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Paradoxes of diversity and inclusion: from the lab to the social field

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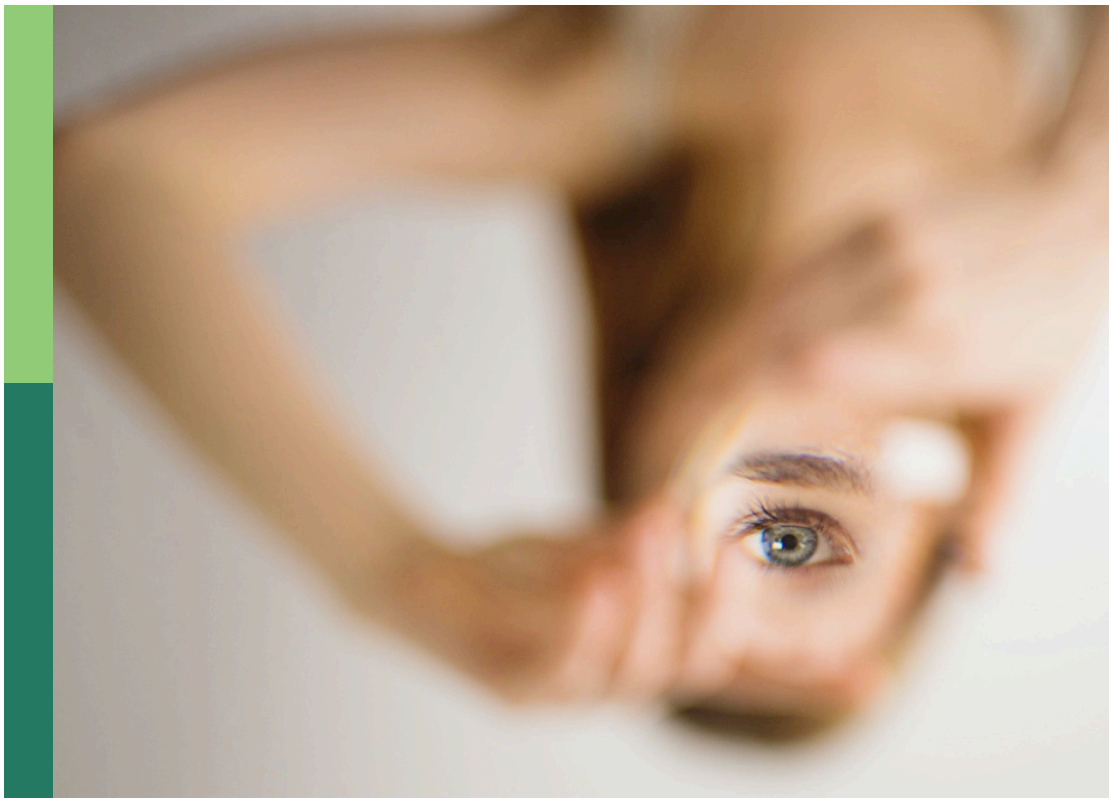

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Paradoxes of diversity and inclusion: from the lab to the social field

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Editorial: Paradoxes of diversity, equity and inclusion: from the lab to the social field

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Editorial on the Research Topic
Paradoxes of diversity, equity and inclusion: from the lab to the social field

Contemporary societies strive for multiculturalism and tolerance. To create conditions to reach this ideal, there should be a continuum between what the social actors are prepared for in school, the practices they encounter in the workplace, and the way they are welcomed (Roberson and Scott, 2024) and can contribute to the broader society. This continuum should be materialized in consistent conceptualizations and practices of diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) across educational, organizational, and societal contexts. However, what we see in practice (Post et al., 2021; Roberson, 2019) is fragmentation instead of continuum and consistency in focus and definition, with little dialogue between research and policy implementation and between research in educational and organizational environments. Inclusive education practices focus on students with special needs, with broader definitions of diversity being neglected. In organizations, the emphasis is mainly on diversity, inclusion and equity being more recent Research Topics and practices. Research conducted at the societal level addresses the comprehensive ideologies underlying diversity and inclusion (Konadu-Osei et al., 2023). This insufficient conceptualization within and across domains gives rise to the many paradoxes we see in the research and praxis of DEI.

This Research Topic is our invitation to a dialogue that builds bridges between the various types (fundamental vs. applied) and domains of research (educational, organizational, and societal) to contribute to moving the field of DEI forward. In this editorial paper, we point to various paradoxes within and between domains by analyzing the focus of DEI policies and practices and the conditions that make them effective. We aim to gain clarity and continuity across fields at the conceptual, empirical, and applied levels.

In the educational domain, the paper of Buchs et al. highlights the necessity of having inclusive programs that broaden their scope by moving from the traditional focus on students with disabilities to other forms of disadvantage, such as linguistic-related status. Although cooperative learning effectively supports inclusive education (it fosters positive relationships and facilitates learning for all), it is rarely implemented. Authors point to the paradox that not all-inclusive programs benefit disadvantaged students, while some even reinforce inequalities between high and low-status students by exacerbating the achievement gap. To counteract the adverse effects, they propose using cooperative learning with a high level

of implementation that sustains equal participation of all and ensures positive intergroup contact between students from different linguistic groups. Their results show that an inclusive program based on multilingual cooperative activities positively impact students with a low status. Another reason why DEI policies in education are ineffective is because they focus on isolated identity experiences (e.g., based solely on gender, social class, or ethnicity) and do not recognize the complex system of disadvantage and exclusion through an intersectional approach. The paper of Fernandez et al. points to this paradox in a higher education context related to universities' diversity and inclusion strategies. Along with the necessity to consider the role of the intersection of social class with other identities, policies should consider the needs and viewpoints of disadvantaged students from a bottom-up perspective based on institutional change and less on the individuals' capacities to cope with institutional norms. DEI initiatives should be founded on the participants' expertise in making sense of their experience to avoid being disconnected from the individual and group needs.

A critical challenge in the DEI domain is conceptualizing the notion of disadvantage by defining what diversity means. The paper of Zhang and Kirby demonstrates a shift in diversity definitions to include fewer protected demographic groups and more non-demographic characteristics, particularly among dominant group members with anti-egalitarian and colorblind belief systems. Thus, while the research suggests the necessity to broaden and complexify the notion of disadvantage, advantaged individuals are motivated to move the focus of DEI from characteristics that create systemic inequalities to characteristics that refer to any form of difference. This also suggests that advantaged individuals perceive the DEI initiatives that aim to reduce inequalities and create more inclusive environments for the disadvantaged as threatening. Therefore, paradoxically, barriers for disadvantaged groups will disappear to the extent that barriers for the advantaged are removed, too. Intersectionality may be a solution here as, for example, not all men are privileged in terms of ethnicity, social class, physical ability or sexual orientation. The recommendation proposed by the paper of Van Laar et al. is to make advantaged group members allies of DEI policies, as they are pivotal agents for change in work organizations, education, and society. With a focus on gender equality policies, the authors show that men's privileged status is potentially threatened by progress in gender equality, with negative consequences on these gender-equality initiatives in a vicious circle. At the same time, they highlight how men themselves are victims of restrictive gender roles, with negative implications for health, risky behavior, wellbeing, and work outcomes. Thus, the threat elicited by DEI practices among majorities represents a significant challenge to make progress with DEI. The authors provide paths to men's involvement in gender equality progress, which may inspire striving for equality in other diversity domains.

The idea of DEI threat among the majority groups is also supported by the paper of Andriessen et al., who bring empirical support from a national survey in the Netherlands. The authors show that perceptions of inclusion climate have opposite effects on the minority and majority. When the majority group perceives the national climate to be more inclusive toward minorities, they report higher levels of ethnocentrism and avoid direct inter-ethnic contact. The opposite is found among the minority group with improved feelings of belonging, participation, and positive intergroup attitudes. Paradoxically, for both minority and majority groups, the perception of an inclusive climate predicts opposition to increased ethnic diversity. This suggests that the relationship between diversity and inclusion is not straightforward and that some DEI practices and contexts allow a positive relationship while others trigger a negative one. In the context of diversity and inclusion in work teams, De Saint Priest et al. have shown that statements promoting diversity value in organizations lead team members to choose more diverse teams but fall short of actual inclusion. In their paper, they examined if the organizations' statements reflecting the commitment to age diversity and fair treatment of mature workers increase representation and inclusion of older people. The authors find evidence that diversity statements increase the representation of older employees in teams but that it does not trigger inclusive behavior. Having broad diversity statements without explicit reference to inclusion may not be enough. This effect may not be limited to age diversity. Diversity statements may lead to paradoxical unintended effects. Therefore, individuals are willing to select diverse teams and behave inclusively toward new team members only when the organizational rationale underlying diversity statements is to change toward a more inclusive workplace. Managers' behaviors are essential in achieving organizational change and dealing with DEI resistance. The paper of Boroș and Gorbatai calls attention to the characteristics that allow middle managers to implement organizations' DEI strategies. Their paradox mindset skills (acknowledging and adapting to the ongoing tensions of conflicting demands rather than trying to eliminate them) and emotional capabilities (the ability to recognize and understand emotions and to influence which emotions they have, when they have them, and how they experience and express these emotions) are crucial preconditions for the successful implementation of these strategies. A paradox mindset enables managers to reconcile the tensions inherent in DEI implementation, while emotional capabilities allow managers to effectively navigate the complex emotional dynamics elicited by diversity, thus contributing to more effective DEI policies.

Among the conditions that make DEI policies effective, the rationale and underlying diversity ideology promoted by organizations are other vital factors. Russell Pascual et al. analyzed diversity ideologies promoted by US universities and organizations to understand their nuances. They found that universities frame diversity ideologies regarding value-in-equality and use the moral and business rationale equally. In contrast, companies focus on value-in-individual differences and use the business case substantially more. However, because those ideologies reinforce a moralistic or instrumental value of diversity, they fall short of building a stronger case at the societal level, namely valuing group differences and positive inter-group contact. This paradox is also highlighted in the paper of Bosch. She shows that while the ultimate goal of DEI policies and practices is to achieve justice, organizations focus exclusively on attaining organizational justice in a simplistic and conflicting manner. Workplace DEI is subject to fashionable rhetoric and does not consider the complex nature of justice at work, avoiding the paradoxical ideas regarded as burdensome. To

increase political gains, managers can claim 'embracing people that are different to you, else you are bigoted' without the necessary attention to clashing values, beliefs, and cultures. The elucidation of the inherent paradoxes within DEI (i.e., of needs, of social value, of productive economy, of time) as experienced by the employers may result in less rhetoric and more thoughtful approaches to DEI. The solution is to broaden the scope of DEI policies to achieve social justice within both organizations and social systems. The paper of Zubareva and Minescu perfectly illustrates how a lack of focus on social justice can have disastrous consequences for diversity and integration policies at the societal level. Using the case of a protection directive (temporary protection directive to protect individuals fleeing the Russian invasion of Ukraine) that allowed Ireland to welcome Ukrainian refugees, they showed how this directive was poorly implemented as a policy, leading to more exclusion, prejudice, and discrimination toward the Ukrainian refugees. Simultaneously, they highlight the double standards responses and differential treatment of Ukrainian refugees in comparison with other immigrants and refugees, such as African, Middle Eastern, Roma, who faced important challenges. This gap between the policy intentions and their actual implementations is one of the paradoxical effects of DEI policies, which sometimes fail to achieve social justice and reduce inequality.

The papers published in this Research Topic suggest that DEI policies implemented in schools, organizations, and society have mixed and paradoxical results. This is partly because these policies' focus is unclear; they lack a clear conceptualization of the DEI notions and fail to consider essential conditions that make them effective. Another important reason is the lack of continuity and consistency across levels and in time: the focus of these policies in school is disconnected from the one in organizations and the one in society in general. Starting from the paradoxes the papers in this Research Topic call attention to, we propose future research directions and questions that would address these paradoxes in an insightful manner.

We acknowledge that paradoxes might exist within and between domains but they are inherent to all DEI policies and are at the root of new developments. One paradox identified both in education and organizations is the gap between what organizations/schools (see Rohmer et al., 2022 for school inclusion) say about DEI, what they do, and what they achieve, also called in the literature diversity decoupling (Toma et al., 2023; De Cock et al., 2024). Future studies should investigate if exposure to diversity decoupling is conducive to other paradoxes, such as DEI policies reinforcing inequalities and discrimination toward disadvantaged groups (see Boroş, 2022 for an example). A second paradox highlighted by the papers in this Research Topic is the increased resistance toward DEI policies and the necessity to bring the advantaged groups on board to make progress with DEI. Future research should focus on allyship dynamics and investigate the role of individual, group, and organizational-level processes to understand better when and why allyship in schools and organizations leads to positive outcomes. In addition, research should disentangle the immediate resistances and paradoxes from the more long-term ones and the associated costs. A third paradox is the lack of coherence between DEI policies at educational, organizational, and societal levels, and we call for research using longitudinal data or diary studies that investigate people's paradoxical experience with DEI policies in their different roles or varying stages of their professional and private lives. In sum, while most paradoxes highlighted in this Research Topic are detrimental to DEI progress, we encourage various actors in charge of DEI to acknowledge that paradoxes are ingrained and necessary to make progress with this complex endeavor.

Author contributions

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Conflict of interest

The authors declare that the research was conducted in the absence of any commercial or financial relationships that could be construed as a potential conflict of interest.

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Examining the divergent effects of perceived inclusion of ethnic minorities on majority and minority groups' inter-ethnic responses

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This study examines the paradoxical effects of a perceived inclusive environment for ethnic minorities. We argue that while perceptions of an inclusive environment may be associated with more positive intergroup attitudes and affect among minority groups, they may instill a sense of threat among the majority group, resulting in negative intergroup sentiments and attitudes towards minorities. We analyzed data from two waves of a nationally representative survey conducted in the Netherlands (n_{total} = 11,897) comprising minority and majority groups. We find support for the proposed paradoxical relationship between the perceived inclusionary climate towards minorities and the attitudes of the majority and minority groups. The results indicate that when perceiving the national climate to be more inclusive towards minorities, the majority group tends to report higher levels of ethnocentrism, avoid direct inter-ethnic contact, and oppose ethnic diversity in general. Among minority groups, a perceived inclusive climate is linked to lower levels of ethnocentrism and a higher willingness to engage in inter-ethnic interactions with the majority group. The results unexpectedly also show that the perception of an inclusionary climate is positively related to opposition to increased ethnic diversity among minority groups. We discuss theoretical and societal implications, while also considering the contextual relevance and limitations of our approach.

KEYWORDS

diversity and inclusion, ethnocentrism, interethnic contact, paradoxes of perceived inclusion, minority - majority

Introduction

> *"I hope he gets rewarded for his hard work. That he gets the same chances as the minorities who have come to live here."* – translated quote from a grandmother talking about her grandson (Elsevier Weekblad, 2016).

Ethnic-cultural diversity in Europe has rapidly increased in the past decades. In 2022, nearly 24 million people living in the EU were citizens of non-member countries (Eurostat, 2022).

Similarly, in the Netherlands the percentage of people with a migration background, i.e., individuals who themselves or have at least one parent born abroad (as defined by Statistics Netherlands [CBS], the Dutch national statistics institute in 2016), is on the rise with 20% in 2010, to 22% in 2015, 24% in 2020 and 25% in 2022.[1] This large and ever-growing minority population still faces many challenges, ranging from discrimination in social and work settings (Vogt, 2005; Andriessen et al., 2010; Wrench, 2017) to higher levels of unemployment (Huijnk, 2016; Galvin, 2017). There has also been an observable increase in ethnic minorities expressing their concerns about the injustices they have experienced through various social movements. Hence many governments and other collectives engage in initiatives to improve the societal standing of minorities, focusing on, for example, how these groups can become part of the social structures, can be respected, and be fairly treated (Ward et al., 2018). Altogether, these efforts are directed at the social inclusion of ethnic minority groups, with the ultimate goal of promoting social cohesion through favorable interethnic attitudes and contact.

At the same time, populist political narratives have increasingly emerged in both Europe and the United States. In this rhetoric, support for and affiliation with diversity by different groups (e.g., political parties, governments) is presented as a cultural and economic threat to the nation (Davidov et al., 2020). Political parties and movements relying on this narrative have emerged and received a substantial share of the votes and political power (Green et al., 2020). For example, the 'leave' campaign of the Brexit referendum drew heavily on the supposed threats of immigration for the United Kingdom (Visintin et al., 2018). The belief that the majority group will eventually become a minority and as a consequence lose power over the country's future has fueled feelings of threat and consequently support for political parties that oppose migration and minority inclusion (Kešić and Duyvendak, 2019).

Drawing on instrumental models of group conflict (Quillian, 1995; Esses et al., 1998; Scheepers et al., 2002; Meuleman et al., 2009), here we further examine this bifurcation. This model considers perceived competition for resources as an important determinant of intergroup attitudes and behavior. The competition may be about economic or material resources, such as money, jobs and housing. However, research suggests that perceived cultural threat, such as an anticipated clash of values or fear of losing a particular cultural identity, may be as important (Ivarsflaten, 2005; Sniderman and Hagendoorn, 2007; Schneider, 2008).

A perceived national climate that promotes equal rights, fair treatment, and respect for minorities may trigger a sense of threat in the majority group. Such threat arises from the perceived or anticipated competition between minorities and the majority group for limited resources (e.g., jobs, housing), and for symbolic or cultural hegemony, as minories can be seen to challenge the cultural predominance that the majority group wishes to maintain (Allport, 1954; Stephan and Renfro, 2002; McLaren, 2003; Semyonov et al., 2008). Intriguingly, such perceptions or anticipations may not accurately reflect actual societal changes (Peyton et al., 2022).

When intergroup relationships are perceived through a zero-sum competition lens, a gain for minorities is perceived as a loss for the majority (Esses et al., 1998, 2005). This can exacerbate feelings of resentment, fear, and hostility towards minority groups among the majority population. Among minority group members, however, an inclusive national climate may evoke fundamentally different responses. Minorities perceiving an inclusive national climate feel more accepted and valued by the larger society which in turn would enhance their sense of belonging and well being. As a result, they may perceive and seek positive interactions with members of the majority group and view diversity as an asset to society. When both sides of the coin are taken into consideration, it suggests that a national inclusion climate may create a context in which one group's approach intentions may be met with avoidance from the other, resulting in strained intergroup relationships and interactions.

We test and replicate the proposed paradoxical effects of perceived inclusion focusing on the ethnic majority and minority groups in the Netherlands. We use data coming from two waves - collected with a four-year gap - of a repeated cross-sectional survey called the Dutch Survey on the Integration of Minorities (SIM). In both waves data was collected among a representative sample of each of the four largest non-western minority groups in the Netherlands: individuals with a Turkish, Moroccan, Surinamese or Dutch-Carribean migration background (as well as a comparative group of persons without a migration background; the majority group).[2] Together, these four minority groups make up almost 60% of the total population with a non-western migrant background and more than 30% of the total immigrant population in the Netherlands. The survey taps into a broad range of subjects and is unique because of the large and representative sample of different minorities, reaching not only the highly educated minorities, but also those with lower levels of formal education, less or no Dutch language proficiency, or those from lower income groups by (also) using face-to-face interviews conducted by interviewers in different languages.

This work makes critical contributions by testing and extending the propositions of the instrumental model of group conflict (Quillian, 1995; Esses et al., 1998). For example, the main premise of this theory is that intergroup conflict stems from the perception of competition for access to valuable resources. We argue that signals of such competitive contexts can be construed differently by members of groups from higher versus lower status positions, who have a greater or smaller share to start with. Consequently, their responses may differ as a factor of these initial group status differences. Given that the majority of existing research has focused on investigating responses to such contexts from the perspectives of the majority, high status groups (Schlueter et al., 2013; Green et al., 2020), our understanding of how such contexts affect minority and lower-status groups remains relatively underdeveloped. This work contributes to theory building from minority groups' point of view and tests the applicability of the instrumental model of group conflict to groups with lower social standing. In so doing, it adds an additional theoretical layer to the

1 StatLine - Bevolking; migratieachtergrond, generatie, lft, regio, 1 January; 2010–2022 (cbs.nl)

2 CBS uses the following official definition to describe a non-Western person in the Netherlands: "Every person residing in the Netherlands of whom one or both parents were born in Africa, Latin America, Asia (excluding Indonesia and Japan) or Turkey."

model and extends its reach. Second, the instrumental model of group conflict suggests that perceived social mobility can elucidate a sense of threat in the majority group which prompts them to want to reduce the source of competition through -among other things- negative attitudes and avoidant tendencies. We gauge the validity of this argument in the context of the Netherlands, unraveling some of the unique forms such negative responses can take. Third, the proposed paradoxical effects of perceived national inclusion climate could explain, at least to some extent, why creating inclusionary climates may not always have the intended positive effects on intergroup contact and can even create unintended negative effects. These findings provide valuable insights for policymakers when designing interventions aimed at promoting minority inclusion. It is important to consider the potential unintended consequences of such interventions to ensure that their benefits are not negated by unforeseen outcomes. By taking into account the complexity of intergroup dynamics and the different perspectives of both majority and minority groups, policymakers can design more effective and sustainable interventions that promote positive intergroup relations.

Theory and hypotheses

Increased migration has led many societies to seek ways to optimally include and enhance participation among minority and immigrant communities, through integrative and multiculturalist policies and efforts (Castles, 1992; Gryzmala-Kazlowska and Philimore, 2017). Notwithstanding whether these policies have, in fact, created the intended objective – that is, structural status gain among minority groups – they have contributed to the emergence of a social mobility narrative which contends that being part of traditionally disadvantaged ethno-racial groups no longer presents a hindrance to one's potential success or accomplishments (Lum, 2009; Bobo, 2011). From the majority's perspective a zero-sum view on social standing appears to be present: if minority groups are thought to encounter no realistic barriers for progress, perceptions of an environment allowing progress should result in these groups claiming more of the valued, yet limited resources (e.g., jobs), leaving less resources available for the majority group. Thus, in a world of finite resources, perceptions of societal contexts that allow or promote social mobility, such as those signaling opportunity-rich egalitarian environments for minority groups, can contribute to perceived competition among groups (Allport, 1954; Esses et al., 2005).

The instrumental model of group conflict suggests that resource stress (i.e., perceived limited access to valued resources by one's group) and salient competitor outgroups (e.g., dissimilar groups in appearance or behavior) cause perception of competition and attempts to remove the source of competition (Esses et al., 1998, 2005). Perceived social mobility and opportunity in society can thus lead high status groups to experience "resource stress" because these signal (potential) changes in the societal hierarchy. The underlying idea is that environmental cues prompting changes to hierarchy can be threatening, as one's own group may no longer have disproportional power and status.

Previous research has suggested that inclusionary environments can represent such cues as they constitute complex resource negotiation settings between groups (Eibach and Keegan, 2006). These settings make parties especially vigilant to (potential) gains and losses, creating fixed-pie perceptions of outcomes where others' gain is perceived as one's loss (De Dreu et al., 2000; Bazerman et al., 2001). Consequently, societal contexts aiming at inclusion, such as those enhancing egalitarian treatment and social standing of minority groups, can be perceived as a loss by the majority group members, who traditionally enjoy a more privileged societal position. That is, perceptions of losing their dominant position inflates perceptions of minorities' progress (Eibach and Keegan, 2006). The opening quote from a 2016 article in a popular Dutch weekly journal also illustrates this, showing that, from a majority group member's perspective, the chances minorities get may come at the expense of the majority group's chances. Empirical research supports this idea. Evidence from a study shows that in the United States, white people's perceptions of decreased bias towards African Americans are associated with increased perceptions of an anti-white bias, such that white participants perceive their own group to face more bias than African Americans (Norton and Sommers, 2011). More recent work demonstrates that the majority group members report a sense of threat primarily as a consequence of perceived (rather than actual) ethno-racial diversity, which they construe as competition for valued resources (Gorodzeisky and Semyonov, 2020).

This perceived threat can have significant impact on intergroup attitudes and affect, particularly towards minority groups. The instrumental model of group conflict suggests that individuals may employ various coping mechanisms to address perceived competition, such as expressing negative attitudes or making unfavorable attributions towards outgroups, as well as avoiding physical proximity to those groups (Esses et al., 1998, 2005). In addition, the improving position of minority groups may prompt a shift in political preferences towards conservatism, which reinforces the status quo (Craig and Richeson, 2018). Furthermore, meta-analytical evidence suggests that intergroup threat can lead to negative outgroup attitudes, potentially contributing to the rise of anti-immigration political movements (Boomgaarden and Vliegenthart, 2007).

Majority group's intergroup responses to inclusionary climate for minorities

The above discussion suggests that a perceived inclusionary climate can instigate negative responses of majority group towards minorities. We examine these responses in three areas: (a) negative intergroup affect, (b) overall negative attitudes towards diversity, and (c) avoidant behavioral tendencies in interethnic context. By examining these three areas, we provide critical insights that span a spectrum of possible intergroup reactions, with important implications for both theory and policy making.

Negative intergroup affect is most widely captured through ethnocentrism – generalized negative affect towards outgroups (Triandis, 1990). The perception of losing a privileged position in society can create a sense of threat to the interests of the majority group, leading to negative affect towards threatening outgroups (Smith, 1993). For example, when a group feels threatened, there can be an increase in out-group bias (Brown and Ross, 1982) and in-group favoritism (Breakwell, 1978). Therefore, we propose that the perceived inclusion of minority groups may correlate with heightened ethnocentrism among the majority group.

In addition to outgroup specific negative affect, we also investigate overall negative attitudes towards diversity manifested as resistance to diversity. This reflects an oppositional stance regarding the desirability and value of (increased) diversity for society (Velasco and Sansone, 2019). An inclusive society towards minorities is one that is open to increased minority representation. Increased numeric representation of minorities could endanger the majority group, since larger groups are believed to hold more power than smaller groups (Blumer, 1958). As a group grows in size, it can be perceived as more threatening since it has the potential to mobilize and advocate for a better position within society, especially in a democratic context. Hence, even the mere presence of cultural diversity in a neighborhood can be interpreted as a perceived threat to the majority group. Research has shown that there is a positive correlation between a sense of endangerment among the majority group and the overestimation of the perception of minority group size (Alba et al., 2005). Further, when under increased threat, the majority group is more likely to reject diversity and express negative attitudes towards minority groups (Outten et al., 2012; Danbold and Huo, 2015). Therefore, perceived minority inclusion may be associated with increased resistance to diversity among the majority group.

