational Behavior*, which was quite small back then but has grown and flourished over the years. In this village, I started to build a structure that became the foundation of my dissertation. I needed to gather materials for my dissertation and embark on various journeys along Academia Road to get what I needed. This road had a clear starting point but no clear end, branching off into numerous side streets and occasionally connecting to other paths I've explored in the past. The road is not a one-way street. I can travel it freely, revisiting familiar places and discovering new ones.

Over the past years, I have met many people who helped me on my travels. They contributed to my development as a person and as a scientist. The people who were there at the start of Academia Road are also the ones I have learned the most from. **Jojanneke, Wiebren**, and **Naomi**, I started to tear up as I wrote this sentence. You cleared many obstacles from the road and always believed in me, even at times when I did not believe in myself. Thanks to your guidance and support, I was able to finish this dissertation and accomplish much more. I am forever grateful that I could discuss both professional and personal matters with you, knowing you would have my back if I needed it. I truly could not have wished for better supervisors.

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The *village of Organisational Behavior* has many (former) inhabitants who contributed to my journey in one way or another. I want to thank **Annemarieke, Beatriz, Daan, Elena, Elianne, Esmee, Eva, Félice, Hao, Inga, Jaimie, Jeanette, Jessica, Jule, Karin, Kshitij, Lena, Lina, Maaike, Madelijn, Mandy, Marieke, Marleen, Martine, Marty, Milynn, Nadia, Ömer, Piet, Reine, Sarwesh, Tatiana, Tessa, Yonn,** and **Youssef** for inspiring me over the past years. Many of you were working on your

own buildings in the village, and we were able to learn from each other's experiences and enjoy our time off as well.

Further along the road, I encountered *the village of GRID*. I want to thank the mayor of this village, **Belle**, for entrusting me with the postdoc project I am currently working on. I have always followed your work from a distance and am grateful for the opportunity to work with you. I also want to thank the other (former) inhabitants of GRID—**Esmée, Jenny, Johanna, Kimberly, Larisa, Maarten, Marijn, Melissa** and **Ruth**—for making my stay here enjoyable and inspiring. **Gonneke** and **Lianne**, it has been a blessing that you two are my closest colleagues. Thank you for your support over the past two years.

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Alissa, Kelly, Zowi, even though the first word that comes to mind when I think of you is 'pub quiz!', our shared interests and conversations extend far beyond them. Still, i hope we will one day win!

Elvan, Nil and **Talha,** our random activities and events were always full of laughter, but also moments in which we could share worries and frustrations. I wonder what is next..

Frank, while we have known each other for many years, I really got to know you since you started working in Utrecht. Thank you for the friendship, for supporting me, and for being my padel buddy!

While working in *the village of GRID*, I worked closely with many others who reside outside the Province of Utrecht University. Thanks to them, Academia Road branched off to various places that allowed me to discover larger parts of the world. I want to thank **Anna, Fabian, Hilde, Inge, Iris, Jens H., Jens v. T., Jip, Karin**, and **Monique** for the pleasurable teamwork over the past years.

With some people, I started to build something different—something I had not seen in other villages on Academia Road, within or outside the Province of Utrecht University. **Daudi, Dounia, Zakia,** and **Zehra**, the Joy in Academia podcast we started is much bigger than 'just a podcast'. **Mehri** and **Ouissam**, our suppers are something I wish I had earlier. With these people, and many others, we began to create our own places whose value cannot be understood unless experienced. Connected to these places, I want to thank **Anya**, **Edwina**, **Yasin**, and **Yavuz** for inspiring, encouraging, and listening to me over the past years.

While working on my dissertation and exploring Academia Road further to gather materials in various places, the road intersected with Government Road. Instead of merely passing by, I decided to walk on it and see where it would lead. I saw *the village of NWO* and decided to stay there for a while. I want to thank **Arnold**, **Astrid**, and **Channah** for the warm welcome and allowing me to explore this road safely. This will not be the only time I walk on Government Road, as far as I know at the moment of writing…In some way, all the roads and paths are connected to each other, and there is still much more to explore. I am curious to see what the future holds for me.

Finally, I want to 'walk' all the way back to before I started on Academia Road. At Highschool Road, I met **Caspar, Cemal, Hidde, David, Ridge, Soufiane, Steven,** and **Vishal**. Our trips over the past years have always been exciting, unpredictable, and fun. It is quite rare for such a large group of friends from high school to stay in touch for all these years. It requires a special bond.