Finally, we investigate the avoidant tendencies exhibited by the majority group in response to an inclusive climate. We examine these tendencies in the context of the reluctance to engage in intergroup contact. We propose that perceived inclusion of minority groups is associated with increased reluctance to interethnic contact in the majority group. Unraveling the determinants of interethnic contact, under certain conditions, is crucial since contact can be a direct way to improve interethnic relations through more positive intergroup attitudes (Pettigrew et al., 2007), reduced threat (Green et al., 2020) and lowered prejudice towards minorities (Visintin et al., 2020). Intriguingly, the relationship between contact and intergroup attitudes has a reciprocal nature: contact can improve attitudes, and positive attitudes increase the likelihood of intergroup contact (Herek and Capitanio, 1996; Levin et al., 2003). Hence illuminating what drives contact (intentions) is key for understanding these unique dynamics of multi-ethnic societies. Taken together, this leads to the following prediction:

> *Hypothesis 1a*: For the majority group, perceived climate of inclusion for minorities is positively associated with ethnocentrism, resistance to diversity, and reluctance to engage in interethnic contact with minority groups.

Minority group's intergroup responses to inclusionary climate for minorities

The instrumental model of group conflict mainly focuses on the intergroup dynamics resulting from perceived threats to the majority group's social status or access to resources due to social mobility (Esses et al., 1998, 2005). It is important to consider the impact of these perceptions among minorities as well, since they can significantly affect their acculturation orientation (Bourhis et al., 1997). In fact, while climate for inclusion for minorities constitutes a potential threat to the majority group, for minorities it represents a welcome opportunity. For minorities (perceiving) social inclusion is undoubtedly beneficial. Numerous studies show that a sense of belonging and equitable treatment are associated with benefits among minority groups, including better school achievements, work and educational engagement, life satisfaction, and mental health (Walton and Cohen, 2011; Berry and Hou, 2016; Phalet and Baysu, 2020). Minority youth who experience more intergroup contact and less unequal treatment, report more belonging with the majority group (Kende et al., 2021). Hence, we contend that perceptions of an inclusionary climate should have opposite effects for minority groups compared to the majority group.

We anticipate that these divergent effects will manifest in intergroup affect and attitudes. The sense of belonging, respect, and fair treatment is associated with more positive attitudes towards the majority group, as it reduces anxiety around intergroup contact and concerns of rejection (Mendoza-Denton et al., 2002; Plant and Devine, 2003). This suggests a negative relationship between perceived climate for inclusion and ethnocentrism among minorities. Similarly, from the minority groups' perspective, perceived inclusion climate for minorities may boost these groups' pro-diversity attitudes. In general, minority groups are supportive of climates and initiatives aiming at improving the position of their own and other minority groups (e.g., Bobo and Hutchings, 1996; Harrison et al., 2006). Some research on neighborhood heterogeneity suggests that among minorities, increased presence of other groups lowers both prejudice towards and sense of competition with those other groups (Oliver and Wong, 2003). This suggests for minority groups that perceptions of an inclusion climate should be negatively associated with generalized resistance to diversity. Thus, we propose for minority groups reduced ethnocentrism and resistance to diversity in an environment perceived as inclusionary.

We also expect contrasting patterns when focusing on avoidant tendencies in the form of reluctance to engage in interethnic contact. Specifically, perceptions of an inclusionary climate should encourage minorities to seek contact with the majority group. Indeed, empirical studies have provided evidence that when minority groups perceive that their experiences and identity are recognized and valued by the majority, they tend to express greater intentions to engage in intergroup contact (Tropp and Bianchi, 2007). Building on this, we expect minorities' approach- rather than avoidance-intentions to grow when they perceive the national climate to support their participation and mobility. This leads to the following prediction for the minority group:

> *Hypothesis 1b*: For the minority group, perceived climate of inclusion for minorities is negatively associated with ethnocentrism, resistance to diversity, and reluctance to engage in interethnic contact with the majority group.

To test our model (see Supplementary Figure S1) we use two independent datasets comprising responses among several minority ethnic groups and a comparative (majority) group. Considering the cross-sectional nature of our data sets, it is important to note that our approach cannot establish causality or determine the direction of relationships. However, examining the model in two independent samples allows us to replicate the findings and demonstrate the stable (as opposed to incidental) nature of the patterns. Further, we focus on individual level subjective perceptions of a societal context. Consequently, our approach does not provide evidence concerning the accuracy or origins of these perceptions. We elaborate upon these limitations in the general discussion.

TABLE 1 Sample characteristics.

Characteristic	SIM 2011	SIM 2015	Combined
Age, M (SD)	40.1 (16.9)	40.8 (17.2)	40.3 (17.0)
Gender (*n*)			
Male	3,301	2,359	5,660
Female	3,522	2,715	6,237
Group (*n*)			
Dutch-descent	1,395	1,046	2,441
Moroccan-descent	1,385	951	2,336
Turkish-descent	1,348	920	2,268
Dutch-Carribean descent	1,400	1,112	2,512
Surinamese-descent	1,295	1,045	2,340
Total	6,823	5,074	11,897

Methods

Survey and datasets

The data used for this study were collected as part of the Dutch Survey on the Integration of Minorities (SIM). This is a repeated, cross-sectional survey among Dutch citizens with no migration background (majority group) and the four largest, non-western minority ethnic groups living in the Netherlands (i.e., Dutch of Turkish, Moroccan, Surinamese, Dutch-Carribean descent). For the current study, we use data collected as part of the 2011[3] and 2015 wave.[4] The data that support the findings of this study are openly available in DANS at doi: 10.17026/dans-xfv-2vx4, and doi: 10.17026/dans-xep-by9x.

For each wave, Statistics Netherlands (CBS) drew samples from the national population register (inhabitants aged 15 and above). All sampled persons were invited to take part in the survey in a consent letter that was sent to their home address. The letter contained information about the research, how the data would be used and a statement about privacy. It also contained a free telephone number and email address for subjects with further questions on the research. Respondents received 15 euros for their participation (for more details on the SIM survey designs, see Andriessen and Kappelhof, 2015; Kappelhof, 2015). For reasons of brevity, we will refer to the groups in our study as Dutch, Moroccan, Turkish, Dutch-Carribean and Surinamese. The net samples of respondents used in the current study are included in Table 1.

Measures

CBS determines *ethnic group membership* by attending to one's country of birth and the country of birth of their parents. Persons born in the Netherlands with both parents born in the Netherlands are classified as Dutch without a migration background. Persons who were either born themselves in a different country or had at least one parent born in a different country are classified as having a migration background (CBS, 2016).[5] We dichotomized this variable to construct the variable (majority/minority group) for the purpose of our study distinguishing respondents without a migration background ("native Dutch"; majority group), and with a migration background (Turkish, Moroccan, Surinamese, or Dutch-Carribean background; minority group). This distinction was used to test for the differential effects of perceived climate for inclusion of minorities on the dependent variables in a multi group model (see analytic strategy).

The latent construct *Perceived climate for inclusion of minorities* was measured using four items that were scored on a 5-point scale (1 = completely disagree, 5 = completely agree). The items were "The Netherlands is a hospitable country for ethnic minorities" (hosp). "The Netherlands is open to foreign cultures" (open), "Ethnic minorities have every chance in the Netherlands" (chance) and "In the Netherlands the rights of ethnic minorities are respected" (rights).

Ethnocentrism was constructed using 'feeling' thermometers (Nelson, 2008). Each respondent rated all five groups (including their own ethnic group) on a scale ranging from 0 to 100, with 0 indicating very cold feelings towards that group and 100 indicating very warm feelings. For native Dutch participants ethnocentrism was calculated as the score on the native Dutch group (tempnatd) minus the mean score on the other four ethnic groups (temptur [Turkish background], tempmor [Moroccan background], tempsur [Surinamese background], tempant [Dutch-Carribean background]). For ethnic minorities we calculated ethnocentrism as the score on their respective ingroup (i.e., Turkish, Moroccan, Surinamese or Dutch-Carribean) minus their score for native Dutch (Valentino et al., 2013).

The latent construct *Resistance to diversity* was measured using three items with a 5-point scale (1 = completely disagree, 5 = completely agree). The items were: "Too many ethnic minorities live in the Netherlands" (many), "Neighbourhoods deteriorate when too many ethnic minorities live there" (deter), and "It is a good thing when a society consists of different cultures" (cultdiv). The last item was reverse coded, so that higher scores indicate higher levels of resistance to diversity.

The latent construct *Reluctance to engage in interethnic contact* was measured using two items with a 5-point scale (1 = not at all, 5 = very much). The items were adapted according to the ethnic background of the respondents and read: "How much would you object to one of your children having many friends from ethnic minority groups [native-Dutch participants]/ many native Dutch friends [ethnic minority participants]" (friends) and 'How much would you object to one of your children choosing a partner from an ethnic minority group[native-Dutch participants]/ a native Dutch partner [ethnic minority participants]" (partner) (Johnson and Jacobson, 2005; Tropp

3 Data for the SIM 2011 survey was gathered in the years 2010 and 2011 (from November 2010 to June 2011). For sake of brievity we call it the SIM 2011 survey. At the time of our analyses these two waves were the most recent, publicly available data sets.

4 2011 fieldwork was conducted by Gfk and Labyrinth. 2015 fieldwork was conducted by TNS Nipo [now Kantar Public] and Labyrinth.

5 https://www.cbs.nl/nl-nl/faq/specifiek/wat-verstaat-het-cbs-onder-een-allochtoon

et al., 2016). Higher scores indicate higher reluctance to engage in intergroup contact. Please see Supplementary Table S1 for an overview of the labels used in the present paper and those in the overarching data set.

Analytical strategy

To test our hypotheses, we used a three-stage approach. In the first – preparatory – stage of the analyses, we performed a multi-group confirmatory factor analysis (MGCFA) to test for measurement equivalence of the latent concepts across minority and majority groups, using Mplus version 7.4 (Muthén and Muthén, 2011).[6] This will be referred to as the measurement model (2011 M0 for 2011 and 2015 M0 for 2015).

After establishing measurement equivalence (i.e., that the constructs in the model measure the same thing for the different groups and therefore the estimates can be meaningfully compared), we used a multi group structural equation model. We focused on fitting the hypothesized structural relations between the different constructs for the minority and majority group.

Models 2011 M1 and 2015 M1 tested for the equivalence of the hypothesized relationships between the constructs associations between majority and minority groups, by constraining the structural paths between the constructs to be equal between majority and minority groups.[7] Here we ask the question if the relationships between the constructs are equivalent for majority and minority groups in 2011 and 2015.

In a subsequent set of models, we released the restraints on the structural paths for the majority and minority groups to be equal for *perceived climate for inclusion of minorities* on the variables *ethnocentrism* (2011 M2a and 2015 M2a), *reluctance to engage in interethnic contact* (2011 M2b and 2015 M2b) and *resistance to diversity* (2011 M2c and 2015 M2c), to test our hypotheses about the differential hypothesized relationships of *perceived climate for inclusion of minorities* among the majority and minority groups. If the hypotheses hold, the model that allows for differential relationships between the majority and minority group should lead to an improved fit compared to 2011 M1 and 2015 M1 models.

In the final stage of our analysis approach we examined if the hypothesized relationship of *perceived climate for inclusion of minorities* is robust and not incidental. To this end we examined if the model results for 2011 and 2015 were similar in direction and size thereby providing evidence for a systematic difference between majority and minority groups. This was done by comparing the fit of three nested models and evaluating the best fit by varying the restrictions of the structural paths. In model M3_1 we assume that hypothesized relationships are similar across both groups and time; model M3_2 assumes that the hypothesized relationships between the constructs are equal across time, but may differ for majority and minority groups; and model M3_3 assumes that hypothesized relationships differ across both groups and time. The measurement part of all three models was constrained to be measurement invariant for all three models.

Fit indices

In order to test the models (M0 – M3) we use formal chi-square tests as well as three often used fit indices: the root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA; Steiger, 1989), the Tucker-Lewis index (TLI; Tucker and Lewis, 1973) and the comparative fit index (CFI; Bentler, 1990). The RMSEA is an absolute fit index that examines closeness of fit of the model. A RMSEA value of more than 0.1 is seen as an indication of poor fit, a value of 0.05 to 0.08 as acceptable and a value below 0.05 as good to very good (Hu and Bentler, 1999). The TLI and CFI compare the fit of the model under consideration with the fit of the baseline-model (here the M1 model). Fit is considered adequate if the TLI and CFI values are above 0.90, better if they are above 0.95.

Results

Preparatory stage: measurement equivalence

In the base model (M0) we performed a multi-group confirmatory factor analysis (MGCFA) to test whether the constructs have the same meaning for minority and majority groups. The invariant measurement model fits both the 2011 and the 2015 sample well: 2011 M0 (RMSEA = 0.039, CFI = 0.973, TLI = 0.975) and 2015 M0 (RMSEA = 0.049, CFI = 0.973, TLI = 0.977). This allows for a meaningful comparison of the latent scores between the majority and the minority groups in both 2011 and 2015. Supplementary Table S2 provides the measurement coefficients (factor loadings) of the (latent) constructs in the 2011 and 2015 measurement invariant model.

Results for differential relationships between majority and minority groups

To test our hypotheses regarding different associations of perceived inclusive climate among the majority and minority groups, a set of models was specified: a model that constrained all structural paths to intergroup equivalence (M1: same associations exist between latent constructs across groups) and models that released the structural paths for native Dutch from *Perceived climate for inclusion of minorities* to the dependent variables (M2 models: associations

6 Three factors (*perceived climate for inclusion, reluctance to engage in interethnic contact, resistance to diversity*) have ordered categorical indicators and therefore the WLSMV (Mean- and Variance-adjusted Weighted Least Square) estimator has been used to address the multivariate normality assumption (Lubke and Muthén, 2004). To reflect the data structure, a cluster variable was included to allow for a correction of possible interviewer-dependent correlation between the answers of respondents that were interviewed by the same interviewer. A weighting variable was also included to correct for potential nonresponse error and unequal inclusion probabilities.

7 It is important to note that the M0 models do not contain the directly observed measure of ethnocentrism. As a result of the addition of the measure of ethnocentrism in the M1 model, the M1 models are expanded and thus not nested within the M0 models. This poses no problems as no formal tests will be conducted between M0 and M1 because this is not relevant for our study.

TABLE 2 Chi-squares and fit measures for the structural models: invariant structural model and partial invariant models.

Sample	Model	Fit indices					
		Chi-square (df)	N^1	RMSEA (90% CI)	CFI	TLI	Formal Chi-square test against M1[2]
2011	M1	1066.851 (93)	6,815	0.055 (0.052–0.058)	0.932	0.934	-
	M2a	934.087 (92)	6,815	0.052 (0.049–0.055)	0.941	0.943	$X^2_{(1)} = 140.896$, $p < 0.000$
	M2b	823.341 (92)	6,815	0.048 (0.045–0.051)	0.949	0.950	$X^2_{(1)} = 159.945$, $p < 0.000$
	M2c	899.480 (92)	6,815	0.051 (0.048–0.054)	0.944	0.945	$X^2_{(1)} = 145.678$, $p < 0.000$
2015	M1	966.161 (93)	5,069	0.061 (0.057–0.064)	0.953	0.955	-
	M2a	699.053 (92)	5,069	0.051 (0.048–0.055)	0.967	0.968	$X^2_{(1)} = 223.681$, $p < 0.000$
	M2b	850.690 (92)	5,069	0.057 (0.054–0.061)	0.959	0.960	$X^2_{(1)} = 80.741$, $p < 0.000$
	M2c	1097.874 (92)	5,069	0.066 (0.062–0.069)	0.946	0.947	$X^2_{(1)} = 18.997$, $p < 0.000$

M1: model with structural paths between constructs constrained to be equal for the majority and minority groups. M2a: model with path from Perceived climate for inclusion of minorities to ethnocentrism released. M2b: model with path from Perceived climate for inclusion of minorities to reluctance to engage in interethnic contact released. M2c: model with path from Perceived climate for inclusion of minorities to resistance to diversity released. [1]For the 2011 analysis there were 8 cases with missing information on all variables. For the 2015 analysis there were 6 cases with missing information on all variables. These were excluded from the analysis. [2]In this test the chi-square difference can be smaller or larger than the observed difference between the tested models. This is due to the Santorra Bentler correction.

between latent constructs differ across groups).[8] This was done for both the 2011 sample and the 2015 sample. Table 2 presents chi-squares and fit measures for these models for both 2011 and 2015.

The formal chi-square test, as well as the improvement in fit measures, indicated that, as hypothesized, perception of an inclusive environment has different implications for intergroup attitudes for the majority than for the minority group when we consider *ethnocentrism* and *reluctance to engage in interethnic contact*. *Climate for inclusion* is positively associated with *ethnocentrism* in the majority group, meaning that when the majority group perceives a climate that is more open and just towards minority groups, they have a higher preference for their ethnic group compared to other ethnic groups. In contrast, in minority groups, climate for inclusion is negatively associated with *ethnocentrism*, meaning that when these groups perceive that the societal climate is more open and accepting of minorities their relative preference of their own ethnic group compared to the majority group is smaller (M2a). Table 3 shows the coefficients of the released paths for both majority and minority group.

Also, in line with our hypothesis we find that *climate for inclusion* of minorities is positively associated with *reluctance to engage in interethnic contact* among the majority group. For minority groups, the effect is opposite as hypothesized: perceiving a more inclusive climate goes hand in hand with less *reluctance to engage in interethnic contact* with the majority group. This is true for both the 2011 and the 2015 sample (M2b).

In line with our reasoning, the effects of *climate for inclusion* of minorities on *ethnocentrism* and *reluctance to engage in interethnic contact* run in opposite directions for majority and minority groups. However, even though we expected the same differential pattern for *resistance to diversity*, this is not what we find in model M2c for 2015. This model did show a small but statistically significant decrease in fit as compared to the model restricting this to be equal between the majority and minority group. Freeing that parameter does not improve the overall fit of the model. This means that in the 2015 study, the relationship between inclusive environment perceptions and resistance to diversity was similar for both the majority and minority groups. To the extent minority *and* majority groups perceive a more positive inclusion climate, they both tend to resist diversity more. Thus, even though H1a is supported, *Hypothesis 1b* is supported for ethnocentrism and reluctance to engage in interethnic contact but not for resistance to diversity.

In the 2011 sample, the direction of the association between *climate for inclusion* and *resistance to diversity* is the same for majority and minority groups. However, the strength of the relationship between the concepts is stronger for the majority group than for the minority group.[9] Taken together, these findings support *Hypothesis 1a* and partially support *Hypothesis 1b*. We discuss possible reasons and implications in the discussion section.

Robustness of the relationships

Finally, we present the results of the three nested M3 models (M3_1 – M3_3) with varying restrictions for the structural paths between the same constructs across the different groups between both samples to ensure the robustness of the relationships. Table 4 presents chi-squares and fit measures for the models, testing if relationships are similar across both groups and samples (M3_1), if relationships are equal across samples, but may differ for majority and minority groups (M3_2), and if relationships differ across both groups and samples

8 In both models, measurement models were constrained to invariance. See Online Supplement for factor loadings.

9 We add, however, that the difference in sample size between 2010/2011 and 2015 (about 1800 cases) may account for the difference in findings between the two samples. Possibly the difference in strength between the majority and minority group in the 2015 sample would have reached statistical significance (as indicated by a drop in fit and formal chi square test) with an equally large sample size.

TABLE 3 Coefficients and standard errors of the released paths for both majority and minority group.

	Effect of climate for inclusion on:	Majority estimate (SE)	Minority estimate (SE)	Model
2011	Ethnocentrism	0.136 (0.016)*	−0.154 (0.017) *	2011_M2a
	Reluctance to engage in interethnic contact	0.489 (0.056) *	−0.233 (0.042) *	2011_M2b
	Resistance to diversity	0.799 (0.052) *	0.248 (0.028) *	2011_M2c
2015	Ethnocentrism	0.143 (0.019) *	−0.216 (0.016) *	2015_M2a
	Reluctance to engage in interethnic contact	0.367 (0.046) *	−0.204 (0.055) *	2015_M2b
	Resistance to diversity	0.533 (0.034) *	0.268 (0.055) *	2015_M2c

*$p < 0.01$.

TABLE 4 Fit indices and chi-square test for models testing robustness across samples.

Model	Fit indices					
	Chi-square (*df*)	*N*[1]	RMSEA (90% CI)	CFI	TLI	Formal Chi-square test[2]
M3_1	2063.681 (219)	11,884	0.053 (0.051–0.055)	0.943	0.953	-
M3_2	1078.497 (216)	11,884	0.037 (0.035–0.039)	0.973	0.978	M3_1: $X^2_{(3)} = 606.694$, $p < 0.000$
M3_3	1221.438 (210)	11,884	0.040 (0.038–0.042)	0.965	0.973	M3_2: $X^2_{(6)} = 18.922$, $p < 0.004$

[1]For the analysis there were 14 cases with missing information on all variables, 8 for the 2011 sample and 6 from the 2015 sample. These were excluded from the analysis. [2]In this test the Chi-square difference can be smaller or larger than the observed difference between the tested models. This is due to the Santorra Bentler correction.

(M3_3). This allows for a formal test of the hypothesis that the differential relationships are the same in size and directions across samples (M3_2) thereby providing evidence for a systematic difference between majority and minority groups.

The results from Table 4 indicate that the model testing whether the structural paths between the constructs are equal across both samples, but vary between the majority and minority groups has the best fit (M3_2) and clearly fits the data structure well, thereby providing support for our hypotheses.

Table 5 shows the coefficients of the structural paths for both majority and minority groups fitted to be equal across samples but different between groups. The factor loadings of this model (M3_2) can be found in the Supplementary Table S2. The table shows opposite associations for majority and minority groups for perceived *climate for inclusion* of minorities on both *ethnocentrism* and *reluctance to engage in interethnic contact*. Whereas the perception of an inclusionary climate for minorities is associated with more ethnocentrism in the majority group, it is associated with less ethnocentrism among minority groups. Similarly, the perception of an open and inclusive climate is associated with less negative attitudes towards interethnic contact among minority groups, whereas it is associated with greater objection to interethnic contact in the majority group. Finally, we found that the majority group's perception of an inclusive climate for minorities is linked to their resistance towards a culturally diverse society and negative attitudes towards ethnically diverse neighborhoods. Interestingly, we find a similar pattern for minority groups, but to a significantly lesser extent. As shown by the formal test, this pattern applies to both the 2011 and the 2015 sample. Taken together, the consistent findings indicate a stable pattern in which a perception of a more inclusive, diverse and equal society has largely different implications for majority and minority groups.

Discussion

This study investigated the paradoxical effects of perceived national inclusion climate for minorities on both majority and minority groups in the Netherlands. Our results show that a perception of an inclusive climate is associated with positive attitudes towards interethnic relations in minority groups, but has opposite effects on the majority group. In particular, the perception of a commitment to equal opportunities and openness toward ethnic minorities is positively correlated with ethnocentric attitudes and a hesitancy to engage in interethnic contact within the majority group. Additionally, this perception is positively associated with opposition to ethnic diversity in general, including perceptions that the mere presence of ethnic minorities has a negative impact on neighborhoods.

This work highlights a paradox that arises when nations strive to create a more equitable and just society. Our findings indicate that when efforts to create a level playing field are perceived as successful, they can paradoxically lead to social tensions because minorities' intentions to engage with the majority in these environments may be met by rejection and distance from the members of the majority group. An additional, unexpected, finding further suggests that this paradox can extend to some parts of intraminority relationships: perceived national inclusion climate for minorities is negatively associated with openness to increased ethnic diveristy in society and neighborhoods among minorities in our sample. We discuss the implications below.

TABLE 5 Structural path coefficients and standard errors of final model (different between groups and consistent across samples).

Perceived climate for inclusion of minorities on	Majority group coefficient (SE)	Minority groups coefficient (SE)
Ethnocentrism	0.152* (0.016)	−0.170* (0.012)
Reluctance to engage in interethnic contact	0.437* (0.047)	−0.232* (0.037)
Resistance to diversity	0.661* (0.036)	0.273* (0.028)

*$p < 0.01$.

Theoretical contributions

The findings for the majority group generally support the basic propositions of the instrumental model of group conflict (Esses et al., 1998, 2005). Because an environment that signals social mobility and opportunity richness for minority groups can be construed as a threat to the economic and cultural hegemony of the majority group, perceptions of an inclusionary climate may motivate the majority group to suppress the source of competition they experience. One way to do this is to report negative attitudes towards and to avoid the competitive minority groups. The current work sheds light onto the different forms such coping mechanisms can take and suggests that it ranges from unfavorable intra-personal affective responses -ethnocentric views- to a rejection of direct contact with minorities to opposition to diversity in general.

In contrast with the majority group's avoidant responses, we find that minority groups' perceptions of an inclusionary climate are associated with greater inclination toward engagement. In these environments, minorities report more favorable intra-personal affective responses (i.e., less ethnocentrism) and are more positive with regards to direct contact with the majority group. These findings build on the instrumental model of group conflict by showing a potential boundary condition: while environments that signal social mobility may be linked with avoidant tendencies among high status groups, for low status groups the opposite may be true.

Intriguingly, contrary to what we expected, we found a positive link between the perception of an inclusive climate and resistance to ethnically diverse settings, even within minority groups. This association is stronger for majority members than for minority groups, but – in contrast to our other findings – the direction of the association for both groups is the same. This finding suggests that ethnic minority groups, much like the majority group, may associate an increasing presence of (other) minorities as a threat in an inclusive climate for minorities. That is, the perception of an inclusive climate may also contribute to the development of fixed pie perceptions within intraminority relationships, contributing to specific outgroup distancing intentions between minority populations. This finding is critical as it (a) uniquely shows the relevance of instrumental model of group conflict (Esses et al., 1998, 2005) for intraminority relationships, and in so doing (b) moves beyond simplistic in- versus out-group dynamics. By examining specific minority populations and their intergroup dynamics within a contextualized framework, our findings hold significance for advancing the development of theories that explain the emergence of intergroup threats beyond majority-minority relationships.

It is noteworthy that the intragroup findings in the present research may also reflect (a fear for) enhanced competition for resources and services in increasingly mixed neighborhoods, that are often segregated along ethnic lines. For instance, in the Netherlands, there is a significant shortage of qualified school teachers, particularly in economically disadvantaged urban neighborhoods. Given that ethnic minorities tend to reside in these areas more frequently, these shortages have a disproportionate impact on the quality of schools and the provided education for their children. Resistance to diverse neighborhoods for minority groups then may also reflect concerns for the quality of services and living conditions in one's neighborhood. Taken together, the findings among the minority groups show that perceptions of minority inclusion, where minorities have a chance to ascend in the hierarchical layers, are positively related to minorities' attitudes towards the majority group but -at least to some extent- negatively towards the presence and increased share of (other) minority groups.

Limitations and future directions

To fully grasp the scope and implications of our current research, it is important to consider its contextual relevance and boundaries. As previously discussed, we leveraged data from two waves of a large, nationally representative, repeated, cross-sectional survey, which offers several advantages. These strengths include our ability to construct and test a theoretical model that uniquely examines the perspectives and psychological dynamics of minority groups. Furthermore, the data allowed us to replicate our initial findings using a separate survey conducted with a significant time gap. Consequently, this approach enhances our confidence in the established relationships between variables and mitigates to a large degree the risk of Type 1 errors often associated with cross-sectional research reliant on a single data collection instance.

Nonetheless, it is important to acknowledge the limitations stemming from the cross-sectional nature of our datasets and our reliance on self-reported individual-level perceptions. While we present and test a theoretical model that places perceived inclusion before outcome measures like ethnocentrism and interethnic contact, we recognize that these data do not allow us to determine causation. In other words, we cannot rule out the possibility that individuals scoring higher in ethnocentrism and/or showing reluctance toward interethnic contact might also perceive a highly inclusive national climate toward ethnic minorities. Experimental approaches or time-lagged designs are necessary to establish the direction of these relationships more robustly.

Future research may also benefit from incorporating additional key variables to enhance our understanding of potential reverse causality. One such variable is individual differences in system justifying beliefs, the extent to which individuals have internalized the legitimacy of existing social arrangements (Jost, 2019). For example, the current data reveal a positive association between ethnocentrism as well as the rejection of intergroup contact, and the perceived inclusion of minorities (i.e., the perception of an environment that offers minority groups equal opportunities)

among members of the majority group. Whether these positive relationships are linked to the legitimization of inequality remains an unanswered question. Recent studies show that among the members of the majority group system justifying beliefs are negatively associated with perceived inequal treatment of minorities (Bahamondes et al., 2019; Suppes et al., 2019), positively associated with group-based discrimination (Bahamondes et al., 2020), and seeing progress among minorities as threat to one's own group's status (Wilkins and Kaiser, 2014). Recent research thus underscores the significance of considering system justification as a crucial variable for a more comprehensive understanding of the concepts and relationships examined in this study. By taking this variable into explicit consideration, future work can enhance our understanding of potential reverse causality and its underlying factors.

Our research provides insights into the relationships between the majority group's perceptions of inclusive climate for minorities and negative attitudes toward minorities. However, it does not elucidate the accuracy or exact origin of these perceptions (and the concomitant threat). At least two critical questions thus remain. The first question is: to what degree does this perceived threat accurately reflect the real economic conditions of the majority group in relation to the improving situation of minority groups? An examination of the statistics suggests that the economic position of minorities in the period between 2003 and 2015 has been consistently behind the majority group, as evident from significantly higher levels of unemployment, lower salaries and lower chance of having permanent jobs (Huijnk and Andriessen, 2016). This suggests that the perceived economic threat in our study may not be an accurate reflection of an economic reality, at least at the group level.

The second question is: where do these seemingly inaccurate perceptions come from? To what extent does this perceived threat arise in response to pro-diversity policies and actions, as opposed to being influenced by a broader discourse encompassing media coverage and anecdotal evidence? We speculate that they arise as a response to both policies and programs targeting minority inclusion and participation and the broader discourse including media coverage and political narratives. Research suggests that non-target group members, such as the majority group, often perceive pro-diversity policies and actions as signals of unfair disadvantage to their group (Brannon et al., 2018; Brown and Jacoby-Senghor, 2021). It is also not surprising that public discourse on the "deteriorating position of the majority group" is rich in examples where these policies are construed in ways consistent with this worldview. For instance, the article quoted at the beginning discusses the majority group's discontent seemingly arising from government policies aimed at promoting the participation of minority groups through support for multicultural community centers (Elsevier Weekblad, 2016). Further, governmental policies prioritizing refugee families in public housing allocation are seen as unfairly taking resources away from the members of the majority group, a viewpoint that has received ample attention in the narratives of right-wing political parties (NOS.nl, 2023), which arguably adds to the discontent felt among a portion of the citizens.

Given our focus on *perceived* inclusion climate and the associated threat, the accuracy and origins of the information used by respondents to provide an answer to the predictor variable in our model are outside the scope of this study. Nonetheless, better understanding these factors is important for both advancing theory and developing effective interventions. Future research could explore how the perceived sense of threat among majority group members arises, examining the contributions of governmental policies, programs, and societal discourse.

Conclusion

This study highlights the paradoxical effects of creating an inclusive environment for ethnic minorities in European societies based on two waves of a repeated, nationally representative, cross-sectional survey, totalling over eleven thousand respondents. While an inclusive environment may improve social mobility and opportunities for minority groups, it may also result in negative intergroup sentiments and attitudes towards immigrants among the majority group. Conversely, an inclusive environment may foster more positive intergroup attitudes and affect for minority groups. Governments and other institutions should remain cognizant of these dynamics and work towards inclusion efforts that alleviate zero-sum perceptions of progress among different groups. This can be achieved through clearer articulation of goals and benefits for the broader society in the long term, as well as through comprehensive public campaigns to correct misinformation.

Data availability statement

Publicly available datasets were analyzed in this study. This data can be found at: doi.org/10.17026/dans-xfv-2vx4 and doi.org/10.17026/dans-xep-by9x.

Ethics statement

Ethical approval was not required given the analysis of publicly available data sets that are not collected by the authors. CBS (Statistics Netherlands - SN) was responsible for selecting the sample and providing the fieldwork agency with the contacting details of the sampled persons (which includes but is not limited to a DPA and secure transfer of information). The studies were conducted in accordance with the local legislation and institutional requirements. Written informed consent for participation was not required from the participants or the participants' legal guardians/next of kin in accordance with the national legislation and institutional requirements relevant for the data collecting agency.

Author contributions

IA and SG formulated the research question and hypotheses. IA, SG, JK, and AH contributed to the conceptualization of the manuscript, the data on which this manuscript is based was originally collected for a project by the Netherlands Institute for Social Research, funded by the Dutch Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment, Integration office, and interpreted the findings. JK conducted the statistical analyses. IA, SG, and JK wrote the first draft of the manuscript. AH provided critical revisions. All authors reviewed and provided critical revisions to the final draft of the manuscript.

Conflict of interest

The authors declare that the research was conducted in the absence of any commercial or financial relationships that could be construed as a potential conflict of interest.

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Supplementary material

The supplementary material for this article can be found online at: https://www.frontiersin.org/articles/10.3389/fpsyg.2023.1242595/full#supplementary-material

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Evaluating an inclusive program for promoting equal-status participation in classrooms with high sociolinguistic diversity: diversity valuation and multilingual cooperative activities

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Introduction: The inclusion of students with diverse heritage languages is an emerging issue in all OECD countries due to the global rise in international migration. With regard to their large cultural and linguistic heterogeneity, primary school classes in the French-speaking region of Switzerland are extraordinary grounds to develop inclusive teaching in context of high diversity. This research-action aims to enhance students' status among their peers and promote equal-status participation in academic activities in such classes. The research perspective focuses on valuing diversity within classes and emphasizing students' linguistic competence through cooperative activities.

Methods: The tested inclusive program places value on linguistic diversity and proposes multilingual cooperative activities that involve students' family languages and require the contributions of all students. The research was conducted over the course of a school year, involving 3rd-4th grade students. It compared the evolution students' status among peers (being chosen as a groupmate for play and work) from the beginning to the end of the school year in four classes with the inclusive program (N=77) and four control classes without the inclusive program (N=62).

Results: The results indicated expected changes in status: status increased in classes with the inclusive program, while it decreased in classes without the program. Moreover, the intervention specifically supported the status of vulnerable pupils. In classes with the inclusive program, students with initially low status experienced the greatest improvement, whereas in control classes, there was no correlation between initial status and changes in status. At the beginning of the school year, across all classes, students with low status participated passively, experiencing higher levels of exclusion and displaying more discrete behavior, highlighting potential initial status-problems issues. This pattern persisted in control classes without the inclusive program, where low-status students were more likely to remain passive, while initially high- status students were more likely to become leaders. In contrast, with the inclusive program, the relationship between status and participation diminished by the end of the year.

Discussion: These findings suggest that the inclusive program contributed to reducing status-related problems and promoting more equal-status participation.

KEYWORDS

cooperative learning, equal-status participation, inclusion, sociolinguistic diversity, status among peers, primary school

1 Introduction

The challenge of inclusive education is to provide equitable and high-quality education for all learners (UNESCO, 2009). It not only involves ensuring access to education but also requires full participation in school life and successful educational experiences. Therefore, inclusive education can only be achieved if mainstream schools are successful in educating all children in their communities, creating welcoming environments, combating discriminatory attitudes, and overcoming barriers that hinder the participation and success of certain learners (UNESCO, 2019). This definition of inclusive education is broader than one that focuses exclusively on students identified with special needs. The classroom environment must support positive experiences for all students.

Offering quality learning opportunities for all involves both positive interactions between groups and fairness (Cañabate et al., 2021), as well as equity, which supports and embraces diversity (Ainscow, 2020). The objective is to enhance each student's social and pedagogical participation (Forslund Frykedal and Hammar Chiriac, 2018). Inclusive education, therefore, requires teaching that addresses the needs of all students, with particular attention to those at risk of learning difficulties and dropping out. Teachers need pedagogical inclusive programs that facilitate the active participation of all students in the classroom (Farmer et al., 2019).

Cooperative learning is proposed as a means of supporting inclusion as it fosters positive relationships between students and facilitates learning for all (Juvonen et al., 2019). It creates inclusive and culturally responsive pedagogy likely to support all students and especially newly arrived students (Ferguson-Patrick, 2020), particularly relevant for classes with culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds (Gillies et al., 2023b). However, cooperative learning is rarely implemented in classrooms (Pianta et al., 2007; Benhaïm-Grosse et al., 2020). This paradox reflects the challenges that teachers face in implementing cooperative learning, particularly in contexts characterized by high linguistic diversity, which hampers the positive interdependence necessary for effective cooperation (Cohen, 1994; Lotan, 2022). To address this issue, an inclusive program was developed in collaboration with primary teachers to accommodate the significant sociolinguistic diversity in their classes. This program includes activities that promote openness to others, openness to linguistic diversity, and multilingual cooperative activities. The latter are based on recommendations from *Complex instruction* (Cohen, 1994; Cohen et al., 1999; Lotan and Holthuis, 2021)[1] proposed to promote equitable student learning in heterogeneous classrooms. This pedagogical approach provides multiple ability treatments explaining that multiple skills are needed to complete the task (Cohen, 1982), acknowledging and assigning competence (Cohen et al., 1988) to all students based on their contributions. In this inclusive program, teachers implemented cooperative activities in Grade 3–4 that required multiple linguistic skills and acknowledged students' competence based on their contributions related to their heritage language. The aim of this study is to investigate the effects of this inclusive program on the changes in students' social and academic status, and regarding the way their participation is related to their status.

1.1 Socio-linguistic diversity in classrooms

Each student approaches learning in a specific way. Success and failure in the classroom contribute to determining students' academic reputation and impact their social status (Hymel and Katz, 2019). Some students possess personal characteristics that are valued to varying degrees, while others receive specialized support that can influence their social standing. Class diversity encompasses a wide range of differences among students, including individual and social characteristics.

The diversity of students in the classroom is increasingly important in today's educational landscape. More and more students, including those with special needs and migrant students, are educated in mainstream classes (Hymel and Katz, 2019). International human migrations are continually on the rise, with the number of international migrants reaching nearly 258 million in 2017 and currently standing at 272 million, accounting for 3.5 percent of the global population (United Nations, 2019). This trend is projected to continue and potentially accelerate in the coming decades due to growing conflicts and climate change, potentially resulting in the displacement of 1.2 billion migrants by 2050 (Institute for Economics and Peace, 2020). These trends highlight the need to establish schools that can rapidly and effectively accommodate migrant students with diverse languages and cultural backgrounds. Language competence is particularly important as it influences peer acceptance, especially for children who are emergent bilingual immigrants and may face social challenges (Farmer et al., 2019). Schools have the responsibility to provide inclusive environments that accept differences for equity, especially in intercultural classrooms (Ferguson-Patrick, 2020), focusing on relationships and engagement.

While diverse school and classroom environments can enhance inclusiveness for students (Nishina et al., 2019), they can also give rise to hierarchical structures within the classrooms that undermine the inclusion process (Farmer et al., 2019). Students belong to different groups based on labels such as exceptionalities, gender, ethnicity, language, socioeconomic status, and others, which can lead to intergroup categorization. As noted by Juvonen et al. (2019), the classroom is a conducive space for the emergence of intergroup dynamics that are crucial to consider in promoting inclusion. It is therefore essential that inclusive educational practices do not result in categorization, leading to counterproductive differentiated intergroup attitudes (Iyer, 2022).

1.2 Cooperative learning: a theoretical consensual promise for promoting inclusion

In order to promote inclusive education, inclusive practices must be implemented in the general classroom with all students (Hymel and Katz, 2019). Cooperative learning is widely recommended for supporting inclusion (Sharan, 2010b; Killen et al., 2011; Forslund Frykedal and Hammar Chiriac, 2018; Fabes et al., 2019; Hymel and Katz, 2019; Nishina et al., 2019). Research on cooperative learning

1 https://complexinstruction.stanford.edu/

highlights its benefits for various outcomes in inclusive education, such as learning (Johnson and Johnson, 2009; Johnson et al., 2010; Kyndt et al., 2013; Johnson et al., 2014), peer relationships (Roseth et al., 2008; Choi et al., 2011; Van Ryzin and Roseth, 2018, 2019, 2022), motivation (Johnson et al., 2014), increased interest in school, and the establishment of academic learning norms (Slavin, 2015). The literature on cooperative learning offers valuable guidance on how to effectively structure group work (see Davidson, 2021 for an overview of major cooperative methods; and Gillies et al., 2023a for a current presentation of the literature) to foster students' social and cognitive engagement (Johnson et al., 2013; Topping et al., 2017) and ensure the inclusion of all students in academic activities (Ferguson-Patrick and Jolliffe, 2018).

More precisely, effective group work requires preparing students to cooperate by explicitly developing the cooperative, social, and interpersonal skills necessary for communication and collaboration (Gillies, 2003, 2020). Another principle is to facilitate group processing (Bertucci et al., 2012; Erbil, 2020) by encouraging students to reflect on their group dynamics and ways to improve them. The teacher also needs to create a classroom climate (Wang et al., 2020) that supports promotive peer interactions. Learning the rules and social norms for behavior during groupwork supports productive functioning during group activities (Lotan, 2022). This preparation is particularly important given the competitive values promoted by society and the emphasis on school selection (Filippou et al., 2022). Students are not accustomed to cooperation, and they may be reluctant to cooperate and revert to competitive behaviors despite cooperative instructions (Buchs et al., 2021). Establishing a safe environment where students feel comfortable to cooperate and gradually learn to cooperate is essential. Interpersonal communication and helping skills promote a sense of community, while explicit discussions about cooperative values encourage acceptance of diversity (Sharan, 2017). This preparation contributes to the development of social competence and prosocial behaviors that support inclusiveness (Nishina et al., 2019) and create conditions for students to participate safely (Batelaan and van Hoof, 2006). This aligns with the "Meet-Up" strategy proposed by Fabes et al. (2019), which addresses social norms and peer interactions at the classroom level.

In addition to this preparation, cooperative learning proposes principles for structuring student interactions in small groups to promote equal participation (Johnson et al., 1998; Kagan and Kagan, 2009; Davidson and Major, 2014; Gillies, 2016; Gillies et al., 2023a). The first principle is to create positive interdependence among learners working toward a common goal, so that students perceive a positive correlation between their success (Butera and Buchs, 2019). The teacher also needs to emphasize individual accountability and responsibility, making everyone's contributions necessary and valued (Topping et al., 2017). Finally, working in small groups facilitates each student's participation, while the cooperative structure maximizes students' engagement and contributions (Sharan, 2010a). This structure encourages the integration of all students' resources and respects their contributions in order to achieve learning goals (Sharan, 2017). Equal participation is a major issue for cooperative learning in order to sustain successful experience for all students (Kagan, 2021) and need to be structured.

This cooperative pedagogy aligns with the principles of "Universal Design for Learning" in education, which advocates for whole-class activities that emphasize both academic and social participation of students (Hymel and Katz, 2019). By working together toward a common goal, students develop a sense of belonging to the same group, which can help reduce social categorization (Cohen, 1994). Creating opportunities for positive interactions between different groups is likely to decrease stereotypical perceptions and potential discrimination (for review, Pettigrew and Tropp, 2006; Hewstone and Swart, 2011), while fostering more inclusive social identities (Reimer et al., 2022).

1.3 Cooperative learning: a challenging practice

A first paradox arises with the low implementation of cooperative learning in classrooms (Baines et al., 2003; Abrami et al., 2004; Pianta et al., 2007; Buchs et al., 2017; Abramczyk and Jurkowski, 2020). Despite the documented benefits and the established guidelines, cooperative learning in classroom remains a challenge (Sharan, 2010a). The effective implementation of cooperative procedures is complex (Jolliffe, 2015; Ferguson-Patrick and Jolliffe, 2018), requiring significant changes in teaching practices (Gillies and Ashman, 2003). Teachers may encounter difficulties (Abrami et al., 2004; Gillies and Boyle, 2010; Jolliffe, 2015; Veldman et al., 2020) and may struggle with proper implementation (Antil et al., 1998; Sharan, 2010a), which can diminish the positive effects on students' social acceptance (e.g., nominations by classmates as friends or groupmates, Klang et al., 2020) and learning outcomes (Hattie, 2009; Topping et al., 2017).

A second paradox emerges from the fact that, in the absence of a rigorous cooperative structure, group work has the potential to exacerbate learning gaps among students. Some students tend to be more confident and comfortable expressing their opinions, ideas, and contributions during group activities while other may feel less confident or valued within the group, leading to reduced participation. This issue refers to status among peers, the social standing holds within a group of classmates. Student status is influenced by various characteristics (Cohen, 1994; Lotan, 2022), including diffuse characteristics (e.g., gender, cultural and social backgrounds), specific characteristics (e.g., specific skills or abilities), and, most importantly, local characteristics related to academic status and popularity. Based on status, students develop academic and social hierarchies, where classmates perceive themselves and are perceived by others as more or less competent (Lotan, 2006). These expectations regarding competence influence actual participation, with some students and more likely to participate during group work based on their respective status. In highly diverse classrooms, high-status students tend to participate more and take on the role of facilitators (Cohen and Lotan, 1995). This pattern of interaction is referred to status problems, i.e., the correlation between students' status and their participation (Cohen and Lotan, 1995; Lotan, 2022).

Because participation serves as an indicator of inclusion (Forslund Frykedal and Hammar Chiriac, 2018) and determines learning (Cohen, 1994; Mercer, 2008; Webb et al., 2021; Lotan, 2022), ensuring equal-status participation is particularly relevant in heterogeneous contexts. Without precautions taken in group work, status problem leads to unequal participation, creating a virtuous/vicious cycle that perpetuates and widens the initial hierarchy in classrooms. Cohen and Lotan (1995) and Lotan (2006) warned that unless these issues of unequal status and participation are addressed in detracked

heterogeneous classrooms, inequality will persist. This is particularly important because the frequency of teachers' use of cooperative learning is not always associated with the quality of teachers' implementation in class (Abramczyk and Jurkowski, 2020).

Thus, one main challenge faced by teachers in implementing cooperative learning for supporting inclusion is ensuring equal status among students in the class, considering their social groups outside the classroom (Killen et al., 2011; Farmer et al., 2019) and their status among peers inside the class (Cohen et al., 2004; Lotan and Holthuis, 2021; Lotan, 2022). Equal status is needed to facilitate participation of all in academic tasks (Cohen, 1994; Pescarmona, 2015), to develop inclusive education in heterogeneous classrooms (Cohen, 1994; Lotan, 2006; Pescarmona, 2014; Lotan and Holthuis, 2021; Lotan, 2022) and to give voice to diversity (Pescarmona, 2023). It requires fostering the participation and learning of those who have lower initial status (Cohen and Lotan, 1997). This is particularly crucial and challenging for students who have not yet acquired all the social and/or academic skills or have limited mastery of the language of instruction (Cohen et al., 1999).

1.4 Supporting students at risk in cooperative learning

1.4.1 Supporting students' competence expectancies

In order to support the participation of all students, teachers need to reinforce students' competence expectancies, especially for students who are at risk (Cohen, 1994; see Lotan, 2022 for a review). First, this can be achieved by highlighting the competence of specific students who have a lower status. Teachers can design activities that allow students to showcase their specific skills and abilities, providing them with opportunities to demonstrate their competence. When students are able to showcase their abilities and make meaningful contributions, and teachers publicly acknowledge their accomplishments providing specific feedback, it boosts their status among their peers. Cooperative work provides teachers with the chance to observe students' abilities and recognize their valuable contributions. Teachers can also assign specific roles during group work that align with these abilities.

Secondly, appropriate tasks should support the participation and learning of students who may be in a vulnerable position within the group due to their status (Cohen and Lotan, 1997). Engaging in challenging learning tasks helps broaden and deepen students' and teachers' understanding of intelligence (Lotan, 2006; Lotan, 2022). Teachers can encourage students to work cooperatively on learning tasks that require multiple abilities, extending beyond the traditional academic skills of reading, writing, and math (Cohen, 1994; Cohen et al., 2004). These tasks demand various intellectual abilities, increasing the chances that every student can demonstrate at least one specific ability. Since no student possesses all the required abilities, cooperation becomes essential to solve the task and value the contributions of all students. This approach effectively shifts expectations of students by providing meaningful opportunities for participation. Cooperative activities that involve multiple abilities offer a platform to highlight the relevance of students' contributions to the activity (Cohen, 1994; Lotan, 2006).

The frequency with which teachers employ these two strategies aimed at reinforcing students' competence expectancies has been shown to decrease status problems (Cohen and Lotan, 1995). Lotan (2022) offers a comprehensive review of the impacts of complex instruction on learning outcomes. The findings emphasize the significance of social interaction in the learning process, encompassing academic domains, language of instruction, and students' disciplinary discourse.

1.4.2 Heritage language in a context of sociolinguistic diversity

To promote the value of sociolinguistic diversity, it is important to design activities that align with students' linguistic skills. Multilingual educational approaches, which recognize language as an integral part of students' cultural identity, are instrumental in fostering inclusion (Batelaan, 2000). In classrooms characterized by high sociolinguistic diversity, incorporating students' heritage languages offers opportunities for their meaningful contributions (Batelaan, 2000) and fosters an appreciation for the richness of differences within the classroom (Ferguson-Patrick and Jolliffe, 2018). By encouraging students to build upon their knowledge and skills in their heritage languages, cross-cultural communication is sustained, and students develop multicultural communication competencies (Gay, 2002). It emphasizes the importance of heritage language background in the development of linguistic competence (Coste et al., 2009).

Providing instruction focused on heritage languages during the early years of schooling has a positive impact on learning outcomes (UNESCO, 2009). It helps students establish meaningful connections between the curriculum and their personal experiences, which facilitates learning (Gay, 2002). This approach also demonstrates institutional recognition of the value of heritage languages by placing them on an equal footing with the language of instruction.

1.5 An inclusive program

In accordance with the principles of intercultural education (Batelaan and van Hoof, 2006; Berry and Sam, 2013) and *Complex instruction* (Lotan, 2022), the inclusive program incorporates the values of diversity and promotes equality and equitable participation (Buchs and Maradan, 2021). What distinguishes this program, is its focus on showcasing students' plurilingual skills in the classroom and proposing multilingual cooperative activities that engage their family languages, thereby representing tasks that require multiple abilities (Cohen, 1994).

The objective of the program tested in this study is to provide students with equal opportunities to contribute while considering their backgrounds, particularly their competence in heritage languages. To ensure students' comfort and contributions, a questionnaire was sent to families to inquire about the specific language or dialect students would like to use in classroom activities, their proficiency levels in this language (for reading, speaking, and writing), and whether someone could assist with homework designed to prepare students for their contributions. Some students indicated multiple languages, while others identified languages spoken by relatives beyond their immediate family (e.g., cousins, aunts, or uncles). Therefore, the program encompasses family languages in a broad sense.

Even when teachers recognize the importance of addressing status disparities in their classes, they may feel daunted by the task

(Pescarmona, 2015). Furthermore, teachers in the context of the study have reported difficulties in conceptualizing and designing cooperative activities (Buchs et al., 2017) and may not feel comfortable introducing linguistic diversity into their teaching (Akkari et al., 2011). Therefore, it was crucial to provide teachers with specific activities that they can implement and support them throughout the process. To address these challenges, a set of activities was collaboratively constructed in partnership with primary teachers before this study. These ready-to-use activities were introduced to the inclusive program tested in this study.