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Finally, I will go back to the place where everything started. **Annem, babam, Emre** ve **Melda**, her daim yanımda olduğunuz için sonsuz minnettarım. Zaman zaman stresli ve neşesiz olabilirdim, yine de her zaman sevgi ve sabır gösterdiniz. Aynı

CURRICULUM VITAE

Onur Şahin was born on 18th April 1992 in The Hague, the Netherlands. He started studying Psychology at the University of Amsterdam in 2010. He obtained his bachelor's degree with a focus on Clinical Psychology in 2014. He started his Research Master at the same university in 2014, with a major in Social Psychology and a minor in Clinical Psychology. He graduated in 2017 and started his PhD-project at Utrecht University in the same year. During his PhD, Onur supervised bachelor and master theses and was involved in the PhD council of the Faculty of Social and Behavioral Sciences.

In 2022, he was briefly employed by NWO to work on a project on making the grant application process more inclusive. In the same year, he started his current position as a postdoctoral researcher at Utrecht University. He studies how men and women in heterosexual couples divide paid and unpaid labor, focusing on an intervention to involve fathers more in household and care responsibilities.

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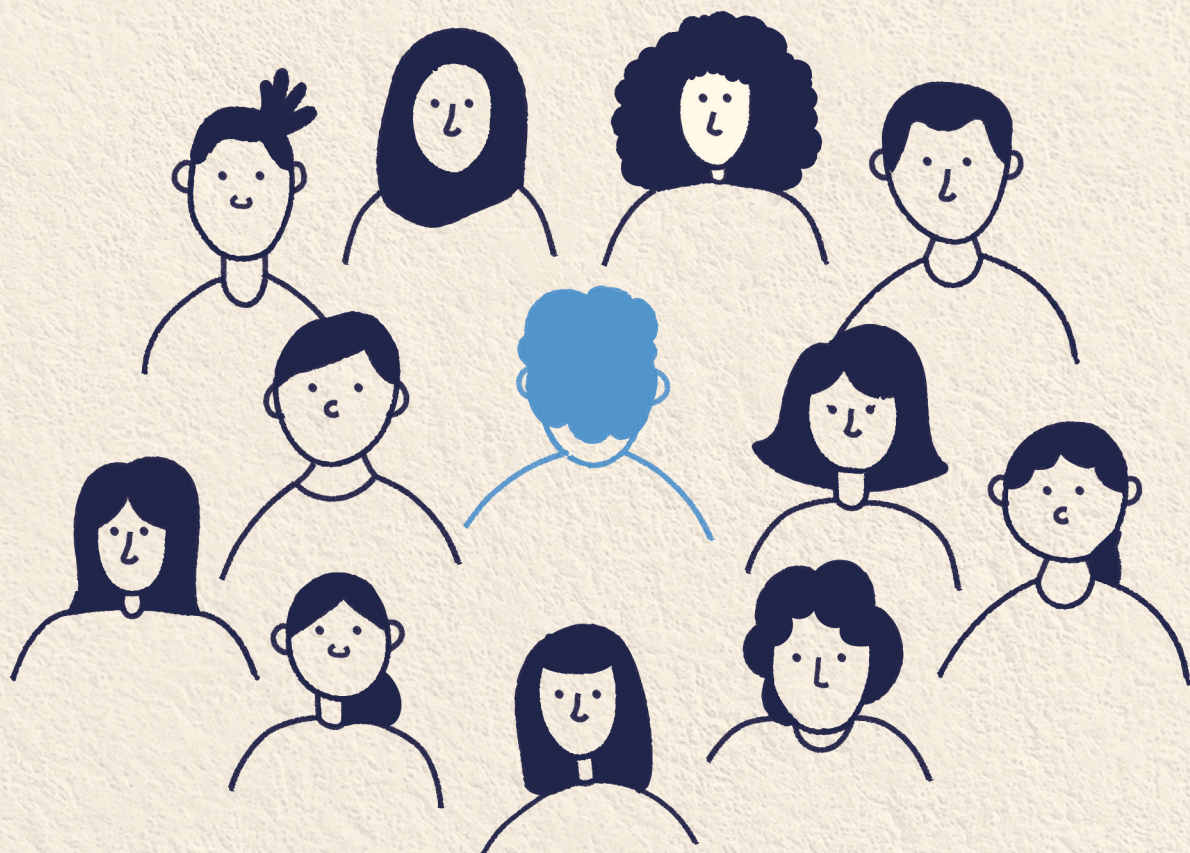
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