The research team took responsibility for documenting the family languages/dialects that students could work with in the classroom. Teachers had previously received training in structuring cooperative activities (provided one year before the study at the school level). Additionally, they received one additional day of training to participate in the research. This training focused on the program's objectives, the significance of students' status for their participation and learning, and the issue of status disparities and status problems. Teachers were provided with all the necessary materials, instructions, and scripts for each activity, including required translations when needed. To transition smoothly into multilingual cooperative activities, preliminary activities were proposed from September to February, followed by the implementation of cooperative multilingual activities from March to June. Based on these elements, the program was structured into three stages presented below. The inclusive program materials are available upon request by contacting the corresponding author.

1.5.1 Activities for opening to others

First, several activities aimed at fostering openness toward others by strengthening classroom cohesion and promoting a cooperative climate were implemented from September. These activities were designed to facilitate the discovery and acquaintance of students, establish inclusive social norms (Lotan, 2022), and emphasize cooperative values (Fabes et al., 2019). Additionally, they aimed to develop interpersonal communication and supportive skills (Sharan, 2017), social competence, and prosocial behaviors (Nishina et al., 2019).

Teachers proposed cooperative activities related to academic subjects in order to familiarize themselves and students to cooperative learning. This initial phase was designed in accordance with the cooperative framework for preparing students to cooperating and structuring cooperative work (Topping et al., 2017). Its purpose was to help students feel accepted and comfortable when participating, while also addressing the challenges associated with a competitive classroom environment (Gundara and Sharma, 2013; Buchs et al., 2021). Moreover, this approach aimed to increase the likelihood of cooperative practices (Filippou et al., 2022).

1.5.2 Activities for opening to linguistic diversity

Next, activities dedicated to promoting openness to linguistic diversity were introduced from December to February. These activities were derived from regular teaching methods employed in the French-Swiss area to foster language inclusivity in schools (Perregaux, 1998; Sanchez-Mazas et al., 2019). While these methods are available to all regular teachers, the implementation of related activities in mainstream classrooms is relatively uncommon. The inclusive program introduced some of these activities.

These activities were specifically designed to cultivate positive attitudes toward plurilingual students and enhance learning in the language of instruction. Some activities focused on linguistic diversity in a general sense, while others emphasized and celebrated the actual linguistic diversity within the targeted classrooms (Perregaux et al., 2003; Sanchez-Mazas et al., 2019). The approach to embracing other languages involved listening, observing, and comparing oral or written texts in different languages during classroom activities. This provided opportunities for students to engage with the language of instruction through other languages and develop metalinguistic skills, as well as reflection on language itself. Consequently, students were equipped with the knowledge and skills necessary to welcome new and unfamiliar languages.

Beyond linguistic aspects, these activities facilitated the development of intercultural skills by exposing students to alternative ways of expression, action, and thought, while fostering positive attitudes toward languages and their speakers (Candelier, 2003; Armand and Dagenais, 2012; Coste, 2013). The activities dedicated to embracing linguistic diversity within the classroom not only supported positive relationships among classmates (Batelaan, 2000; Ferguson-Patrick and Jolliffe, 2018) but also promoted stronger connections between families and schools, enhancing student engagement in school activities (Gay, 2002).

1.5.3 Multilingual cooperative activities

From March to June, a total of 22 multilingual cooperative activities were conducted. The cooperative structure, devised by the research team, ensured that each student's contribution was crucial in achieving the common goals of the team. Some activities utilized dual-language printed materials, with each student receiving materials in their family language and French (the language of instruction), while others involved words provided by family in their respective languages. They actively incorporated the participation of students' and parents' cultures in classroom activities. The nature of the activities required students to draw upon their unique resources, such as specific linguistic skills for students who spoke a language other than French, or different types of contributions for students who only spoke the language of instruction. For students who had no foreign language background at home or in their relatives (2 to 6 students in each class), various alternative contributions were introduced. This included learning braille, searching for definitions in French, or assuming different necessary responsibilities, ensuring that every student's contribution was essential during multilingual cooperative activities. Students switched teams for each activity, fostering diverse interactions and contact with different languages.

Each class consisted of 19 to 22 students. The linguistic diversity in these classes was substantial, ranging from 10 to 14 additional languages alongside French when taking into account students who spoke French at home with their parents but had a foreign language background (3 to 7 students in each class). In total, there were 27 different languages represented, including Albanian, German, Amharic, English, Arabic, Chinese, Sinhalese, Haitian Creole, Dari, Spanish, Italian, Japanese, Kinyarwanda, Konkani, Kurdish, Luganda, Norwegian, Portuguese, Romanian, Russian, Slovak, Somali, Swiss-German, Czech, Thai, Tigrigna, and Turkish. In some cases, parents did not speak French at all (1 to 6 students in each class), requiring the translation of parental authorizations. For students who spoke two different foreign languages (3 to 6 students in each class), they were

given the choice of which language to use in school activities. Around 8 to 10 different languages were utilized in each class for the activities. The research team managed the relationship with translators to provide all the necessary materials for the activities, along with the French version for the teachers to identify different passages.

These activities, encompassing multiple abilities in line with complex instruction (Cohen, 1994; Lotan, 2006; Lotan and Holthuis, 2021; Lotan, 2022), allowed every student to make unique contributions toward the common goals. Teachers ensured that each student fulfilled their role and contributed to the team's success, fostering positive team experiences. The activities were designed to value all students' skills and publicly recognize the competence of each student. The program drew upon several practices and instructional strategies recognized as valuable and effective in culturally diverse contexts (Allison and Rehm, 2007) and addressed the characteristics of status-problem treatment (Cohen, 1994; Lotan, 2022). Importantly, while the multilingual cooperative activities provided an opportunity to value students' skills in their family languages, they also celebrated other skills, allowing each student to showcase their abilities. The inclusive program targeted all students, with special attention given to students at risk without explicitly identifying or naming specific individuals or groups to avoid stigmatization or categorization.

The overarching hypothesis is that this inclusive three-stage program will (1) enhance students' status among their peers, particularly for those who initially had low status, and (2) contribute to more equitable and equal-status participation in classroom activities.

The first series of hypotheses pertained to the effect of the inclusive program on the evolution of status.

> *H1a*: It was expected that the inclusive program would enhance the status of students, with greater improvements observed in classes that implemented the program compared to classes without the program.
>
> *H1b*: Additionally, it was hypothesized that the inclusive program would have a particularly positive impact on students who initially had low status. This hypothesis suggests a stronger negative relationship between initial status and the evolution of status with the inclusive program.

The second series of hypotheses aimed to investigate the role of the inclusive program in the evolution of status problems. Status problems were examined through the relationship between students' status and their type of participation during the unstructured activity. Status problems could be identified through: (a) positive relationships between status and assertive types of participation (e.g., high-status students being more likely to endorse leadership and engage in co-construction), and (b) negative relationships between students' status and passive types of participation (e.g., low-status students being more likely to be discrete and excluded). This approach to status problems implies the following hypotheses:

> *H2a*: At the outset of the academic year (pre-test), students in highly diverse classrooms may exhibit a pattern of status problems. To investigate this hypothesis, the relationship between students' initial status (pre-test) and their type of participation at the beginning of the year (pre-test) was examined.
>
> *H2b*: By the end of the year, it is hypothesized that if status problems were present during the pre-test, they may persist in classrooms without the inclusive program. However, in classrooms with the inclusive program, it is expected that such problems would be diminished. Consequently, participation should not be associated with any specific status with the inclusive program. To test this hypothesis, the relationship between students' final status (post-test) and their type of participation at the end of the year (post-test) was examined in the two conditions.
>
> *H2c*: At the end of the year, the inclusive program is expected to disrupt the connection between initial status (pre-test) and participation at the end of the year (post-test). In other words, the inclusive program should facilitate equal-status participation across different status levels, and initial status should no longer be linked to distinct types of participation with the inclusive program.

2 Methods

2.1 Participants

The study was conducted during the 2018–2019 academic year in Geneva Canton, French-speaking area from Switzerland. In 2019, 45% of pupils enrolled in compulsory education in Geneva spoke a first language different from the language of instruction, and 44% belonged to a different nationality.[2] The proportion of parents who held senior managerial and executive positions varied from 22.8% for French-speaking children to 15.4% for children speaking another language at home. Similarly, the proportions ranged from 53.9 to 34.0% for self-employed individuals, employees, and middle managers, and from 23.3 to 50.5% for workers or those with no occupation indicated.[3] In terms of academic performance, the success rate at the end of the 4th grade's cantonal exams in French was 87.3% for French-speaking pupils and 77.3% for students who spoke another language at home during the 2018–2019 academic year.

In terms of school structure in Geneva, when children arrived from foreign schools without proficiency in French, they spent half of their time in a specialized class dedicated to learning French and the other half in a mainstream class with peers of the same age. This arrangement typically lasted for one to two years. All students involved in the study were regular students in the classes included in the research. All students with parental authorization from the 8 classes were included in the study.

The inclusive program was implemented by four regular teachers in their mainstream class from one school (referred to as School A), with a total of 77 students whose parents provided authorization and participated in the pre- and post-tests. Four control classes were also included in the study, with one in School A and three in School B, comprising a total of 62 students with parental authorization present during the pre- and post-tests. Both schools were located in the same

2 The Swiss Federal Statistical Office, https://www.bfs.admin.ch.

3 Genevan office for research in education, https://www.ge.ch/organisation/service-recherche-education.

area, with 37.4% of pupils coming from modest backgrounds and 57% of students speaking a language other than French (the language of instruction) in 2019. Specifically, in School A, 49% of pupils spoke another language at home in 2016, and 39% were from modest backgrounds (compared to 55 and 48%, respectively, for School B). All participating teachers had prior training in cooperative learning and volunteered to participate in the study.

This paper focus on equal-status participation in classroom. In the present study, students' participation was coded based on video-recorded interactions during a non-structured activity conducted in triads at the beginning and end of the school year. Only students with parental authorization for video recording were videotaped and included in the analysis. The triads consisted of heterogeneous groups with one student of low, one of medium, and one of high initial status. If a student was absent, the remaining dyads were excluded from the analysis. Therefore, interactions from 17 trios with 51 students in classes with the inclusive program and 14 trios with 42 students in control classes were analyzed, including those present at both the pre-test and post-test.

2.2 Design

We have conducted a pre-post test intervention in order to test the impact of the inclusive program by comparing 4 classes with the inclusive program to 4 control classes without the inclusive program. Although the study design was not preregistered, it received approval from the ethics committee of the host university and the heads of the teaching departments. This approval allowed the collection of data in the schools based on the study's description prior to implementation. Written informed consent was obtained from the parents, their teachers, and their headmasters.

2.2.1 Independent variable

The main independent variable is the introduction of the inclusive program as described in section 1.5. Teachers from the control and treatment classes were all trained to cooperative learning before the intervention.

2.2.2 Dependent variables

2.2.2.1 Status among peers

Status was measured using a sociometric instrument inspired by Cohen and Lotan (1997) at the beginning and end of the school year. In determining status among peers, local characteristics, such as academic status and popularity are significant factors (Lotan, 2022). In the study by Cohen and Lotan (1997), students were asked to indicate the names of those in their class who were considered the "best at math and science" for academic status and those who were considered their "best friends" for social status. A scoring system ranging from 1 to 5, based on the quintiles of the classroom distribution, was proposed. The scores for academic and social status were then combined to create a "co-status score."

A pilot study conducted in our specific context revealed that the original measure was problematic. Students found it uncomfortable and strange to indicate who the "best students" or "best friends" were. In order to avoid a competitive framing of the question, we adapted the measure. Instead, we provided a list with the names of all students in the class and asked students to indicate (a) the students in the class with whom they liked to work in groups (either a lot or a little) for school status, and (b) the students with whom they liked to play during free time like recess, lunch break (either a lot or a little) for social status. These measures allowed us to calculate a weighted status score, assigning 2 points for the highest intensity (liking a lot) and 1 point for the lower intensity (liking a little), while students who were not chosen received 0 points. The correlation between the scores of academic status and social status was high, with $r = 0.83$ for the pre-test and $r = 0.85$ for the post-test, $p = 0.001$. Consequently, we calculated the co-status by summing the two weighted scores, $M_{pre\text{-}test} = 38.11$, $Min_{pre\text{-}test} = 13.00$ and $Max_{pre\text{-}test} = 64.00$; $M_{post\text{-}test} = 39.83$, $Min_{post\text{-}test} = 0.00$ and $Max_{post\text{-}test} = 74.00$.

2.2.2.2 Index of status problems

To document the existence of problem status in the classroom, an adapted index proposed by Cohen and Lotan (1997) was used. This index calculated the correlation coefficient (*Pearson r*) between the co-status scores of individual students and their observed average rate of peer task-related talk during work at learning centers. Cohen and Lotan (1995, 1997) conducted observations of students during structured cooperative work. They utilized a single indicator, "task-related talk," which encompassed discussions related to the task at hand, cooperation among students, and discussions about individual roles. Additionally, they examined the role of the facilitator, a traditional role introduced within the complex instruction method (Cohen, 1994). However, in our study, a non-structured group work approach was intentionally introduced to examine whether status problems could arise when students were free to organize themselves as they wished. This allowed for variations not only in the quantity but also in the quality of student participation, as proposed by Buchs et al. (2018). To explore different types of participation that reflect a potential continuum related to status expression, a coding scheme was adopted, categorizing students' participation into four categories:

(a) Exclusion: The student's contribution is disregarded, ignored, or rejected by the group.
(b) Discrete participation: The student observes and follows the actions of groupmates without actively engaging, or is prompted by a groupmate to contribute.
(c) Co-construction: The student actively participates in verbal discussions related to the task content, organization, or promotes an inclusive environment that encourages the involvement of all students.
(d) Leadership: The student exhibits behaviors that limit others from participating, questions or negotiates others' contributions, rejects input from others, or invites others to speak, react, or behave.

This continuum, from exclusion to leadership, gives insight concerning the severity of problem status; the two extreme categories being more severe. The video recordings were divided into 10-s segments, and each student's actions were coded for each segment. As some groups completed the activity more quickly, the first 60 segments of 10 s each were coded for all groups. Inter-rater agreement was assessed, and after achieving satisfactory agreement (97% average agreement over 220 segments), only one coder was retained. The coding process was blind to the condition, timing of the video (pre-test or post-test), and student status information.

3 Results

3.1 Results regarding status among peers

The inclusive program was expected to enhance the status of students, with greater improvements in classes with the program compared to classes without the program (Hypothesis H1a). Additionally, it was hypothesized that the inclusive program would have a particularly positive impact on students' status with low initial status (Hypothesis H1b). Table 1 indicates the evolution of students' status among peer in the two conditions.

The repeated measures ANOVA analysis (Intervention X Time) revealed that the inclusive program did moderate the evolution of student status, as indicated by a significant interaction, $F(1, 137) = 81.76$, $p < 0.001$, $\eta^2_p = 0.37$. At the pre-test stage, students from control classes without the program exhibited higher status, $M = 40.66$, compared to students from targeted classes, $M = 36.04$, $p < 0.01$. However, by the end of the year, the situation reversed, with the inclusive program, students showed higher status, $M = 43.21$, than those from control classes, $M = 35.61$, $p < 0.001$. Furthermore, the inclusive program contributed to the improvement of students' status from pre-test to post-test, $\Delta M = 7.17$, $p < 0.001$, whereas status decreased in classes without the program, $\Delta M = -5.05$, $p < 0.001$, see Figure 1.

Additionally, it was hypothesized that the inclusive program would have a particularly positive impact on students' status who initially had low status (Hypothesis H1b). This hypothesis suggests a stronger negative relationship between initial status and the evolution of status with the inclusive program.

For H1b, a regression model was employed to examine the relationship between the evolution of status (dependent variable) and the initial status (centered), the intervention (coded as −1 for without intervention and +1 for with intervention), and the interaction between the two as predictors. The results indicated that the effect of the inclusive program was significant, $b = 5.60$ $t = 9.00$, $p < 0.001$, as was the effect of initial status, $b = -0.25$, $t = -4.16$, $p < 0.001$. Crucially, the interaction between the intervention and initial status was found to be significant, $b = -0.28$, $t = -4.73$, $p < 0.001$. The model accounted for 50% of the variation in the evolution of status among peers.

Figure 2 illustrates the interaction effect. In classes with the inclusive program, there was a significant negative association between the evolution of status and initial students' status, $b = -0.53$, $t = -5.83$, $p < 0.01$, indicating a noteworthy positive evolution of status for students with low initial status. In contrast, without the inclusive program, the relationship between status evolution and initial status was not significant, $b = 0.03$, $t = 0.44$, ns. This suggests that in the absence of the program, students have maintained their status whether initially high or low.

For students with high initial status (+1SD), the effect of the intervention on their status evolution was less pronounced, $b = 2.63$, $t = 2.95$, $p < 0.001$ compared to students with average status, $b = 5.60$, $t = 9.00$, $p < 0.001$ or low initial status (−1SD), $b = 8.59$, $t = 9.74$, $p < 0.001$. This finding suggests that the inclusive program specifically benefits students with low initial status in terms of improving their status over time. It is important to note that, with the inclusive program, the status evolution turned negative for students who had a score higher than 50 in their initial status, i.e., for 4 out of 51 students.

TABLE 1 Students' status at the beginning and the end of the year with and without the inclusive program.

	With inclusive program		Without inclusive program	
	Pre-test Beginning of the year	Post-test End of the year	Pre-test Beginning of the year	Post-test End of the year
M	36.04	43.21	40.66	35.61
SD	8.96	8.47	11.76	13.89

M, Mean; SD, Standard deviation.

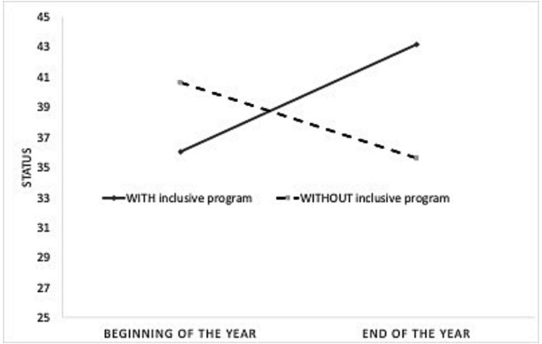

FIGURE 1
Evolution of students' status from pre-test to post-test regarding the intervention (with and without inclusive program).

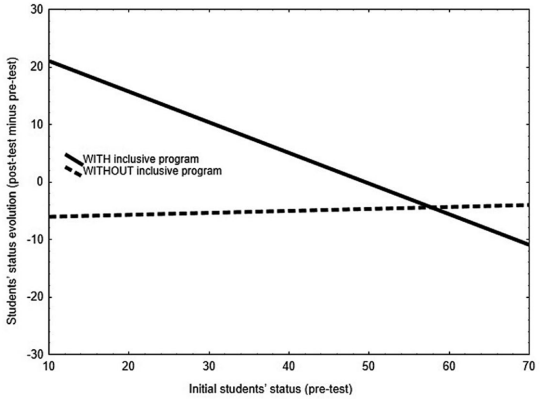

FIGURE 2
Students' status evolution in fonction of the initial students' status regarding the intervention (with and without inclusive program).

3.2 Results regarding status-problems

The second series of hypotheses aimed to investigate the role of the inclusive program in the evolution of status problems. Status problems could be identified through: (a) positive relationships between status and assertive types of participation (e.g., high-status students being more likely to endorse leadership and engage in co-construction), and (b) negative relationships between students' status and passive types of participation (e.g., low-status students being more likely to be discrete or excluded). Correlations between students' status and participation are presented in Table 2. Due to the

non-normality of the data regarding the types of participation (i.e., Being excluded, Discrete participation, and Leadership), correlations are reported for both the original data and the transformed data.

> *H2a*: At the outset of the academic year (pre-test), students in highly diverse classrooms may exhibit a pattern of status problems. To investigate this hypothesis, the relationship between students' initial status (pre-test) and their type of participation at the beginning of the year (pre-test) was examined.

At the beginning of the academic year, the correlations observed across all classes suggested the presence of status problems, as indicated by negative correlations between initial status and more passive forms of participation. Students with lower initial status were more likely to experience exclusion, $r_{original} = -0.26$, $p = 0.01$ and $r_{transformed} = -0.25$, $p = 0.01$. Negative correlations were also found for discrete participation in the original data, $r_{original} = -0.29$, $p = 0.005$, but these correlations were not significant with the transformed data, $r_{transformed} = -0.15$, $p = 0.14$. Initial status showed no significant relationship with co-construction, $r_{original} = 0.14$, $p = 0.17$ or leadership, $r_{original} = -0.05$, $p = 0.64$, $r_{transformed} = 0.02$, $p = 0.88$. This initial pattern was consistent with a dynamic of exclusion experienced by students with lower status among their peers.

> *H2b*: By the end of the year, it is hypothesized that if status problems were present during the pre-test, they may persist in classrooms without the inclusive program, but would be diminished in classrooms with the inclusive program. Consequently, participation should not be associated with any specific status with the inclusive program. To test this hypothesis, the relationship between students' final status (post-test) and their type of participation at the end of the year (post-test) was examined in the two conditions.

In the post-test phase, the students' status at the end of the year was not correlated with the type of participation in the classes with the inclusive program. The correlations observed with the original data ranged from $-0.09 > r_{original} < 0.10$, $p > 0.48$, and with the transformed data, the correlations ranged from $-0.03 > r_{transformed} < 0.19$, $p > 0.71$. These findings illustrate an equal-status participation in the classes with the inclusive program.

In contrast, in the control classes, the correlations between status and participation were higher. The correlations with the original data ranged from $-0.32 > r_{original} < 0.10$, while the correlations with the transformed data ranged from $-0.23 > r_{transformed} < 0.25$. At the end of the year in the control classes, the pattern observed is consistent with the expectations in the case of status problems. There were negative correlations between status and passive participation, indicating that lower-status students were more likely to be excluded and adopt discrete participation. There was a positive correlation between status and assertive participation, indicating that higher-status students were more likely to participate in co-construction and assume leadership roles. However, it is worth noting that correlations with the transformed data were not significant.

> *H2c*: At the end of the year, the inclusive program is expected to disrupt the connection between initial status (pre-test) and participation at the end of the year (post-test). In other words, the inclusive program should facilitate equal-status participation across different status levels, and initial status should no longer be linked to distinct types of participation with the inclusive program.

The final hypothesis examines whether students retained any trace of their initial status from their initial status (pre-test) when working with their classmates at the end of the year. The pattern of correlations appears consistent with persistent marker for lower-status students in the control classes. Negative correlations persisted between initial status and passive participation. Lower-status students were more likely to remain excluded at the end of the year, $r_{original} = -0.39$, $p = 0.01$; $r_{transformed} = -0.26$, $p = 0.10$, and engage in more discrete participation, $r_{original} = -0.32$, $p = 0.04$; $r_{transformed} = -0.29$, $p = 0.06$. However, when using transformed data, these correlations were not significant. Additionally, in the control classes, students with higher initial status continued to demonstrate more leadership at the end of the year, $r_{original} = 0.32$, $p = 0.04$; $r_{transformed} = 0.35$, $p = 0.02$. There

TABLE 2 Correlations (original and transformed data when required) between students' status among peers and type of participation.

		All classes (N = 93)	Without inclusive program (N = 42)		With inclusive program (N = 51)	
		H2a	H2b	H2c	H2b	H2c
		Status (PRE-test)-Participation (PRE-test)	Status (POST-test)-Participation (POST-test)	Status (PRE-test)-Participation (POST-test)	Status (POST-test)-Participation (POST-test)	Status (PRE-test)-Participation (POST-test)
Being excluded	Original data	−0.26*	−0.32*	−0.39*	0.03	−0.01
	Transformed data[1]	−0.25*	−0.23	−0.26†	−0.03	−0.02
Discrete participation	Original data	−0.29**	−0.28†	−0.32*	0.19	−0.04
	Transformed data[1]	−0.15	−0.17	−0.29†	0.03	−0.08
Co-construction	Original data	0.14	0.10	−0.02	0.07	0.03
Leadership	Original data	−0.05	0.13	0.32*	−0.06	−0.14
	Transformed data[1]	0.02	0.25	0.35*	0.01	−0.08

[1]Transformed data (log) in order to respect condition for computing correlations (normality). **$p < 0.01$; *$p < 0.05$; †$p < 0.10$.

was no relationship found between initial status and co-construction in either classes without the program, $r_{original} = -0.02$, or the classes with the inclusive program, $r_{original} = 0.03$.

In the classes with the inclusive program, no significant relationship was found between initial status and any form of participation, and the correlation coefficients were very weak, ranging from $-0.13 > r_{original} < 0.03$ and from $-0.02 > r_{transformed} < -0.08$ for transformed data. This suggests that students in these classes were more engaged in equal-status participation, regardless of their initial status.

4 Discussion

This study was framed within an inclusive education perspective that aims to facilitate a positive classroom experience for all students. This necessitates pedagogical approaches that foster quality relationships in the classroom and address existing barriers for certain students, ensuring their active participation. Aligned with the principles of intercultural education (Batelaan and van Hoof, 2006; Berry and Sam, 2013) and *Complex instruction* (Lotan, 2022), the inclusive program integrates the values of diversity, equality, and equitable participation (Buchs and Maradan, 2021).

Considering sociolinguistic diversity in classrooms, the objective of the program tested in this study was to provide students with equal opportunities to contribute, taking into consideration their competence in their family language. This program included activities that promote openness to others, openness to linguistic diversity, and multilingual cooperative activities. Multilingual cooperative activities were designed to necessitate the contribution of all students while acknowledging their specific linguistic skills. This one-year inclusive program was expected to (1) enhance students' status among their peers, particularly for those who initially had low status, and (2) contribute to more equal-status participation in classroom activities.

The results demonstrated that this inclusive program moderated the evolution of students' status. There was a significant increase in status with the implementation of the inclusive program, with students being more cited as play and work partners at the end of the year. This outcome may seem intuitive, considering that the students had spent a school year together in the same class. However, in classes where the inclusive program was not implemented, not only did status fail to improve, but they actually declined.

As predicted also, the inclusive program had a positive impact on students who initially had low status. It was specific to the inclusive program. In the absence of the program, students with low as well as high initial status experienced a similar stagnation in their status. The negative relationship found between initial status and changes in status with the inclusive program could lead to concerns about high-status students being penalized. However, results showed that the negative change in status for high-status students occurred only for a few students, those who had an initial status above 50 (4 students on 51). This result can be explained by the measurement method: since the students could name many classmates they wanted to play and work with, adding names may require removing others.

These results are a first important step regarding equity in highly diverse classrooms, considering that all teachers, from classes with and without the inclusive program, were previously trained in cooperative learning. Introducing the inclusive program based on multilingual cooperative activities that mobilize heritage or family languages is efficient for supporting the status of students at risk. These findings highlight the transformative potential of plurilingual cooperative activities, shifting from a deficit perspective where plurilingual students or those who do not speak French at home are viewed as lacking the necessary skills to fully participate in classroom life. Instead, these activities provide a platform for valuing and recognizing the skills of these students, both by their peers and teachers in lines with status treatment proposed by *Complex instruction* (Cohen, 1994; Lotan, 2022).

The second hypothesis proposed an additional step toward equity in highly diverse classrooms. It examined the status problems, specifically whether students' status determined their participation. The initial pattern at the beginning of the year illustrated a status problem, with low-status pupils more likely to participate passively. Results suggested a dynamic of exclusion experienced by students with lower status. The correlations suggested that this pattern remained present at the end of the year without the inclusive program. The correlations in these classes were negative with passive participation types and positive with active participation types. This pattern was found for both pre-test status and post-test status. Caution is needed because the correlations were weak and non-significant for transformed data. Nevertheless, this pattern contrasted with the absence of correlation between status and type of participation at the post-test in classes where the inclusive program was implemented. Neither initial status nor status at the post-test were related to students' participation in classes with the inclusive program, which evoked equal-status participation in these classes.

From a methodological aspect, this analyze of status problems is original and more precise than in previous studies. Previous research has examined average rates of peer task-related talk (Cohen and Lotan, 1995, 1997) and some types of participation (Buchs et al., 2018). In the present study, we refined the types of participation by examining qualitative types of participation that were supposed to have differentiated relationships with status. The pattern of results aligned with this proposition. In situations where status problems were expected, the correlations followed this pattern. At the beginning of the school year, students with low initial status participated passively, experiencing higher levels of exclusion and displaying more discreet behavior, highlighting potential initial status-related issues. This pattern persisted in control classes without the inclusive program, where low-status students were more likely to remain passive, while initially high-status students were more likely to become leaders. Even if they bring a new light on status problems, this methodology and associated patterns should be tested in future research to further validate their significance. One major challenge in our results was the non-normality of the data. Results indicated that with the required statistical transformations, the strength of correlations was reduced, rendering them non-significant.

Thus, this inclusive program and the guidelines on which it is based are promising perspectives to teach in diverse classrooms. Nevertheless, it remains demanding and time consuming, what constitutes a major barrier for teachers (Buchs et al., 2017; Abramczyk and Jurkowski, 2020). Therefore, future directions should address the question by providing efficient support for teachers for properly introduce cooperative structure more easily compatible with teacher daily constraints. Structural approach (Kagan, 2021) introduces some simple procedures in order to propose simultaneous interactions as

well as equal participation. Easy enough for becoming cooperative routines in daily teaching, these structures have the potential to reinforce students' in-class participation. Preliminary results underlined positive effects for students in general (Kothiyal et al., 2013; Reddy et al., 2015) as well for the participation of shy students (Mundelsee and Jurkowski, 2021). Additional research is needed to investigate the potential of this structural approach in order to sustain participation of students with low initial status, especially in highly diverse classrooms. This could be an opportunity to sustain the quantity of cooperative implementation while ensuring equal-status participation.

5 Conclusion

To rely on cooperative learning to support inclusion induces two paradoxes. Firstly, while cooperative learning is the most cited way to promote inclusion (Juvonen et al., 2019), there is a low implementation of cooperative learning in regular classrooms (Baines et al., 2003; Abrami et al., 2004; Pianta et al., 2007; Buchs et al., 2017). Secondly, there is the potential for counterproductive effects of cooperative learning if status issues are not actively addressed (Cohen, 1994; Lotan, 2022).

To address the first paradox, it is important to provide teachers with concrete strategies that introduce regular cooperative activities. Teachers claim their interest for lesson examples and teaching material (Abramczyk and Jurkowski, 2020). It is crucial to propose such examples, built in collaboration with teachers, and to empirically demonstrate their effectiveness in the context of diversity. Such results bring confidence to implement cooperative learning in classroom with large diversity and confidence is essential for teacher attitudes toward inclusive practices (Desombre et al., 2019; Abramczyk and Jurkowski, 2020; Jury et al., 2023) and inclusive schools. Moreover, the inclusive program adopted a collective approach of classroom management, avoiding labels or categorization of targeted students. This aligns with the implementation of a Universal Design for Learning (UDL) approach (Rose and Meyer, 2002; Katz, 2013), which is also often perceived as challenging or even impossible to implement.

To address the second paradox requires a high quality of implementation for sustaining equal participation (Abramczyk and Jurkowski, 2020). According to our results, it is essential to train teachers regarding the consequences of status problems and to empower them with tools able to create equal-status interactions that enhance all students' learning experiences and outcomes (Lotan and Holthuis, 2021). Our study bring knowledge about the status problems and develop an effective tool to foster equal-status interaction in context of high diversity classroom.

These two paradoxes may be addressed by proposing dedicated material and program as well as targeted training for pre-service and in-service teachers. This was the objective of the inclusive program that has been developed and tested. The inclusive program we proposed aligns with the process of engineering suggested by Lotan and Holthuis (2021). This process includes preparing teachers, designing and constructing curricula, developing status interventions, and constantly checking and testing proposed responses against theoretical claims. The inclusive program was introduced to teachers as ready-to-use activities. The research team provided the activities with materials, scripts, and structuration. Teachers then implemented them in their own classrooms. While there were some challenges regarding the time required, there were no reported difficulties in implementing the program. Both students and teachers provided positive feedback. This is encouraging regarding the paradoxes discussed, cooperative learning is likely to support inclusion if carefully structured. By acknowledging specific status characteristics (linguistic skills) in multiple abilities tasks, the program reinforced a positive perception of students within the class (Lotan, 2022). To our knowledge, this program is the first to overcome status problems in classrooms with such large sociolinguistic diversity. Teachers are often skepticism and lack of confidence when they have to teach in such diverse classroom (Jury et al., 2023). This study shows that such program can outcome status problems through cooperative activities. Such status modification in classroom with large diversity is particularly important for the inclusive perspective (UNESCO, 2009; Forslund Frykedal and Hammar Chiriac, 2018; Farmer et al., 2019; UNESCO, 2019).

This program is also an outstanding method to promote positive intergroup contact between diverse students. The program meets the conditions for reducing prejudice (Pettigrew and Tropp, 2006). Indeed, it supports openness to diversity and carefully structures conditions for students from different groups to successfully cooperate toward a common goal. It ensures equal status between the groups with a normative climate of tolerance and empathy. Such conditions of intergroup contacts have the potential to improve stereotypes assigned to the groups these students represent (Hewstone et al., 2018) and even to other minority groups (Pettigrew, 1997). Such positive intergroup contact also increases willingness for intergroup contact outside the schools (Reimer et al., 2022). This can accelerate teaching language learning which is crucial for rapid inclusion of migrant students in mainstream classrooms. Therefore, addressing actively students' status problems within diverse classrooms is not only a key factor for classroom social interactions, it is also a way to accelerate the inclusion of migrant students in schools, and to develop coexistence in our multicultural societies.

Data availability statement

The raw data supporting the conclusions of this article will be made available by the authors, without undue reservation.

Ethics statement

The studies involving humans were approved by Ethics committee from University of Geneva. The studies were conducted in accordance with the local legislation and institutional requirements. Written informed consent for participation in this study was provided by the participants' legal guardians/next of kin.

Author contributions

CB: Conceptualization, Formal analysis, Funding acquisition, Methodology, Supervision, Writing – original draft, Writing – review & editing. NM: Writing – review & editing. MH: Formal analysis, Writing – review & editing.

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Conflict of interest

The authors declare that the research was conducted in the absence of any commercial or financial relationships that could be construed as a potential conflict of interest.

Publisher's note

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Disentangling the nuances of diversity ideologies

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Objectives: Minoritized racial groups typically report greater psychological engagement and safety in contexts that endorse multiculturalism rather than colorblindness. However, organizational statements often contain multiple (sub) components of these ideologies. This research broadens our understanding of diversity ideologies in the real-world by: (1) mapping out the content of real-world organizational diversity ideologies, (2) identifying how different components tend to cluster in real-world statements, and (3) presenting these statements to minoritized group members (Study 2) to test how these individual components and clusters are perceived (e.g., company interest, value fit).

Methods: 100 US university statements and 248 Fortune 500 company statements were content coded, and 237 racially minoritized participants (M_{age}=28.1; 51.5% female; 48.5% male) rated their psychological perceptions of the Fortune 500 statements.

Results: While universities most commonly frame diversity ideologies in terms of value-in-equality, companies focus more on value-in-individual differences. Diversity rationales also differ between organizations, with universities focusing on the moral and business cases almost equally, but companies focusing on the business case substantially more. Results also offered preliminary evidence that minoritized racial group members reported a greater sense of their values fitting those of the organization when considering organizations that valued individual and group differences.

Conclusion: These are some of the first studies to provide a nuanced examination of the components and clusters of diversity ideologies that real-world organizations are using, ultimately with implications for how we move forward in studying diversity ideologies (to better reflect reality) and redesigning them to encourage more diverse and inclusive organizations.

KEYWORDS

diversity, diversity rationales, race, diversity ideology, multiculturalism, colorblindness

Introduction

Racial diversity in the United States (US) has increased more quickly than previously predicted (US Census, 2019; Frey, 2020). As racial/ethnic demographics shift in US society, as well as within the workplace, it is crucial to understand how people's beliefs about how to approach diversity and difference, or their lay *diversity ideologies* (Rattan and Ambady, 2013), impact minoritized racial groups.

Indeed, people hold a range of beliefs about how to approach diversity and difference, and these ideologies can permeate organizational culture (Plaut et al., 2009). Two of the most dominant ideologies primarily differ in whether they highlight group differences (i.e.,

multiculturalism) or downplay them (i.e., *colorblindnesss*; Gündemir et al., 2019). A great deal of scholarship suggests benefits to *highlighting* as opposed to *downplaying* group differences (e.g., Wolsko et al., 2000; Plaut et al., 2009). However, diversity ideologies are far more nuanced than is captured by this broad distinction between multiculturalism and colorblindess. Embedded within each of these broad ideologies, there can be differing messages about *how* exactly to promote diversity (reflecting different diversity ideology components) and *why* (reflecting different diversity cases, or diversity rationales; for an overview, see Gündemir et al., 2019). Thus, the multicultural versus colorblind distinction does not itself allow us to fully understand which components drive marginalized individuals' reactions to an organization's ideology, nor the potential beneficial effects of multiculturalism in particular.

In the present research, we document the prevalence of specific components of diversity ideologies and diversity rationales in the real-world to understand the extent to which theoretical understandings of diversity ideologies reflect real-world expressions of ideology (or not). We do so in part by integrating past insights from multiple streams of diversity research, including research on differing diversity ideology components. For example, Gündemir et al. (2017a) distinguish between an emphasis on value-in-group differences, value-in-individual differences, or value-in-similarities (as potentially distinct and defining features of an ideology). Purdie-Vaughns and Walton (2011) further suggest that ideologies might incorporate multiple components, including both value-in-group differences (between-group variability) and value-in-individual differences (within-group variability; arguably rendering a distinct diversity approach/ideology unto itself).

Moreover, we integrate insights on different diversity rationales, including both the 'moral case' and 'business case' for promoting diversity (Thomas and Ely, 1996). In so doing, we aim to help conceptually bridge these differing streams, offer new insights on how they come together in real organizational settings (100 US universities, 250 companies in the Fortune 500), and more generally highlight the need for more thorough engagement with the nuance and complexity of diversity ideologies – not least to ensure that our understanding of these ideologies does not move forward in a way that is detached from their existence in the real-world.

To ensure our research addressed this gap, we identified components for both how we should navigate diversity (diversity ideology components) and why (diversity rationales) in current research's diversity ideologies (identified through a literature search conducted by two members of the research team). The key diversity ideologies are summarized in Table 1 (see Supplementary materials for the full analysis). In every paper reviewed, the ideologies used did not reflect a single component in isolation, but a combination. Therefore, our research will code for both the prevalence of the components but also how they group together in real-world diversity statements in both US universities and companies. To help facilitate a more nuanced understanding of why these ideologies are beneficial and for which outcomes, we will also provide an initial, systematic examination of how minoritized racial group members respond when presented with these real-world components (e.g., level of interest in the organization, sense of value fit, authenticity).

Although colorblindness was once the prevalent ideology in organizations (Plaut, 2002), multiculturalism has seen a dramatic increase (Apfelbaum et al., 2016). This shift in ideology aligns with theoretical and experimental discussions supporting multiculturalism as an identity safety cue for minoritized groups (Gündemir et al., 2019). Two key theories in the field highlight the benefits of valuing differences (multiculturalism ideologies) over similarities (colorblindness) for minoritized groups: acculturation and social identity theories.

Acculturation theories propose that contact between members of different cultural groups results in changes in both groups (Redfield et al., 1936; Graves, 1967). However, minoritized racial groups are particularly responsible for adapting to the majority group and sometimes even suppressing their sub-group identities (Berry, 2001). As cultural and racial identities are a key part of how people perceive themselves (Tajfel and Turner, 1979), particularly for minoritized group members (Gerard and Hoyt, 1974), downplaying those identities—as prescribed by colorblindness—can be detrimental for their self-concept.

Multiculturalism is an ideology that enables minoritized racial groups to preserve their cultural identity (Berry and Kalin, 1995). For minoritized groups, multiculturalism can increase group identification and therefore results in more positive ingroup evaluations (Verkuyten, 2005). Accordingly, compared to colorblindness, minoritized racial groups tend to prefer multiculturalism (Richeson and Nussbaum, 2004). However, there are some important caveats and complexity to this general pattern of findings. When minoritized racial groups are underrepresented in an organization, multiculturalism (versus colorblindness) increases workplace trust, comfort and engagement for minoritized racial groups (Purdie-Vaughns et al., 2008; Plaut et al., 2009), but hurts their performance, persistence, and representation under some circumstances (Apfelbaum et al., 2016). Taken at face value, this might suggest that multiculturalism and colorblindness show discrepant findings for different types of outcomes (e.g., behavioral versus psychological outcomes).

A key driver of these discrepant findings, however, may be the ways researchers frame the ideologies. For example, some research has focused on valuing demographic group differences in their multicultural ideologies (Kirby and Kaiser, 2021), but others have focused on individual (trait) differences (Apfelbaum et al., 2016). Similarly, colorblindness has been defined as a focus on *common ingroup identity* (Dovidio et al., 2007), *valuing equality* (Apfelbaum et al., 2016), *devaluing group identities* (Purdie-Vaughns et al., 2008), *assimilation* (adopting the majority groups' norms and views; Plaut et al., 2009), and *value-in-individual differences* (i.e., celebrating uniqueness across individuals; Gündemir et al., 2017a).

It is perhaps unsurprising that multiculturalism would create more identity safety for minoritized group members when compared to assimilation or group devaluation (see Hahn et al., 2015). However, even more positive components of colorblindness that focus on *value-in-similarities* suggest it can be detrimental for outcomes such as workplace engagement (Purdie-Vaughns et al., 2008; Plaut et al., 2009). Therefore, it appears that valuing equality (as was the case in Apfelbaum et al.'s (2016) research) is the only exception to the general pattern of colorblindness being detrimental for minoritized racial groups. This aligns with cultural norms, as equality is widely valued in the US (Hofstede, 1980; Thomas and Ely, 1996). Martin Luther King Jr.'s infamous speech captured this by stating that he wished for a world in which we would judge individuals "not by the color of their skin but by the content of their character." (King, 1963).

In terms of multiculturalism, some research focuses on group differences (Kirby and Kaiser, 2021) and some focuses on

TABLE 1 Examples of diversity statement components.

	Key citation	Definition	Example of this component
Multiculturalism			
Value-in-group differences	Kirby and Kaiser (2021)	Valuing differences between marginalized social groups	"While other consulting firms mistakenly focus on their staff's similarities, we train our ethnically diverse workforce to embrace their differences. Focusing on our differences creates a more exciting and collaborative work environment."
Value-in-diversity	Gündemir et al. (2017b)	Celebrates people of different marginalized racial groups	"Our employees benefit from our dedication to this diversity-focused policy: their own diverse backgrounds are recognized and celebrated through our many diversity initiatives and programs."
Colorblindness			
Value-in-individual differences[1]	Gündemir et al. (2017a)	Focuses on differences at the individual level, such as qualities, experiences or skills	"focusing on individual characteristics creates an exciting work environment"
Value-in-similarities	Purdie-Vaughns et al. (2008)	Focuses on similarities between people	"While other consulting firms mistakenly focus on their staff's diversity, we train our diverse workforce to embrace their similarities. We feel that focusing on similarities creates a more unified, exciting, and collaborative work environment."
Value-in-equality	Apfelbaum et al. (2016)	Focuses on equality or prevention of discrimination	"All employees, regardless of background, are treated equally and fairly. Equal opportunity further ensures that our employees are recruited, hired, and promoted without regard to race, sex, age, gender, gender identity or expression, religion, national origin, disability, marital status, sexual orientation, veteran status, or other. "

[1]Value-in-individual differences has also been included under the multicultural categorization (e.g., Gündemir et al., 2017b); "We foster an inclusive and open-minded workplace that values diverse backgrounds and experiences."

value-in-diversity (Verkuyten, 2005; Purdie-Vaughns et al., 2008). As these differing definitions of multiculturalism are being compared to differing definitions of colorblindness, it is difficult to draw meaningful conclusions. For example, focusing on value-in-group differences, compared to value-in-similarities, decreased authenticity and increased perceptions of tokenism for Black Americans who were weakly identified with their racial group (Kirby and Kaiser, 2021). However, *both* value-in-group differences and value-in-individual differences increased minoritized groups' leadership self-efficacy when compared to value-in-similarities (Gündemir et al., 2017a).

The distinction between focusing on group differences and value-in-diversity is also key. Purdie-Vaughns et al. (2008) found that a multiculturalism ideology, focused on value-in-diversity, increased minoritized groups' workplace trust and comfort more than a colorblind ideology that devalued group identities. The difference in the valence of these multiculturalism (celebrating) versus colorblindness (devaluing) framings could explain the discrepancy between this finding and some of those discussed previously (see Hahn et al., 2015). Within multiculturalism, there is also a difference in valence between focusing on how groups differ and going one step further to celebrating this diversity (see Table 1 for examples). Our research aims to explore this difference further through documenting the prevalence of both components and their relationships with minoritized groups' perceptions.

Across the literature, these differences in components of ideologies that are classified under the same or similar terms to multiculturalism versus colorblindness has made it difficult to understand which components drive different findings. These different components of the ideologies represent at least five distinct ideas about navigating diversity (*value-in-group differences, value-in-individual differences, value-in-similarities, value-in-equality,* and *value-in-diversity*). This is the first paper to systematically compare these components, document their presence in the real-world, and provide a better understanding of their effects for the minoritized racial groups they intend to benefit. [1]

Not only does diversity rhetoric differ in prescriptions for *how* to navigate diversity, but they differ in notions of *why* diversity is important—often called a "case for diversity" or diversity rationale. The two main diversity rationales are the business and moral case. The business case argues that diversity brings economic or instrumental value to the organization through increased productivity, whereas the *moral case* argues that promoting diversity is the right thing to do (Noon, 2007). The *business case* has a number of downsides: (a) it is generally less beneficial for minority groups as it can lead to deprioritization of minority group job applicants, (b) relates to increased graduation rate disparities between White and Black students (Starck et al., 2021), (c) it can lead to concerns from minoritized groups about how they will be treated at work (Ely and Thomas, 2001), (d) it reduces minoritized groups' sense of belonging (Georgeac and Rattan, 2023), and (e) it makes companies less appealing as employers (Jansen et al., 2021). Despite these downsides, the business case has often been used as the rationale behind multiculturalism (Plaut, 2002). It has even been used as an argument against colorblindness – diversity can be instrumental for the organization (van Knippenberg et al., 2004) and thus the differences that come with diversity should be emphasized rather than downplayed (Gündemir et al., 2019). However, as discussed above, multiculturalism tends to be preferred by minoritized racial groups and therefore, it remains unclear whether the downsides of the

1 Research with White people has shown that when colorblindness is treated as a multifaceted construct rather than unidimensional, the different components are associated with different prejudice outcomes (Whitley et al., 2022).

business case are also seen in the real-world when coupled with multiculturalism. In practice, multicultural statements can and do make either the business or moral case (or both) and these differences may also contribute to a lack of clarity about why and when multiculturalism versus colorblindness provide identity safety.

This research aims to better understand how the different components of diversity ideologies and rationales are perceived by minoritized racial groups. We will document the components present in both university (Study 1a) and company (Study 1b) diversity statements to understand how their rhetoric might differ. In addition to examining the prevalence of individual components, we will also document which components tend to appear together and whether particular combinations are especially beneficial. Diversity ideologies and rationales have often been studied in isolation and our research aims to understand how these two forms of diversity rhetoric appear together in the real-world.

In addition, we will examine how these components and their clusters relate to psychological measures (Study 2). Specifically, we will investigate the relationships between the company diversity statement components collected in Study 1b and minoritized racial groups' interest in the company, perceptions of value fit, authenticity, and tokenism.

Study 1

In Study 1, we assessed the prevalence of different components in real-world university (Study 1a) and company (Study 1b) diversity statements. Specifically, we examined how organizations approach diversity (value-in-group differences, value-in-diversity, value-in-similarities, value-in-individual differences, and value-in-equality) and why diversity matters to them (moral case and business case) in the statements of the top 100 US universities and top 250 Fortune 500 companies. We also assessed what components tend to appear together within the same statements. Because previous research has shown that the private sector focuses more on the business case than the public sector in Dutch organizations (Jansen et al., 2021), we also explored the possibility that there are differences in how Fortune 500 companies (public sector organizations) versus US universities (private sector organizations) discuss diversity (diversity ideologies), and how different diversity ideologies and rationales cluster together.

Method

Study 1a diversity statement coding

We collected diversity statements from the top 100 US universities on the US News and World Report rankings list. Research assistants copied the first block of distinctive text (up until an image or subheading was used) on their diversity and inclusion webpages[2] and two coders[3] independently content coded each statement to indicate whether any of the components (*value-in-group differences, value-in-individual differences, value-in-similarities, value-in-equality, value-in-diversity,* the *business case* or the *moral case*) were present (summarized in Table 2; 1 = present, 0 = absent).[4] Statements could be coded as having multiple components. Once sufficient reliability was achieved (i.e., kappa reliability was at least 0.41, or "moderate" agreement; see Landis and Koch, 1977),[5] all discrepancies were discussed by the coders to reach a unanimous decision.[6] These components were our independent variables of interest.

Study 1b diversity statement coding

We collected diversity statements from the top 250 companies of the Fortune 500 companies. Two of these companies had no diversity statement present, so our final sample size was 248. Four research assistants[7] followed the same coding procedure as Study 1a (summarized in Table 2).[8,9]

Study 1 results

We began by examining the prevalence of diversity ideology components in current universities' (Study 1a) and companies'

2 For organizations where diversity statements appeared in multiple locations, we used their diversity and inclusion page. For organizations that did not have a diversity and inclusion page, we searched the website for other places where the diversity statement could appear (e.g., careers or about us pages) and used those.

3 The two coders were a White British/Spanish woman and an Asian woman who were long-term residents of the United Kingdom. The coding for the business case and moral case were conducted later and included a White French and a White British woman for the business case and two White women for the moral case.

4 The subjectivity of the coders may have influenced our results. For example, the interpretation of a White woman may differ from the interpretation of an Asian woman. However, during the first iterations of the coding process, we adapted our coding scheme so that different coders would have similar interpretations (i.e., until we obtained sufficient reliability).

5 Value-in-group differences: κ=0.66; coder agreement=83%, Value-in-individual differences: κ=0.54; coder agreement=81%, Value-in-similarities: κ=0.65; coder agreement=84%, Value-in-equality: κ=0.60; coder agreement=87%, Value-in-diversity: κ=0.77; coder agreement=89%, Business case: κ=0.56; coder agreement=78%, Moral case: κ=0.52; coder agreement=76%.

6 After coding the full set, three categories did not have sufficient reliability. After revising the coding scheme and recoding, value-in-similarities, value-in-equality, and value-in-diversity did not have sufficient reliability, but we attained sufficient reliability after one, one, and two more iterations, respectively. The business and moral cases were coded separately and required one iteration of coding the full set.

7 The four coders were three White women and one Asian woman. The coding for the business case and moral case were conducted later and included a White French and a White British/Spanish woman.

8 Sufficient reliability was achieved for all components: Value-in-group differences (κ=0.74; coder agreement=91%), Value-in-individual differences: (κ=0.50; coder agreement=80%), Value-in-similarities: (κ=0.51; coder agreement=88%), Value-in-equality: (κ=0.64; coder agreement=82%), Value-in-diversity: (κ=0.66; coder agreement=88%), Business case: (κ=0.53; coder agreement=81%), Moral case: (κ=0.44; coder agreement=77%).

9 For all categories, we attained sufficient reliability in one iteration of coding the full set of statements.

TABLE 2 Content coding of diversity statement components[1].

Components	Definition	Universities example	Companies example
Diversity ideology			
1 Value-in-group differences	Emphasizes differences between any form of social category (e.g., race, gender, sexual orientation, class, age).	"We recognize and value the unique experiences drawn from differences in race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, age, religion, and veteran status and welcome all students of diverse backgrounds."	"we define diversity as the range of differences that make individuals unique, including ability, age, ethnicity, gender identification, race, sexual orientation, religious belief and veteran's status. Inclusion is how we leverage these differences to form a genuine community and expand business opportunities."
2 Value-in-individual differences	Emphasizes differences between people or individuals (in a way that is not explicitly about a social group, such as race, gender, sexual orientation, class, age). It focuses on differences in individual qualities and skills.	"By embracing diverse people, ideas, and perspectives we create a vibrant learning and working environment."	"we take an active, strategic approach to appreciate our individual and collective experiences, different ways of thinking, and various communication styles."
3 Value-in-similarities	Emphasizes similarities between people.	"The University of Sterfield is committed to blending our cultures into a harmonious family atmosphere and accepting each as a vital link in our mission."	"we are united by a culture that cultivates a workplace like no other."
4 Value-in-equality	Discusses equality or prevention of discrimination. Equality relates to fairness in terms of equal opportunity for all and ensuring that procedures treat everyone the same way.	"The University of Sterfield is an equal opportunity employer and educator, proudly pluralistic and firmly committed to providing equal opportunity for outstanding men and women of every race, creed and background."	"We are an equal opportunity employer and strive to build balanced teams from all walks of life."
5 Value-in-diversity	Acknowledges or celebrates people of different social groups (e.g., race, gender, sexual orientation, class, age).	"The Council celebrates cultural identities and diversity on campus by fostering awareness and mutual understanding through increased communication."	"By celebrating diversity across all spectrums, including but not limited to race, national origin, religion, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, disability, veteran/military status, and age, we are a stronger company and culture."
Diversity rationale			
6 Business case	Focuses on the benefits diversity brings for the organization itself.	"At The Sterfield University, we recognize that every competitive advantage begins with people. By valuing, celebrating and leveraging the differences and similarities of our students, faculty and staff, we inspire an environment of innovation and passion - one that enables us to create a teaching, research and service environment that better reflects the needs of our students, faculty, staff, customers, constituents, communities and other key stakeholders."	"We know that diverse teams improve our performance, drive our growth and enhance engagement among ourselves and with our customers and suppliers."
7 Moral case	Focuses on valuing diversity and/or equality because it is the right thing to do.	"In an organization so reliant on its people, creating a diverse and inclusive community is not only the right thing to do; it's critical to the successful implementation of our mission. The greatest challenges facing us in the century ahead are incredibly complex and will require diverse teams who can work collaboratively and innovatively. Actively seeking a student body and a faculty and staff who represent the diversity of our region, nation and world is necessary to prepare our students for an increasingly globalized and connected world."	"We do the right thing by treating everyone with respect."

[1]All example statements are anonymized – the company/university name is replaced with "Sterfield."

(Study 1b) diversity statements. Next, we examined how these components group together in real-world organizational diversity statements.

Prevalence of diversity ideology components

Study 1a

In the university statements, value-in-equality (77%) was the most common diversity ideology, followed by value-in-individual differences (69%), value-in-diversity (63%), value-in-group differences (49%), and value-in-similarities (38%). In terms of the 'why' of diversity management, the moral case (52%) was more prevalent than the business case (46%), although both appear in nearly half of statements.

Study 1b

In the company statements, value-in-individual differences (70.2%) was instead the most common diversity ideology, followed by value-in-equality (53.6%), value-in-diversity (28.6%), value-in-group differences (21.8%), and value-in-similarities (14.5%). Amongst the statements that focus on difference, a focus on value-in-individual differences was more prevalent than value-in-group differences. In terms of the 'why' of diversity management, the business case (79.8%) was more prevalent than the moral case (31.9%) – this pattern was similar to university statements, but much more pronounced.

How do diversity statement components group together?

We performed a hierarchical agglomerative cluster analysis of the diversity statement ratings to understand how the diversity statement components cluster together.[10]

Study 1a

Capturing prominent clusters within university statements, the five-cluster solution is shown in Table 3 and example statements are shown in Table 4. The first cluster – reflecting what we refer to as *Moralistic Value-In-Diversity* – captured 30 statements that were particularly focused on notions of diversity and difference (e.g., *value-in-group differences, value-in-individual differences*, *value-in-diversity*) and *value-in-equality*, framed within a *moral case* for diversity. The second cluster – reflecting *Instrumental Value-In-Diversity* – captured 27 statements that were also focused on notions of diversity and difference (e.g., *value-in-group differences, value-in-individual differences*, *value-in-diversity*) and *value-in-equality*, but were framed within a *business case* for diversity (rather than the *moral case*). Both of these clusters are similar to multicultural meritocracy (Gündemir et al., 2017b; which also focuses on *difference in addition to* value-in-equality), but further distinguishes between the distinct diversity rationales in which they are embedded. The third cluster – reflecting *Instrumental Equality* – captured 20 statements that were high on *value-in-equality, value-in-individual differences,* and the *business case*. The fourth cluster – *Moral Equality* – captured 14 statements that were high on *value-in-equality* and the *moral case*. The fifth cluster – *Dual Identity* – see Gaertner and Dovidio (2000) captured 9 statements high on *value-in-individual differences, value-in-similarities*, and *value-in-equality*, grounded in both the *business case* and *moral case* for diversity.

Study 1b

Within company statements there were fewer prominent clusters. The three-cluster solution is shown in Tables 4, 5. The first cluster – *Instrumental Individualism* – captured 121 statements (49%) that focused on *value-in-individual differences* and the *business case*. The second cluster – *Moralistic Individualism* – captured 59 statements (24%) that that were particularly focused on *value-in-individual differences*, *value-in-equality* and the *moral case*. The third cluster – *Instrumental Value-In-Diversity* – which also appeared in university statements, captured 68 statements (27%) that were particularly focused on diversity and difference (e.g., *value-in-group differences, value-in-individual differences*, *value-in-diversity*) and *value-in-equality*, framed within the *business case*.

Study 1 discussion

Although both universities and organizations focus on value-in-similarities the least, universities most commonly advocate for

10 This analysis was performed in SPSS using the squared Euclidean distance similarity measure and the Ward's method (Ward, 1963). The Ward's method was selected as it gives more effective solutions than other methods for binary data (Hands and Everitt, 1987; Tamasauskas et al., 2012). The number of clusters was determined through an analysis of the dendrogram and agglomeration schedule following Yim and Ramdeen's (2015) recommendations. Based on Clatworthy et al.'s (2005), also see Jolliffe et al.'s (1982) recommendation, to assess the validity of the cluster structure, we removed variables and re-ran analyses. This suggested that our clusters were robust.

TABLE 3 Percentage of university statements containing each diversity ideology by cluster (Study 1a).

Cluster	Value-in-group differences	Value-in-individual differences	Value-in-similarities	Value-in-equality	Value-in-diversity	Business case	Moral case
Moralistic Value-In-Diversity	**90.00**	**70.00**	26.70	**76.70**	**100.00**	6.70	**93.30**
Instrumental Value-In-Diversity	**77.8**	**88.90**	40.70	**70.40**	**96.30**	**81.50**	0.00
Instrumental Equality	0.00	**50.00**	25.00	**85.00**	25.00	**65.00**	5.00
Moral Equality	0.00	35.70	42.90	**92.90**	0.00	0.00	**100.00**
Dual Identity	11.10	**100.00**	**88.90**	**55.60**	22.20	**100.00**	**100.00**

Bolded percentages reflect those at or above 50% (i.e., the majority of the statements in that cluster contain the components of interest).

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TABLE 4 Example statements for each cluster.

Cluster	Universities example	Companies example
Moralistic Value-In-Diversity	"We envision a Sterfield University where people of all identities & experiences are understood, appreciated, and fully included in the community and where equitable treatment and outcomes prevail."	N/A
Instrumental Value-In-Diversity	"Sterfield University's founders opened its doors to all students without regard to religion, race, or gender. Building and sustaining a vibrant community of scholars, students, and staff remains essential to our mission of contributing to, and preparing students to thrive in, an increasingly interconnected world. We strive to create environments for learning, working, and living that are enriched by racial, ethnic, and cultural diversity. We seek to cultivate an atmosphere of respect for individual differences in life experience, sexual orientation, and religious belief, and we aspire to be free of intellectual parochialism, barriers to access, and ethnocentrism. Success in a competitive, global milieu depends upon our ongoing commitment to welcome and engage the wisdom, creativity, and aspirations of all peoples. The excellence we seek emerges from the contributions and talents of every member of the Sterfield University community."	"We believe achieving success begins with people, and we are focused on building a team with a rich diversity of perspectives, experiences and ideas. As one of the nation's premier energy companies, Sterfield is committed to recruiting, developing and retaining great people at all levels. A key part of that commitment is to attract and maintain a diverse and multi-generational workforce that can help us meet the continually evolving needs of our customers. To reinforce our commitment, we continue to develop and implement corporate-wide diversity and inclusion training for all of our employees and further strengthen our Corporate Diversity Council and Employee Resource Groups. At Sterfield, we define diversity broadly. We provide an inclusive work environment that is free from discrimination and harassment on the basis of race, color, age, sex, national origin, religion, marital status, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, genetics, disability or protected veteran status. We also appreciate diversity of thought, style, technical and functional capabilities or leadership. When talented employees from varied backgrounds are engaged and contributing to our business success, we all benefit."
Instrumental Equality	"Everything about our academic mission—teaching, learning, scholarship, research, engagement, and creative activity—is made better by the exchange of ideas and diverse experiences and perspectives of our students, faculty, and staff. We value the contributions and inherent worth of all individuals, and treat others with mutual respect and understanding. And when we are in the field as professionals, we are devoted to understanding the varied historical and social contexts where we work."	N/A
Moral Equality	"The primary objectives of the programs and services for underrepresented and minority students at Sterfield are to support the outreach, recruitment, and retention of Native American, African American, Hispanic American and those of Pacific Islander heritage. These objectives support the overall campus goal of building a safe, supportive and inclusive community for all students."	N/A
Dual Identity	"The Office of Institutional Diversity seeks to ensure a University of Sterfield where people of many different backgrounds and perspectives join together to actively advance knowledge. As a community dedicated to scholarship, research, instruction, and public service and outreach, we recognize the importance of respecting, valuing and learning from each other's differences while seeking common goals."	N/A
Instrumental Individualism	N/A	"When you bring a variety of perspectives to the table, it creates a culture of innovation—essential to facing the world's healthcare challenges. We have been widely regarded as an employer of choice, with numerous local and global awards recognizing our commitment to fostering an extraordinary workplace."
Moralistic Individualism	N/A	"We celebrate the diversity and uniqueness of each employee and believe that everyone has the right to be treated with fairness, dignity, and respect. Our diversity makes us stronger"

navigating diversity by focusing on value-in-equality, whereas companies focus on value-in-individual differences. The reasons for why diversity should be valued also differ between the organizations, with universities focusing on the moral case and business case almost equally, but companies focusing on the business case substantially more. This is in line with previous work that has shown that the business case is more prevalent in the private sector (Jansen et al., 2021; Georgeac and Rattan, 2023)—this may be because of differences in goals across sectors, among other potential differences. Organizations may implement diversity ideologies to communicate to

TABLE 5 Percentage of company statements containing each diversity ideology by cluster (Study 1b).

Cluster	Value-in-group differences	Value-in-individual differences	Value-in-similarities	Value-in-equality	Value-in-diversity	Business case	Moral case
Instrumental Individualism	0.00	**69.40**	21.50	48.80	0.80	**100.0**	2.50
Moralistic Individualism	0.00	**52.50**	10.20	**52.50**	5.10	35.60	**91.50**
Instrumental Value-In-Diversity	**79.40**	**86.80**	5.90	**63.20**	**98.50**	**82.40**	32.40

Bolded percentages reflect those at or above 50% (i.e., the majority of the statements in that cluster contain the components of interest).

potential stakeholders that the organization is committed to diversity (i.e., a signaling rationale; Dover et al., 2020). These stakeholders may differ between companies and universities (e.g., potential employees versus students) and therefore so will the nature of the signaling rationale.

The ways statements grouped together also revealed differences between types of organizations. In universities, statements that focus on diversity and difference commonly cluster with either moral reasons for caring about diversity (Moralistic Value-In-Diversity) or business case justifications (Instrumental Value-In-Diversity). However, in companies, only the instrumental Value-In-Diversity statements are seen. The university statements also showed a quadrant with statements either being very high (>75%) on value-in-equality (Instrumental Equality and Moral Equality) or value-in-group differences (Moralistic Value-In-Diversity and Instrumental Value-In-Diversity), and either high on the moral case (Moralistic Value-In-Diversity and Moral Equality) or the business case (Instrumental Value-In-Diversity and Instrumental Equality). For companies, we also found that statements were either high on the moral case (Moralistic Individualism) or the business case (Instrumental Individualism and Instrumental Value-In-Equality). However, we did not find the value-in-equality versus value-in-group differences pattern we found for universities, perhaps as a result of the low prevalence of value-in-group differences.

Moreover, whilst both focus on value-in-individual differences, in universities it tends to come alongside value-in-equality, whereas in companies it is often paired with the business case. Additionally, in universities but not in companies, we found that there is also a grouping that focuses on dual identities (high in value-in-individual differences and value-in-similarities) – this type of ideology recognizes that people belong to individual subgroups whilst also having a shared overarching identity (Glasford and Dovidio, 2011). Overall, these findings suggest much stronger reluctance to focus on group differences in companies as compared to universities and more of a tendency to focus on individualism.

In Study 2, we followed up on these clusters to assess how they are perceived by minoritized racial groups, as well as which individual components drive effects. This allowed us to better determine how rhetoric existing in real organizations impacts on underrepresented groups.

Study 2

Despite numerous studies examining perceptions of multicultural and colorblind ideologies, it remains unclear which components drive these effects. For example, *why* do minoritized racial groups typically support multicultural over colorblind ideologies (Ryan et al., 2007)? We aimed to address this gap by measuring minoritized racial groups' responses to the different components discussed thus far, as well as the clusters identified in the organizational statements. To better understand minoritized racial groups' perceptions of the different components, we assessed their perceptions of 248 Fortune 500 statements on a range of different measures used in previous research in the field[11,12,13]. Because of inconsistent operationalizations of diversity ideologies in the literature, we did not initially have strong hypotheses. However, we did expect that the multicultural components (value-in-group differences, value-in-diversity), value-in-equality and the moral case would be associated with more value fit, interest, and authenticity. We expected that value-in-similarities would be negatively associated with these psychological outcomes.[14]

We focused on these dependent measures because previous research has found effects of diversity rhetoric on authenticity (Kirby and Kaiser, 2021), organizational interest (Kirby et al., 2023), and value fit (Purdie-Vaughns et al., 2008). Both lack of value fit and inauthenticity play a key role in reinforcing stereotypes and in turn social inequalities (Schmader and Sedikides, 2018). Therefore, it is key to understand how different concepts of diversity ideologies affect these variables. Moreover, diversity ideologies are often implemented with the intent to appeal to minoritized groups and encourage them to apply (Dover et al., 2020) and therefore it is key to ensure they have this intended effect. We measured tokenism because previous research found that value-in-group differences may increase tokenism (as measured by their prototypicality pressure scale; Kirby and Kaiser, 2021). This finding appears to contradict the general consensus that multiculturalism is universally beneficial (e.g., for value fit;

11 We also ran a similar preliminary study with the university statements. However, because it only had 100 statements, it was underpowered. For simplicity, we focus on outcomes for the company statements and only report the study with university statements in the online supplement.

12 https://osf.io/q5h7f

13 We amended our original pre-registration before data analysis to clarify that we would only include variables that were significantly associated with our dependent variables in the mediation analyses.

14 Here, we discuss our original hypotheses, which were somewhat exploratory. However, after some unexpected findings in a preliminary (underpowered) study, we pre-registered more specific hypotheses. These hypotheses were mostly in line with the above predictions, with the exception of predicting that value-in-group-differences would predict increased feelings of tokenism. However, we have de-emphasized this hypothesis for the sake of clarity because we did not replicate the preliminary finding – more details and justification for this decision can be found in the online supplement. Some of the pre-registered analyses are also being included in a separate manuscript focused on real-world diversity outcomes (e.g., workplace inclusion indices and representation of minoritized racial groups), rather than the current focus on perceptions of diversity statements.

Purdie-Vaughns et al., 2008) for minoritized racial groups (Gündemir et al., 2019), so we wanted to better understand if the different framings in the literature might explain conflicting findings like this one. However, this was an exploratory question because the research suggests that tokenism may be more relevant when accounting for individual differences in identification (Kirby and Kaiser, 2021), which was not possible with the present data

Method

Participants

We recruited racially minoritized participants residing in the US via Prolific. Of the original sample of 269 participants, 32 were excluded as they did not identify as a racial/ethnic minority group member. Therefore, the final sample was 237 participants (28.7% Hispanic or Latino/a, 24.5% Black/African American, 19.4% mixed race other, 12.2% East Asian, 7.6% mixed race Black/White, 7.2% South Asian, 0.4% American Indian/Alaskan Native). Participants were aged between 18 to 69 years old ($M = 28.13$; $SD = 9.67$); 51.5% were female and 48.5% were male, 93.2% were native English speakers.[15]

Materials and procedure

This research was approved by the ethics department at the university of the first author, and all participants provided informed consent. Each participant read 10 randomly selected diversity statements from the total pool of 248 statements. The names of the organizations were removed from all statements and replaced with Sterfield—a fictitious name—to prevent prior impressions of the companies affecting the results. Each statement was rated between 6 and 11 times ($M = 9.56$). In analyses, the company interest, value fit, authenticity, and tokenism measures were collapsed for each statement, so that each statement had a single index of average company interest, value fit, authenticity, and tokenism. For all measures, participants responded on a 7-point Likert scale (1 = *Strongly Disagree*, 7 = *Strongly Agree*).

Company interest

Participants responded to three items from Kirby et al. (2023): I would be interested in this company; This company would not be a good fit for me (reverse-scored); I would like to work here. Because reliability was low ($\alpha = 0.66$), we computed company interest as the average of two items (I would be interested in this company; I would like to work here; $r_{SB} = 0.96$). Higher values indicated stronger company interest.

Value fit

Participants responded to four items adapted from Purdie-Vaughns et al.'s (2008) trust and comfort scale[16]: I think I would like to work under the supervision of people with similar values as this company; I think I would be treated fairly by my supervisor; I think I would trust the management to treat me fairly; I think that my values and the values of this company are very similar. We computed an average where higher values indicated stronger value fit. Reliability of the measure was excellent ($\alpha = 0.97$).

Authenticity

Participants responded to two items adapted from Kirby and Kaiser's (2021) authenticity scale[17]: I could be my true self at this company; I would feel comfortable at this company. We computed an average where higher values indicated stronger authenticity ($r_{SB} = 0.93$).

Tokenism

Participants responded to five items adapted from Apfelbaum et al.'s (2016) representation-based concerns scale[18]: My performance at this company will only reflect on me, not other racial minorities (R); At this company, I will feel like I have to represent all racial minorities; At this company, I would be concerned that people will treat me differently because of my race; If I don't do well at this company, it will be viewed as stereotypic of my race; At this company, I do not want to stand out as a racial minority. We computed an average where higher values indicated stronger tokenism. Reliability of the measure was excellent ($\alpha = 0.79$).[19]

Finally, demographic details were collected, and participants were thanked, debriefed, and reimbursed.

Research materials, pre-registration (uploaded before data analysis and an analysis plan is included) and data files are available on OSF: https://osf.io/vfdpc/.

Results

Analytic strategy

Participants were randomly assigned to read 10 diversity statements from the total 248. Rather than using participants as the level of analysis, we used the statements. To do this, we calculated mean company interest, value fit, tokenism, and authenticity ratings for each organization. Our dataset included a row for each company, with the coding from Study 1b and the mean ratings of each dependent variable as separate columns.

We examined whether any clusters of components are especially beneficial (or detrimental). To do this, we used the clusters obtained in Study 1b as an independent variable in ANCOVAs, controlling for word count, on the outcome variables (company interest, value fit, tokenism, and authenticity). Then, we investigated whether any individual components were related to the outcome variables. To investigate this, we ran bivariate correlation analyses between the components and the outcome variables, followed by multiple

15 SES was not collected due to time and resource constraints.

16 We excluded any items that measured authenticity or company interest and changed any references to the company they used in their manipulation to 'this company'.

17 The four items in this measure were very similar to one another so we selected the two most distinct items in the interest of shortening the questionnaire.

18 We excluded one item "My [gender/race] would be very important to me at Redstone" that did not capture tokenism – instead identity centrality. We also changed any references to the company they used in their manipulation to 'this company'.

19 Tokenism was also measured with a single item "At this company, I would be seen as the same as other members of groups to which I belong" for comparison with the university data that is reported in the supplement.

regression analyses to investigate the relationships between the components and the outcome variables when controlling for the other components and word count.

Are particular ideology clusters preferred?

The different clusters were significantly associated with perceptions of value fit and company interest, [$F(2,242) = 4.06$, $p = 0.018$, $\eta_p^2 = 0.03$] and [$F(2,242) = 3.58$, $p = 0.029$, $\eta_p^2 = 0.03$], respectively. However, the clusters did not relate to authenticity [$F(2,242) = 1.91$, $p = 0.150$, $\eta_p^2 = 0.02$] or tokenism [$F(2,242) = 1.14$, $p = 0.323$, $\eta_p^2 = 0.01$]. Participants reported greater perceptions of value fit and greater company interest for the Instrumental Value-In-Diversity cluster than the Instrumental Individualism and Moralistic Individualism clusters (see Supplementary Table S10). This tentatively provides support for the notion that value-in-diversity and difference fosters fit better than focusing on value-in-individual differences.

Which individual diversity ideologies are beneficial?

Preliminary analyses

We checked for any multicollinearity issues by running crosstabulation analyses between all of our independent variables (Table 6). Value-in-group differences and value-in-diversity were strongly associated, φ (1, $N = 248$) = 0.81, $p < 0.001$, with only an 8% difference between the scores given to them. Due to multicollinearity concerns (Alin, 2010), these two variables were analyzed separately in two multiple linear regression models. The moral case and business case were also strongly associated, φ (1, $N = 248$) = −0.58, $p < 0.001$, with only a 17% overlap between the scores given to them. To avoid issues with multicollinearity, we deviate from our pre-registered analysis plan by including the moral case and business case in separate models. Below we report the findings from the regression models including the moral case and value-in-group differences. The Supplementary materials include the models with value-in-diversity and the business case.

Company interest

Correlation analyses revealed that minoritized racial groups were more interested in working for companies with value-in-group differences, value-in-individual differences, value-in-equality, value-in-diversity, and the business case in their statements (Table 7). The regression analyses showed that only the value-in-individual differences effect held when controlling for the other components (Table 8 and Supplementary Tables S11–S13).

Value fit

Correlation analyses revealed that minoritized racial groups had higher value fit perceptions for companies with value-in-group differences, value-in-individual differences, value-in-equality, value-in-diversity, and the business case in their statements (Table 7). The regression analyses revealed that only the value-in-individual differences and value-in-group differences effects held when controlling for the other components (Table 8 and Supplementary Table S11). It is key to note that the findings for the relationship between value-in-individual differences and value fit are not significant in two of the models that account for multicollinearity issues ($p = 0.072$ when value-in-group differences and the business case are included, and $p = 0.051$ when value-in-diversity and the business case are included; see Supplementary Tables S12, S13).

Authenticity

Correlation analyses revealed that minoritized racial groups felt like they could be more authentic in companies with value-in-group differences, value-in-individual differences, value-in-equality and value-in-diversity in their statements (Table 7). The regression analyses revealed that none of these effects held when controlling for the other components (Table 9 and Supplementary Tables S11–S13).

Tokenism

Correlation analyses revealed that minoritized racial groups felt like they would be tokenized less in companies with value-in-group differences, value-in-individual differences, value-in-equality and value-in-diversity in their statements (Table 7). The regression analyses revealed that none of these effects held when controlling for the other components (Table 8 and Supplementary Tables S11–S13).

Mediation tests

We ran a parallel mediation model to investigate whether the relationship between value-in-individual differences and company interest was mediated by value fit, authenticity, and/or tokenism (controlling for word count). We found that only value fit showed a significant indirect effect on interest (see Table 9 for statistics).

Study 2 discussion

This study aimed to disentangle a range of diversity ideologies and examine how their clusters and individual components relate to psychological measures. Racial minority group members reported greater perceptions of value fit and company interest for the

TABLE 6 Cramer's phi values for associations between independent variables.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. Value-in-group differences	–						
2. Value-in-individual differences	0.22***	–					
3. Value-in-similarities	−0.13*	−0.06	–				
4. Value-in-equality	0.01	0.14*	−0.03	–			
5. Value-in-diversity	0.81***	0.18**	−0.11	0.09	–		
6. Business case	0.05	0.20**	0.04	<0.01	−0.02	–	
7. Moral case	−0.05	−0.12	−0.04	0.15*	0.03	−0.58***	–

*$p \leq 0.05$, **$p \leq 0.01$, ***$p \leq 0.001$.

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TABLE 7 Correlations between diversity ideology components and outcome variables.

	M	*SD*	Value fit	Authenticity	Tokenism	Value-in-group differences	Value-in-individual differences	Value-in-similarities	Value-in-equality	Value-in-diversity	Business case	Moral case
Company interest	5.19	0.55	0.93***	0.90***	−0.63***	0.22***	0.25***	−0.04	0.24***	0.26***	0.14*	0.03
Value fit	5.21	0.51	–			0.25***	0.23***	−0.05	0.23***	0.25***	0.15*	0.03
Authenticity	5.06	0.56	0.91***	–		0.21***	0.18**	−0.07	0.21***	0.23***	0.10	0.05
Tokenism	3.48	0.44	−0.63***	−0.64***	–	−0.15*	−0.13*	0.06	−0.21***	−0.18**	−0.07	−0.08
Word count	100.90	65.98				0.24***	0.20***	−0.05	0.41***	0.37***	0.16*	0.10
Percentage						21.8	70.2	14.5	53.6	28.6	79.8	31.9

*$p \leq 0.05$, **$p \leq 0.01$, ***$p \leq 0.001$.

Instrumental Value-In-Diversity cluster than the Instrumental Individualism and Moralistic Individualism clusters. When these clusters were broken down into the individual components of diversity ideologies, value-in-individual differences and value-in-group differences were associated with a stronger sense of value fit. However, only value-in-individual differences related to company interest, which was mediated by value fit. We also found that increases in word count relate to more positive perceptions of the statements, irrespective of content.

Our research is in line with previous research that began to disentangle the different components in the literature. Gündemir et al.'s (2017a) research distinguished between a focus on value-in-individual differences or value-in-group differences and found both related to increased leadership self-efficacy. Similarly, we found that both components relate to increased value fit.

This increase in value fit resulting from value-in-individual differences is associated with an increase in company interest. These findings enable us to better understand conflicting findings in previous literature. It was unclear whether value-in-individual differences was beneficial for minoritized groups. In one instance it was compared to value-in-equality where it was relatively detrimental for their performance when highly underrepresented (Apfelbaum et al., 2016). In other instances, it was compared to value-in-similarities where it improved minoritized groups' leadership self-efficacy (Gündemir et al., 2017a). When disentangling the components, it continued to signal fit and facilitate organizational interest among minoritized racial groups.

General discussion

This paper had two key aims. The first was to examine which diversity ideologies are commonly used by organizations. The second was to disentangle a range of diversity ideologies and examine which clusters and components are related to minoritized racial groups' psychological perceptions.

In terms of the components used by universities and companies, both types of organizations focus on value-in-similarities the least. However, universities most commonly focus on value-in-equality, whereas companies focus more on value-in-individual differences. Value-in-individual differences is also coupled with value-in-equality in universities but not in companies. The reasons for why diversity should matter also differ between them, with universities focusing on both approaches equally and companies focusing on the business case more. In universities, we also found that statements that focus on diversity and differences commonly cluster with either moral reasons for caring about diversity (Moralistic Value-In-Diversity) or the business case (Instrumental Value-In-Diversity). In companies, a focus on diversity and differences commonly appears alongside the business case (Instrumental Value-In-Diversity), but potentially due to the low prevalence of the moral case the Moralistic Value-In-Diversity ideology was not found. Previous research has suggested that different types of organizations differ in their reasons for caring for diversity (Jansen et al., 2021), and our research suggests they also differ in how they navigate diversity.

Most importantly, focusing on both individual and group differences relates to increased value fit. For value-in-individual differences, this increase in value fit also in turn relates to

TABLE 8 Relationship between diversity statement components and psychological measures with value-in-group differences and moral case in model.

	Interest			Value fit			Authenticity			Tokenism		
	$R^2 = 0.23$, $F_{6,241} = 11.64$, $p < 0.001$			$R^2 = 0.20$, $F_{6,241} = 10.19$, $p < 0.001$			$R^2 = 0.17$, $F_{6,241} = 8.47$, $p < 0.001$			$R^2 = 0.14$, $F_{6,241} = 6.66$, $p < 0.001$		
Predictor	**β**	***t***	***p***	**β**	***t***	***p***	**β**	***t***	***p***	**β**	***t***	***p***
Value-in-group differences	0.10	1.65	0.101	0.14	2.26	0.025	0.11	1.79	0.075	−0.05	−0.82	0.412
Value-in-individual differences	0.15	2.49	0.013	0.12	2.04	0.043	0.09	1.40	0.162	−0.06	−0.88	0.381
Value-in-similarities	<0.01	0.01	0.993	−0.01	−0.11	0.912	−0.04	−0.60	0.548	0.03	0.49	0.622
Value-in-equality	0.06	0.98	0.326	0.08	1.19	0.234	0.05	0.77	0.442	−0.06	−0.96	0.336
Moral Case	<0.01	0.08	0.939	0.01	0.08	0.937	0.03	0.46	0.646	−0.05	−0.79	0.433
Word Count	0.35	5.45	<0.001	0.31	4.71	<0.001	0.32	4.73	<0.001	−0.30	−4.47	<0.001

TABLE 9 Indirect effects from parallel mediation model in Study 2.

Mediator	*b*	*SE*	95% CI
Value Fit	0.11	0.04	[0.02, 0.19]
Authenticity	0.04	0.02	[<0.01, 0.09]
Tokenism	<0.01	<0.01	[<0.01, 0.01]

increased company interest. The benefits of focusing on both of these components align with Gündemir et al.'s (2017a) research which found that both components increase minoritized groups' leadership self-efficacy. This also aligns with the identity safety literature, which has proposed an ideology that goes beyond the focus on group differences (between-group variability) but also acknowledges value-in-individual differences (within-group variability) may foster a sense of belonging amongst minoritized racial groups (Purdie-Vaughns and Walton, 2011).

Value-in-group differences relating to increased value fit also aligns with acculturation and social identity theories. Acculturation theories propose that valuing group differences enables minoritized racial groups to maintain their ethnic identities in cultures where many ethnic groups are present (Berry, 2001). Social identity theory further argues that valuing group differences increases group identification and positive ingroup evaluations among minority groups (Verkuyten, 2005). Our ethnic identities are key to our self-concepts (Tajfel and Turner, 1979). Therefore, it is logical that a diversity ideology that enables minoritized racial groups to preserve and strengthen their social identities would align with their values.

Similarly, the benefits of value-in-individual differences fit within the current cultural context. In the US, individualism is highly valued and on the rise (Twenge et al., 2013), albeit less so for minoritized racial groups (Vargas and Kemmelmeier, 2013). However, these findings appear to conflict with other research, at least on the surface. When organizations define diversity "broadly," focused on a wide range of individual characteristics, minoritized racial groups report less interest in those organizations (Kirby et al., 2023). However, it only hurts their interest if the organization neglects to explicitly mention minoritized groups. Similarly, our research showed the Instrumental Value-In-Diversity ideology—which combines value-in-group differences with value-in-individual differences was associated with increased value fit and interest relative to ideologies that did not include group differences. Thus, value-in-individual differences has clear benefits for organizational interest, but it may not always be sufficient on its own without acknowledging important social identities. These findings also align with scholarly perspectives suggesting that acknowledging a wide range of disadvantaged groups might harness the benefits of multiculturalism without making individuals feel tokenized (Rios and Cohen, 2023).

These detrimental effects of solely focusing on value-in-individual differences (without value-in-group differences) may also explain why we did not find the moral case was positively related to minoritized groups' perceptions of the statements as expected. The moral case tends to cluster with individual differences (Moralistic Individualism) and therefore the downsides of only focusing on individual differences may have prevented the benefits of the moral case from being detected. Investigating whether a Moralistic Individualism ideology that also includes the value-in-group differences component is perceived more positively by minoritized racial groups would be an interesting avenue for future research.

We also did not find any effects for our authenticity or tokenism dependent measures. This may be because these effects are moderated by participant level variables. Previous research (Kirby and Kaiser, 2021) found that the relationship between diversity rhetoric and authenticity is moderated by identification. As our data was analyzed at the statement level not the participant level, we were unable to test whether identification moderated our findings. Also, participants were only presented with a company diversity statement compared to previous research which has provided more information on the company context (e.g., Apfelbaum et al., 2016). As authenticity and tokenism are more abstract than company interest and value fit, our methodology may not have sufficed for authenticity and tokenism effects to be detected, as they may require a fuller understanding of the company context.

Theoretical and practical implications

This research contributes to the field in being the first paper to document the prevalence of diversity ideologies and rationales in real-world diversity statements, as well as how they tend to cluster together. This enabled us to begin to understand how the ideologies and rationales numerous papers have studied are implemented in organizations. For example, researchers tend to

define value-in-similarities in terms of similarities between members of the organization (e.g., Purdie-Vaughns et al., 2008), whereas in practice value-in-similarities focused more on having a unified and cohesive culture. Alternatively, this finding could also reflect a shift over time in how organizations frame a focus on similarities.

We also assessed how minoritized racial groups perceive these components and the ways they group together. The Instrumental Value-In-Diversity ideology (value-in-group differences, value-in-individual differences, and value-in-diversity, value-in-equality, and the business case), positively related to minoritized groups' psychological perceptions. Most organizations adopt a multicultural approach (Apfelbaum et al., 2016) and our research suggests that organizations should frame multiculturalism in terms of the Instrumental Value-In-Diversity ideology. Our individual components analysis suggested the positive effects of the Instrumental Value-In-Diversity ideology were driven by value-in-individual differences and group differences, so implementation of the Value-In-Diversity ideology should ensure these components are prioritized. However, as this study was correlational, it is important for further research using experimental methods to assess if these effects are causal before implementation.

Constraints on generality

Whilst this research was the first to disentangle the different diversity ideology components, diversity ideologies are only a proxy of what companies' diversity management is like in practice. Further research should investigate whether diversity ideologies match company diversity practices, as well as how the company's overall diversity climate relates to minoritized racial groups' psychological perceptions. We also used a sample from the US, and these results may differ in other countries with different racial relations. They may also differ across different racially minoritized groups, but we did not have sufficient power to be able to differentiate between different groups. As perceptions of discrimination differ between racial groups (Bonilla-Silva and Dietrich, 2011; Keum et al., 2018), it is key for further research to investigate this. We also categorized participants as minoritized racial groups by asking them to self-report their race/ethnicity. Although this is typical in psychological research, future studies could confirm that these participants themselves identify as minoritized. Moreover, due to the complex nuances of the components, inter-rater reliabilities were low for some components. Finally, we have not tested these questions experimentally, which means we cannot make strong claims about causality. However, using a large range of real diversity statements is nonetheless a strength of the research.

Conclusion

Universities and companies differ in how they frame their diversity policies, with companies focusing most heavily on celebrating value-in-individual differences and universities focusing on value-in-equality. This focus on celebrating difference matches well with the needs of racially minoritized people – expressing a value for individual, as well as group, differences facilitates a stronger sense that a company's values fit with their own. These findings have important implications for the nuances of how organizations should frame their diversity strategies in order to foster identity safety among minoritized groups.

Data availability statement

The datasets presented in this study can be found in online repositories. The names of the repository/repositories and accession number(s) can be found at: https://osf.io/vfdpc/.

Ethics statement

The studies involving humans were approved by the Psychology ethics committee at the University of Exeter. The studies were conducted in accordance with the local legislation and institutional requirements. The participants provided their written informed consent to participate in this study.

Author contributions

NRP: Conceptualization, Data curation, Formal analysis, Funding acquisition, Investigation, Methodology, Project administration, Resources, Supervision, Validation, Visualization, Writing – original draft, Writing – review & editing. TK: Conceptualization, Formal analysis, Funding acquisition, Investigation, Methodology, Project administration, Resources, Supervision, Validation, Writing – original draft, Writing – review & editing. CB: Visualization, Writing – review & editing.

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Conflict of interest

The authors declare that the research was conducted in the absence of any commercial or financial relationships that could be construed as a potential conflict of interest.

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Supplementary material

The Supplementary material for this article can be found online at: https://www.frontiersin.org/articles/10.3389/fpsyg.2023.1293622/full#supplementary-material

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Gender and social class inequalities in higher education: intersectional reflections on a workshop experience

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Research about the experiences of underrepresented groups in higher education (HE) demonstrates the persistence of challenges, despite policies and institutional strategies to promote inclusion. Diversity and inclusion policies have been part of the HE agenda for several decades, yet most policies and interventions focus on (a) a given, isolated identity experience (e.g., based solely on gender, social class, or ethnicity) rather than more intersectional approaches to identity; and (b) top-down interventions that do not include participants insights in their design. In this paper, we report a case study of a workshop with students at an elite university that drew on an intersectional approach to social identities (IASI), specifically, looking at gender and social class. We explore three key themes: (a) the importance of group processes, (b) the use of visual techniques, and (c) the institutional tensions and the (de)politicisation of social psychology research. Reflecting on this case study we argue that approaches to identity and inclusion in HE can benefit from intersectionality beyond the use of multi and overlapping identity and social group categories. We argue that research in this space is not neutral and needs to acknowledge researchers' position about (a) inclusion and diversity, (b) perceptions of participants in research, and (c) the motivation and aims of institutions where the research is conducted. Finally, we discuss the theoretical and practical implications of integrating an intersectional approach within social identity research in HE when focusing on underrepresented groups.

KEYWORDS

diversity, higher education, inclusion, intersectionality, workshop, gender, social class

Introduction

Diversity and inclusion (D&I) have been a key mission of higher education (HE) institutions during the past decades. Although universities have historically been associated with exclusion and elitism (Koutsouris et al., 2022), the benefits associated with participating in HE have led governments to promote broader access to universities for

all, regardless of an individual's background. For example, charters like Athena SWAN and Advance HE's Race Equality identify and address the challenges for the inclusion of students and staff due to their gender and ethnicity, respectively. Research also demonstrates the positive effects of interventions to improve students' sense of belonging, for example for Black students in the United States (Brady et al., 2020), African American students (Walton and Cohen, 2011), and women in STEM disciplines (Walton et al., 2015).

Although these interventions are important to improve students' experiences in HE, they focus on singular identities. However, recognition of multiple systems of disadvantage and exclusion is critical (Nichols and Stahl, 2019). Indeed, intersectionality—that is, the understanding of individuals' experiences of various kinds of discrimination and disadvantages as intersecting, rather than as singular and independent—is a critical framework for the analysis of educational experiences as complex and imbedded in socio-political lives (Kapilashrami, 2021).

Our project aimed to contribute to this corpus to address two important paradoxes in D&I interventions in HE: (a) the lack of focus, from our knowledge, on the intersection of gender and social class; and (b) the focus on top-down and managerial approaches to inclusion (Koutsouris et al., 2022). To this end, we conducted a workshop following an intersectional approach to social identities (from now IASI workshop), with female and male students from underrepresented social class groups at an elite university. The IASI workshop involved students as active actors in the research processes, whilst creating knowledge about issues that they care about and reflecting on their experiences.

The IASI workshop aimed to emphasise an intersectional approach to social identity in educational settings. We designed this method to promote more engagement from students in research activities in universities, especially considering reported student dissatisfaction and cynicism towards studies about their experiences, and the criticisms of the role of researchers as 'outsiders' from participants' experiences (Bridges, 2001). The use of intersectionality as a theoretical framework creates important challenges for social psychology researchers in D&I, in terms of the self-reflection on their own research epistemologies and methodologies, challenging researchers to analyse their respective positionalities in terms of (a) the institutions where research is conducted and funded, and (b) the views about the relationships between the researchers and participants.

We will first provide a summary of how D&I has been understood in HE settings. Then, we will present intersectionality conceptualisations and their uses as theoretical and methodological frameworks. We will also review how these frameworks have been applied to research in HE settings from a social identity approach. Second, we will report a research experience where we aimed to address the paradoxes described above by conducting a workshop from an intersectional approach to social identity (IASI). Finally, we will discuss the implications that the opportunities and challenges that arise from using this method may have on researchers.

D&I discourses in HE

Diversity and inclusion have been part of HE's agenda for the last decades. However, how D&I have been approached by HE—from our perspective—has led to different issues. In the United Kingdom, an important policy agenda has been the Widening Participation strategy, which aims to remove access barriers for students from disadvantaged backgrounds (Connell-Smith and Hubble, 2018) and to promote social mobility (Kettley, 2007). However, despite the positive outcomes in terms of increasing the access of students to HE, this strategy has been criticised from a number of different perspectives. For example, there is a lack of clarity on how universities understand concepts such as 'Widening Access' and 'Widening Participation'. As Coyle et al. (2020) describe, even though these ideas tend to be used synonymously, they communicate different perspectives about inclusion. Widening Access tends to focus on the numbers of students from disadvantaged groups and translates to the increase of representation in HE of underrepresented groups, whereas Widening Participation is more likely to include academic and social experiences after access, seeking more representation of students across universities and subjects (Tonks and Farr, 2003).

How universities understand inclusion is also a matter of debate (Koutsouris et al., 2022), and the concept remains, vague, ambiguous and oversimplified (Stentiford and Koutsouris, 2021). Hence, inclusion has become an abstract and universal concept, when in reality it has been associated with multiple significances and values that can be contradictory (Peña et al., 2022). For instance, the association of inclusion with expansion (Marginson, 2016), with a focus on numbers rather than on understanding students' experiences. Indeed, inclusion has been approached from a managerial and neoliberal perspective (Koutsouris et al., 2022), where participants themselves (e.g., students and lecturers) are the ones that must ensure inclusion in their everyday interactions, rather than tackling systems of exclusion. This lack of problematization can be one of the reasons why diversity initiatives have been shown to be ineffective (Moreu et al., 2021).

Connectedly, interventions to promote inclusion in HE are likely to be designed outside of students' groups, who often are the intended beneficiaries of such interventions, leading to a notion of participants as 'receiving' the intervention rather than co-creating it. This 'deficit' perspective of inclusion is built on the idea of educational settings as homogeneous, where one group is recognised as the 'different' one (Peña et al., 2022). This notion promotes a fixed idea about what inclusion means, as educational settings are diverse and reunite multiple actors. Instead, a more appropriate definition of inclusion in HE settings considers inclusion as a dynamic and relational process (Peña et al., 2022). This approach emphasises that inclusion is a set of practises within cultural and historical contexts that, to begin with, are diverse, where (a) differences among individuals are expected and valuable; (b) identities are diverse, changing and producing knowledge; and (c) students' participation produce inclusion, as students see their perspectives integrate into their educational settings and their social and personal well-being is recognised and valued (Peña et al., 2022).

Moreover, most of the interventions drawn on Widening Participation strategies are more likely to focus on only one identity, despite the recognition of the importance of integrating intersectionality in equality, D&I actions in HE (Kapilashrami, 2021). Although some authors advise focusing interventions only on one potential target audience (e.g., Moreu et al., 2021), research in HE has shown that intersectional experiences are important to understand the occurrence of inclusion/exclusion processes. For example, research has looked at the experiences of ethnic minorities female students and giving attention to their challenges but also potentially valuable

resources (García Villa and González Y González, 2014), or interrogating HE policies and strategies that lead to the invisibilisation of women of colour (Nichols and Stahl, 2019).

An intersectional approach to social identities in higher education

There are several reasons why conducting research looking at social identities and intersectionality can offer important insights about HE and its paradoxes when approaching D&I for several reasons. First, intersectional identities acknowledge individuals' experiences and systems of inequity, providing important insights into educational and organisational practises in HE. Second, HE itself is an institution that has maintained and reproduced segregation (Reay, 2021), thus resulting in an imperative/parallel need to question and address said mechanisms that promote segregation. Students are key actors in HE and their discourses can highlight how these mechanisms operate in their everyday experiences. Hence, when research focuses on students' experiences, we need to investigate students' identity experiences and the structural mechanisms that are reproduced within their experiences.

Hurtado (2017) proposed the idea of 'intersectional identities' to describe how social identities are positioned in power structures and hierarchies. Therefore, when stigmatised social identities intersect, they become intersectional identities which—under certain conditions—become more salient and are used to enact oppression (Hurtado, 2017). Theoretically, an intersectional approach to social identity aims to contribute a more complex interpretation of identity processes, where identities are not a reflex caused by a stimulus and become salient (Wijeyesinghe and Jones, 2014). Rather, identities coexist, are negotiated, and become more salient and important under particular social contexts. Hence, from this perspective, intersectionality is understood as 'mutually constituted relations among social identities' (Shields, 2008, p.301). Therefore, identities—understood as social categories—can be defined and understood only from their relationship with other social categories (for example, gender can be understood only from its relation to social class).

Research in HE settings integrating an intersectional approach to social identity theory has focused mostly on the gendered and racialised experiences of undergraduate students in HE settings, using interviews as methodological techniques (e.g., Liang et al., 2017), and quantitative methods (Charter, 2020). Students' experiences have also been analysed outside academic settings (e.g., Ireland et al., 2018), to analyse how society and culture impact individuals' intersectional gender and race experiences. Moreover, research has also demonstrated attempts to build and create new approaches using both frameworks, such as the pedagogy of social justice education (Hahn Tapper, 2013), working for empowering students towards societal transformation.

However, from our knowledge, the intersection of gender and social class from an intersectional approach to social identities has also not been widely explored. This is problematic because social class is a critical dimension in the persistence of inequality in access (Rubin, 2012; Crawford et al., 2016; Ahn and Davis, 2020), and that gender inequalities in HE settings persist in terms of (a) sense of incompatibility with peers, especially in some disciplines (Cheryan et al., 2009; Starr, 2018; Veldman et al., 2021); (b) being more likely to feel like they are imposters (also known as 'imposter syndrome'), even when they are numerically the majority (Tao and Gloria, 2019): and (d) being more likely to experience sexual harassment, gender bias and sexism from their classmates and instructors (Kuchynka et al., 2018; Begeny et al., 2020; Eaton et al., 2020)—even in fields where women's representation has substantially grown (Bloodhart et al., 2020; see also Van Veelen and Derks, 2021).

Despite diverse evidence showing the importance of intersectional experiences for students from underrepresented groups, paradoxically, HE diversity, and inclusion strategies persist to focus solely on top-down approaches. Additionally, these strategies have overlooked the role of social class experiences and, moreover, the role of the intersectional experiences in terms of social class and gender.

Case study: the IASI workshop

Overview

Researcher have been widely interested in knowing more about why, despite the efforts of HE institutions to promote diversity and inclusion, challenges persist (Moreu et al., 2021). They might be different reasons to explain this phenomenon. In this study, we argue that key aspects for diversity and inclusion, such as (a) gender, social class, and intersectional experiences; (b) participants' knowledge, perceptions, and needs regarding diversity and inclusion in HE; and (c) the socio-political context where diversity and inclusion strategies are implemented, have been overlooked. Therefore, this workshop study aimed to address the three key paradoxes in research into to D&I in HE: (a) focusing on single identities, not considering the role of the intersection of social class with other identities, such as gender, despite the stratification of HE system in the United Kingdom; (b) following a top-down approach in how interventions are applied; and (c) the constraints faced by D&I researchers at their organisations (such as HE) when organisations focus on individuals' coping strategies rather than changing the institution to promote inclusion.

To this end, we developed a workshop with students, taking elements from action research (based on Mertler, 2017) and educative workshop (based on Carrasco et al., 2012) methodologies. Educative workshops are influenced by democratic educational workshops and the theme centred interaction approach, providing more depth in terms of how group processes and interaction develop during the workshop (Carrasco et al., 2012). Educational workshops aim to facilitate learning processes considering both theory and praxis, with a focus on the analysis and reflection on pedagogical processes (Betancourt, 1996). To this end, educational workshops are structured following three phases in each session: (a) icebreaker; (b) main activity; and (c) assessment of the session (Carrasco et al., 2012). For the purpose of this study, we developed a workshop considering the following elements of each approach: (a) the focus on participation and partnership with participants from both approaches; (b) the dialectic and emergent process of research from action research; and (c) the three phases described by educational workshops.

Although action research has been used in research about intersectional experiences in HE (e.g., Bailey et al., 2019; Woolf and Wamba, 2019; López et al., 2022), to our knowledge, it has not considered an intersectional approach to social identities, neither included elements from the educative workshop method (Carrasco et al., 2012). Although educational workshops have been part of

educational research in HE (e.g., Carrasco et al., 2012), the model proposed in this study aims to emphasise reflexive and critical thinking from the participants, as well as providing a background to analyse the role of researchers during the workshop process.

Hence, in this paper, we aim to (a) report a case study of a workshop intending to address these paradoxes, and (b) analyse some of the opportunities and challenges that this method entails. The university where this project was set was ranked in the top 5 of the least inclusive universities in the United Kingdom (The Sunday Times, 2020). For the workshop, we drew on the 'intersectional social identities' framework (Hurtado, 2017). Following this approach, we intended to explore intersections of disadvantages (being working class and being a woman) recognising that these groups allow for both disadvantage and privilege (e.g., being a working class and man). Hence, we understood social identities as being multiple and intersectional (Gaither, 2018), where the self-concept is complex with identities that are simultaneously salient and overlapping, which are constituted by statuses of gender and social class. Therefore, the use of this workshop as a case provided practical information to reflect on the contributions and limitations of this framework in a HE settings.

The workshop followed an intersectional approach to social identities, drawn on action research and educative workshop principles. In this workshop, we considered the importance of (a) knowing about students' experiences in their own words; (b) recognising students as active agents with knowledge and expertise on their experiences; and (c) developing material that could be raised with the community and university.

The workshop included four sessions across 2 weeks (meeting twice a week). Each session last between 60 and 90 min. The workshop consisted of the creation and implementation of a collaborative guideline to improve the transitional experiences of first-year students from disadvantaged backgrounds during their transition to university in the pandemic context. The collaborative guideline was a booklet shared as a PDF file. Each page of the booklet included information about the university resources that students could access when facing particular challenges at university, and a photography taken by students as part of a photo-discussion activity. These challenges were selected by the participants and included: University well-being support: how to access it, NHS mental health support, Academic Tools, Understanding mitigation, Meeting new people and social support, Discrimination, inclusion, and support. In the case of 'University well-being support access', we also included resources outside university available 24/7. Likewise, for Discrimination, inclusion, and support, we included external support.

The guideline was designed to promote skills acquisition to bolster their academic success and that of their peers from similar backgrounds. Hence, the workshop aimed to address the paradoxes that we identified in D&I interventions by (a) promoting the role of peers' support in the development of collaborative strategies and shared knowledge about how to enhance academic success, (b) increasing their participation in discussions of institutional strategies of Widening Participation, and (c) including a gendered and socio-economic perspective to address the inequalities related to gender and the socioeconomic inequalities associated with their access and ability to obtain a university degree and to enter the workforce. Hence, we aimed to examine the importance of gender and social class, considering how students' identities are multiple and intersectional, and their experiences have nuances that must be included in Widening Participation strategies. Indeed, we proposed a focus on widening collaboration strategies, that promote students having an active role in the development of these strategies, and that recognise their own knowledge about the challenges that they have faced in achieving academic success.

Participants

We recruited participants through (a) the target university social media channels, and (b) newsletters shared via email to students from the target university. The call for participant's poster stated: 'Work group widening collaboration in gendered educational settings: Are you a first-generation student or identify as a student from low-income household or working class? Are you keen to share your ideas about helping students during the COVID-19 pandemic and contributing to a more equal and inclusive education?' The poster also included information about the time of meetings and payment. Before starting the workshop, we conducted a 'Q&A' 30 min session for students interested that wanted to know more about the project.

Participants were 10 (2 men[2], 8 women) undergraduate students that identified themselves as (a) first generation (i.e., students whose parents/relatives did not attend HE), (b) low household income, and/or (c) working-class students. We grouped these identities under the umbrella of working-class identity, defining social class in line with previous work as a sense of membership to a particular social class group, shaped by the perception of where an individual stands, relative to others, considering their economic, educational, and social standing (Manstead, 2018). The number of participants after the first session was nine (for details, see Table 1). Participants received payment for their participation in the workshop in line with minimum wage guidelines.

Workshop phases

'The project was conducted during a lockdown period in the COVID-19 pandemic. Therefore, all the activities were conducted online via Microsoft Teams. Each session included a PowerPoint slide as visual support (with key questions and activities; see Supplementary material for an example). The first two sessions focused on identifying opportunities for collaboration with students from low SES backgrounds: (a) the main concerns and barriers that students from low SES have faced during the COVID-19 pandemic, and (b) how to create a resource that could help the transition of first-year students from low SES to the university, considering the importance of gender experiences. For the first session, we utilised a visual methodology using photography, drawn on elements from photo-elicitation (Harper, 2002) and photovoice (Wang and Burris, 1997) methodologies. The third and fourth sessions focused on creating a resource that signposted first-year students to the resources that could help them to navigate university (see Table 1)'.

Addressing D&I paradoxes through the IASI workshop: opportunities and challenges

In this section, we reflected on the opportunities and challenges that the IASI workshop method entailed. Following

TABLE 1 IASI workshop: participants number, sessions aims, and activities.

Session number	Participants number	Aims	Activities
1	10	• To know the group and set guidelines/boundaries/rules for the focus group. • To collaboratively analyse photovoice results. • To discuss how to approach guidelines (brainstorming). • To discuss expectations and assessment of the first session.	Icebreaker: 'Mingle, mingle' Photos group discussion. First ideas about the guideline format and topics to be included.
2	9	• To evaluate the first session and discuss expectations about the rest of the planning work. • To discuss guideline aims and content. • To collaboratively, assess the guideline material. • To discuss expectations and assessment of the first session.	Icebreaker: One word to describe last session. Last meeting wrap-up using an online whiteboard. Discussion about the importance of students' 'informal' knowledge to navigate the university. Groups discussion about what piece of advice and university resources (e.g., well-being services and how to reach them) should be included for each topic (breakout rooms).
3	9	• To present final guideline material. • To collaboratively assess the guideline material.	Icebreaker: Sharing one gift on the chat that represents how do you feel today. Check-in the final topic to be covered in the guideline. In groups, drafting how to convey information for each topic (using online dashboard).
4	9	• To assess overall activity and potential impact of sessions. • To create strategies to maintain participants' social network/support.	Participants were presented with reviewed drafts for each topic. Discussion about changes to be made/agreements about the content. Discussion about project dissemination. Closure: voting for best mug and snack.

the experience of the workshop, as a research team, we reflected on the experience and analysed how this workshop model can be improve and, hence, applied in the future. First, we would describe the opportunities we detected and that can be helpful to researchers working in educational settings, such as the use of group methods and images in research. Next, we will present the challenges recognised in this experience, regarding to the lack of inclusion of intersectional identities discussions during the workshop.

Opportunities: group methods and intersectional approaches to social identities research

The IASI workshop can be a method to research group dynamics and processes. Collaborative research methods (e.g., action research, participatory action research) developed by disciplines outside social psychology—such as education—present opportunities to challenge social identity assumptions about identity categories, intergroup relations, and the role of social context. A reflection on methodologies in HE research is critical because of its focus on university students, a population constantly used as participants for different studies (Hanel and Vione, 2016), and also a population that has been under several injustices following the changes in the higher education system, such as increase of fees, privatisation, etc. (Odysseos and Pal, 2018). The inclusion of group methodologies—similar to the social justice aspects from the intersectional approach—can provide more complexity and nuances to research. Indeed, although our project was not framed as a participatory action research, students highlighted its participatory aspect, emphasising the 'collaborative' aspect of it, in terms of sharing their opinions and collaborating with a group towards a meaningful outcome.

Moreover, conducting the sessions over time with the same group of participants created some intragroup and ingroup-outgroup dynamics that we observed throughout the workshop. For example, students differentiated themselves from other students with more resources, referring to how they did not have access to economic and material resources helpful to navigate university, and emphasising other aspects of their identity in a positive light, such as hard work and cooperation with others, similar to the idea of social creativity (Haslam et al., 2005). The differentiation process was not only with outgroup members but also within the same group. During the photo discussion, students recognised similarities with other members of the groups, identifying the same experiences and settings portrayed in the photos, such as studying from their bedrooms. However, other students recognised that this experience (having your own bedroom to study) was not part of their experiences, and it was considered a privilege. Finally, creating a group of participants who met over time with a sense of shared identity provided a sense of social support within the group, which was demonstrated as participants shared ideas of how to handle difficulties during the pandemic, for example, signposting university support.

Opportunities: the use of visual techniques in intersectional approaches to social identities research

Even though there is no unique answer in terms of which method is more appropriate in intersectionality research (e.g., qualitative versus quantitative methods, see Else-Quest and Hyde, 2016; Grabe, 2020), a key aspect to consider is the complexity and nuances that intersectionality approaches offer and, hence, the call for diverse methodologies to—at least try to—capture this complexity.

Furthermore, social identity research from an intersectional approach can benefit from techniques from different disciplines, emphasising the interdisciplinary aspect of intersectionality research. For example, our project included the use of visual data. Visual methods enable participants to reflect on their images and discuss aspects that could be difficult to access or explain without the aid of photography. The use of visual data added nuance to the data and created knowledge that could not otherwise be explored with verbal data only (Jenkins and Boudewijn, 2020). In our project, we based the first session activity on the photovoice methodology proposed by Wang and Burris (1997) and photo-elicitation proposed by Harper (2002). Whilst some use photo-elicitation and photovoice as interchangeable concepts (Bugos et al., 2014), we differentiate aspects of them to establish our methodology. Photovoice is a participatory methodology where participants are asked to express their perspectives regarding a particular social or community issue, through the use of photography. Participants not only create photos during the process but also add their interpretations and reflections about those photos collaboratively with others, including a critical perspective that can undercover power relationships of inequality (Freire, 1970) and generate multiple meanings (Peña Ochoa, 2010). Within social psychology research, there has been an increase in the use of photography to better understand students' experiences (Latz, 2012; Ingrey, 2013; Cornell et al., 2016), and exploring these experiences from an intersectional approach (Jehangir et al., 2022).

Therefore, we take some elements of the photovoice methodology in our work (Wang and Burris, 1997), particularly the participants as the ones taking the photography, its emphasis on participation and group discussion, and the role of photography to represent participants' realities and critical community issues (Masterson et al., 2018). We adapted the initial photovoice methodology by inviting students to use their mobile devices to take pictures (Yi-Frazier et al., 2015). In our project, students shared photography about 'being a student during COVID-19 times', and indeed the use of photography elicited their discussions about these experiences, but also created a sense of shared experiences and community. The use of photography facilitated a positive sense of shared experiences, consistent with the idea that shared social experiences provide a sense of belonging, social support, and trust with others perceived as similar to them (Allen et al., 2021). For example, one participant referred during the discussion of photography of a laptop:

> Even though our courses might be different, or like we're all completely different people but at the moment it's been reduced down to the same thing, just a laptop screen on your desk, your bed, wherever it is. Like, everything has been completely turned on its head and this is what everyone is now living with depending on your own situation. Everyone is now in the same boat really.

Furthermore, one of the few times that intersectional identities were mentioned was prompted by a photography discussion. A participant referred to how looking at a picture of the campus made her think about her safety, and elicited gender differences regarding perceptions of lockdown and safety on the streets:

> I think in terms of, like the impact – gender's impact of the pandemic, especially kind of given what's happened, over the weekend and like the murder of the Sarah Everard lady, you're kind of, I don't know, I'm more aware of kind of like, if I am on campus, I am alone on campus, if I am on campus. And you have to be kind of social distanced and isolated from people, so if you are in the library, or on campus you are more likely to be alone. (…) also just going out for walks and stuff, as a woman, I would think about is it dark outside? When you're going out for a walk or not necessarily taking a route that is maybe in a bit of a sketchy area

Although the perceived danger of walking alone during the lockdown was mentioned only by one female participant during the photography activity, this can also be an indicator of the potential that photography has for an intersectional approach to social identity research in educational settings.

Challenges: (de)politicisation of intersectional research in social psychology

We recognise that the IASI workshop creates methodological, ethical, and political challenges when studying D&I, especially when the researchers work and participate in the same institution as the participants. Intersectionality shares a different paradigm that provides an opportunity to look at structural inequalities and promote action for social justice, to create political and transformative praxis. For some authors, intersectional approaches are grounded in opposition to the positivist perspective and scientific language in research (Grabe, 2020; Buchanan and Wiklund, 2021). On the contrary, intersectionality can offer a perspective of social problems that are understood as a historic, complex, and subjective process (Greenwood, 2008). However, there are concerns about how the 'intersectionality' name might be misused by psychology researchers, focusing more on some aspects of this approach (specifically the subjective and identity interactions) than others (the dynamics of power), leaving out the political and transformative aspect of it (Rodriguez et al., 2016). As researchers, we faced the same paradox. For instance, our project focused on strategies to improve academic success, which can be considered an instrumentalist position (Nichols and Stahl, 2019), usually shared by psychology in educational settings. However, success can have different meanings, which are related to students' identity experiences (Fernández et al., 2023).

Furthermore, during the first session, students emphasised the structural problems faced by them at their university, asking for a change in university policies and support. However, due to institutional

guidelines, our project implied a given topic—in this case, highlighting students' own resources to navigate HE—rather than proposing a collaborative instance to (a) negotiate the topic of the project, and (b) promote institutional changes. Hence, an important challenge faced during this project was to navigate institutional expectations, our expectations as researchers and the students' expectations. Although we aimed to integrate an intersectional approach to our project, we also recognised the difficulties faced to conduct a political and transformative praxis when we were part of the same institution that students attended in a critical time, such as the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic: (a) directly or indirectly, being recognised by participants as part of an institution where they do not feel supported; (b) difficulties to provide concrete solutions to structural problems; and (c) negotiate participants and researchers expectations about the outcomes of the activity. Indeed, during the first session, students shared their discomfort with university support during the pandemic. For example, one participant wrote during an online board activity: *'Departments need to listen and acknowledge students' voices*-e.g. *petitions about exams, being overworked, extended deadlines rather than ignoring students' problems given the current circumstances'*. This example is one tension that D&I researchers face outside of this particular case. Hence, these patterns are also seen in D&I research (ers): many researchers do D&I research but are constrained by HE itself because the topic often cannot be negotiated, and the solutions are also kind of directed towards participants' coping strategies to navigate HE rather than institutional changes.

Therefore, as mentioned earlier, participants perceived the team as 'outsiders' from their group despite the efforts to conduct a project from a participatory approach. This notion likely affected participants' engagement in the workshop, potentially restricting their responses and discussions. The positions of 'outsider' and 'insider' in participatory research are intricated and not fixed (Losito et al., 1998) and, hence, need to be part of the researcher's and participants' analysis in participatory projects.

Although we initiated the sessions with an ice-breaker activity which was facilitated by the undergraduate student from our team, we did not acknowledge our role as part of the institution, and rather, following the time pressure, we moved forward intending to comply with our calendar. Thus, our workshop, although provides strengths to analyse and promote social change, also entails important challenges in fully understanding and challenging existing power dynamics in HE, by way of how much researchers are willing to negotiate their plans and schedule, and their own role as agents from institutions that might promote tensions within participants. If we as researchers do not recognise these tensions in our own position in educational organisations, and create reflexive spaces to think of our research practises—by way of analysing our analyses (Carrasco et al., 2012) and promoting critical self-reflexivity (Grabe, 2020)—we will keep perpetuating a depoliticisation of intersectional and social psychology.

The challenge of capturing intersectional experiences

Despite the fact that we included the idea of intersectionality in the project invitation and questions to facilitate discussion (e.g., *'Do you think your gender and social class affected your experiences?'*), and the majority of participants identified themselves as women and from disadvantaged social class groups, students focused their answers on the role of social class. On only two occasions did students mentioned particular challenges in terms of being a woman and being from a low-income background: in terms of safety during lockdown and in terms of gender discrimination. In this case, three students mentioned that students, especially the ones from underrepresented backgrounds, needed information on how to proceed and look for support when experiencing discrimination experiences, with gender being mentioned as one of the key aspects of these experiences.

Hence, despite trying to facilitate the awareness of intersectionality, participants were more likely to discuss their experiences from a particular identity, in this case, their social class. This difficulty has been described in previous research with university students (e.g., Liang et al., 2017). Students' motivation to discuss their socioeconomic experiences, rather than gender, was part of the findings from this project, and also the challenges that action research entails. Indeed, for action research, research is a dialogic process, where participants' beliefs and motivations need to be included in the research process. Hence, despite our interest in analysing the intersection of gender and social class experiences, it is important to acknowledge that it is possible that in HE settings social class experiences were more salient.

Previous research has shown the negative consequences of 'intersectional awareness', which is individuals' view of different identities intersecting (Curtin et al., 2015), which could explain why students did not mention intersectional experiences widely. However, we recognise two potential issues that may explain this outcome. First, it is possible that the situational aspects that might make gender experiences more salient were not included properly in the workshop (e.g., creating examples/activities signalling more directly gender experiences in HE settings, including experiences in students' courses rather than the university as an all). Moreover, we need to consider that the call to participate was initiated with an invitation in terms of social class experiences, rather than gender. At the same time, it is also possible that HE settings make it harder for students to recognise gender inequalities/disadvantages. Universities are institutions where women are often a numerical majority (UNESCO, 2021), giving a sense of equality due to increased participation. However, just increasing the numbers can also lead to a false sense of equality, making it difficult for individuals to recognise inequalities (see Begeny et al., 2020).

General discussion

In this paper, we aim to report a workshop experience focused on addressing three key paradoxes in D&I strategies in HE: (a) focusing on single identities, not considering the role of the intersection of social class with other identities, such as gender, despite the stratification of HE system in the United Kingdom; (b) following a top-down approach in how interventions are applied; and (c) the constraints faced by D&I researchers at their organisations (such as HE) when organisations focus on individuals' coping strategies rather than changing the institution to promote inclusion. We argue that, to address these paradoxes, research needs to incorporate methods that position participants as active and critical individuals. Participants'

own sense-making of their experiences and respective interventions should be incorporated into researchers' theorization and interpretation of their findings. These reflections shed light on the need to consider the complexity of multiple and intersectional identities when D&I strategies are developed. Hence, this experience provided insights into how institutions might be disconnected from students' needs and demands and the complexities and tensions in the relationship between students and HE institutions. In this paper, one of the problems in defining and applying D & I strategies is that the intended beneficiaries do not usually take part in elaborating or providing inputs regarding the interventions. This is problematic at different levels: first, because the contents and methods used for the interventions might not align with participants' context, background, and needs. Second, the act of conducting interventions without participants being consulted or asked could signal a message of 'top-down' demands and negatively impact the engagement of participants with these strategies.

One example to counteract these issues was the use of visual data. In this experience, projective techniques described by critical social psychology research (e.g., Peña Ochoa, 2010; Carrasco et al., 2012) were helpful to (a) facilitate students' participation in online settings; (b) convey the idea that meanings are not unique nor individual, and rather are socially constructed by the group; and (c) analyse how these meanings are not necessarily imposed top-down by researchers, which can often be seen among D&I researchers (e.g., starting with a pre-determinate conceptual framework and then looking for these viewpoints in the data). For example, students were asked to describe how they felt, starting the session by sharing a gif in the chat box; or how they perceived the meeting by choosing from a set of memes offered by the facilitators. Visual techniques attempt to address the limitations of conventional research methods and capture the complexities of an ever-changing society (Liebenberg, 2018).

We also recognise the tensions of proposing a research method more in line with participants' experiences and perceptions yet expecting participants to recognise 'intersectional experiences' and naming them as such. This expectation might lead researchers to think of participants' experiences in terms of identity categories and to suppose that the experiences participants have been expressly due to the social categories (that we as researchers hypothesise), rather than looking at power structures and dynamics that participants may more clearly point or relate to in their experiences.

Hence, to raise awareness of intersectional identities, HE interventions need to recognise and include in their activities the specificity of intersectional groups (e.g., interventions for working class women). This focus can be the first step to create nuanced support for different groups, promoting students' sense of social support and trust in HE institutions, leading to a co-creation of a collaborative community across different groups. In the future, a more targeted call and workshop design could help to promote awareness about intersectional identities. For instance, future experiences based on the IASI workshop could include participants from one intersectional group (only working-class women) and create activities that explicitly focus on intersectional experiences (e.g., making salient both gender and social class).

Therefore, although we argued that standard research approaches with minoritised groups have limitations, such as the generalisation of results (Smith and Bond, 2022), the level of participation and engagement of the individuals that are part of the research process, and the secondary role of reflection about how psychological theories might participating in the reproduction of inequalities (Parker, 2007), participatory approaches also entail limitations that need to be acknowledged. Participatory approaches also present drawbacks, especially in terms of their practicalities, such as the level of engagement and participation from participants in the project conceptualisation (e.g., Gray et al., 2000), potentially imposing participation (Greenwood et al., 1993), and how participants' ideas are comprehended by researchers as subjective process intervene in researchers' objectivity (Ratner, 2002). Therefore, it is crucial to acknowledge the limitations of participatory approaches and consider that the reflection presented in this manuscript cannot be generalised to other experiences. Otherwise, participatory approaches will reproduce what they aim to recognise: the importance of participants' knowledge and the context where this knowledge is created and negotiate.

Conclusion

Following the workshop experience, future research in HE settings needs to acknowledge the complexities of educational processes in the current context. Hence, we recommend: (a) to promote co-creation instances with participants, as well as a participative to research, considering participants as key actors of the knowledge produced; (b) to use a wide range of techniques and create context-situated methods to integrate the results from these techniques; and (c) to reflect on the organisational, social and cultural context where research is conducted.

Data availability statement

The raw data supporting the conclusions of this article will be made available by the authors, without undue reservation.

Ethics statement

The studies involving humans were approved by CLES Psychology Ethics Committee, University of Exeter. The studies were conducted in accordance with the local legislation and institutional requirements. The participants provided their online written informed consent to participate in this study.

Author contributions

Material preparation was performed by DF, MR, EO, and AM. Data collection was performed by DF, EO, and AM. Data analysis was performed by DF, MR, EO, and EF. Theoretical and conceptual analysis was performed by DF, MR, EO, EF, CW, and CB. The first draft of the manuscript was written by DF, EO, and EF. All authors contributed to the article and approved the submitted version.

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Conflict of interest

The authors declare that the research was conducted in the absence of any commercial or financial relationships that could be construed as a potential conflict of interest.

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Supplementary material

The Supplementary material for this article can be found online at: https://www.frontiersin.org/articles/10.3389/fpsyg.2023.1235065/full#supplementary-material

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Who counts as diverse? The strategic broadening and narrowing of diversity

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Introduction: A large majority of US organizations profess a commitment to diversity, but their definitions of diversity can vary greatly. While previous research demonstrates a shift in diversity definitions to include fewer protected demographic groups and more non-demographic characteristics, the present research examines whether this shift might be a motivated process among dominant group members related to anti-egalitarian and colorblind belief systems.

Methods: Using quantitative and qualitative methods, we explored potential underlying ideologies that may be associated with White Americans' shifting definitions of diversity. White Americans (N = 498) were asked how they define diversity, as well as who should be included in a range of diversity initiatives.

Results: White participants' higher anti-egalitarian belief was associated with stronger colorblind ideology endorsement, which was then associated with shifting their definition of diversity to include fewer disadvantaged demographic groups, more advantaged demographic groups, and non-demographic groups, as well as employing a colorblind inclusion rhetoric.

Discussion: Instead of only "broadening" diversity to include more characteristics than diversity's original focus, White Americans higher in anti-egalitarian and colorblind motives exhibited a simultaneous "narrowing" of diversity to include fewer protected demographic characteristics. Taken together, these findings have implications for dominant group members' definition of diversity and the subtle ways in which colorblind ideology may be enacted.

KEYWORDS

diversity, social identity, inclusion, intergroup relation, diversity definition, colorblind ideology

Introduction

A large majority of organizations in the United States (U.S.) profess a commitment to diversity (Kirby et al., 2023). How people and organizations define diversity can vary greatly, however (Howard et al., 2021; Kirby et al., 2023). While diversity and diversity initiatives originally served to increase the representation of oppressed and marginalized group members, organizational definitions of diversity have expanded to include individual traits (e.g., personality, ideology) that are not protected by law (Edelman et al., 2001). For example, a worldwide employment website describes workplace diversity as "the

individual characteristics employees have that make them unique," including "employees' life experiences, how they solve issues, and socioeconomic status" (Indeed, n.d.). This pattern is also reflected in the diversity statements of the top 250 Fortune companies, where references to non-demographic characteristics increased between 2014 and 2020 (Kirby et al., 2023). This new expanded definition of diversity appears to include virtually *everyone* and insinuates a shift away from diversity's focus on protected and marginalized identities.

In the present research, we aim to gather preliminary evidence for *why* this shift may be occurring. In line with previous research demonstrating the role of individuals' intergroup beliefs in their definitions of diversity (Unzueta and Binning, 2012; Unzueta et al., 2012; Danbold and Unzueta, 2020), we argue that shifting definitions of diversity may be a motivated process among dominant group members. In particular, we aim to understand how White Americans' anti-egalitarian belief is associated with colorblind endorsement and therefore shifting definitions of diversity with less focus on disadvantaged demographic groups.

Anti-egalitarian belief and diversity construal

Anti-egalitarian belief reflects the extent to which people support social hierarchy and inequality. Individuals high in anti-egalitarian belief (i.e., anti-egalitarian individuals) prefer hierarchical group orientations and dominance over low-status groups, while individuals low in anti-egalitarian belief (i.e., egalitarian individuals) support egalitarianism within and between groups (Sidanius and Pratto, 1999; Ho et al., 2015). Among White Americans, higher endorsement of anti-egalitarian belief is associated more prejudice against ethnic outgroups (Kteily et al., 2011).

Anti-egalitarian belief may have a notable impact on how dominant group individuals understand and perceive diversity. Previous research has suggested that people construe the meaning of diversity in ways that serve their anti-egalitarian motives (Unzueta et al., 2012). In particular, anti-egalitarian participants "broaden" their definitions of diversity by judging an organization as more diverse if it is high in occupational heterogeneity (i.e., more even distribution of workforce types), even if it is low in racial heterogeneity—they then use this to legitimize their opposition to affirmative-action policies (Unzueta et al., 2012). Additionally, compared to minoritized group members, dominant group members consider organizations to be "diverse" at lower numerical representations of minoritized group members, which is driven by a desire to maintain their standing in the social hierarchy (Danbold and Unzueta, 2020).

Similar to individuals' construal of diversity, the concept of "discrimination" can also be defined narrowly or broadly, depending on individuals' definitions of discrimination (Greenland et al., 2022). Specifically, dominant group members strategically employ the broad and narrow definitional boundary of discrimination motivated by their ingroup-serving and hierarchy-maintaining motivations (West et al., 2021, 2022). For example, when asked what counts as "discrimination", White male participants included a wider range of behaviors under the label "discrimination" when identifying discrimination against their ingroup; however, they included a narrower range of behaviors when identifying discrimination against their outgroup (West et al., 2022). Notably, these patterns only appear for White men with high levels of anti-egalitarian belief, suggesting their tendency to construe "discrimination" in line with their belief systems.

Consistent with these findings of motivated construal of diversity and discrimination, we propose that anti-egalitarian belief will affect dominant group members' overall conception of *who* counts as diverse. We expect dominant group members' anti-egalitarian belief to be associated with more broadening of diversity to include more non-demographic groups, as well as advantaged demographic groups, as a means to include themselves in diversity. Simultaneously, anti-egalitarian belief will be associated with narrower definitions of diversity to include fewer disadvantaged demographic groups, consistent with their motives of maintaining their dominant social statuses.

Colorblind racial ideology

Why might anti-egalitarian belief be associated with these shifting definitions of diversity? Colorblind racial ideology, or colorblindness, is one underlying ideology that may result in a desire to obscure a focus on protected characteristics and the realities of discrimination. Specifically, colorblindness is an ideology that downplays racial/ethnic identities to focus on individual uniqueness or commonalities with others (Gündemir and Kirby, 2022). Although colorblind ideology could theoretically orient individuals toward equality and intergroup harmony by advocating for intergroup equality and non-discrimination, components of colorblindness can instead serve hierarchy-enhancing ends (Neville et al., 2013; Whitley et al., 2022). For example, endorsing colorblind ideology is associated with higher anti-Black racism, more beliefs that justify societal inequality, and higher ingroup favoritism (Whitley et al., 2022; Yi et al., 2023). Moreover, exposing dominant group members to messages endorsing colorblindness leads to higher levels of explicit and implicit racial bias (Richeson and Nussbaum, 2004; Holoien and Shelton, 2012).

Colorblindness is also theorized as a form of "new racism" that White Americans uphold to ignore race-based inequalities and injustices and to look another way (Bonilla-Silva, 2003, 2015). Endorsing colorblind ideology and utilizing colorblind rhetoric allows White Americans to justify and rationalize contemporary racial inequality, minimize prevalent racial prejudice and discrimination, and deny their existing privilege (Bonilla-Silva, 2015). Compared to racial minority students, White college student participants more often exhibit colorblind racial ideology by adopting an "everyone is diverse and unique" mindset (Dingel and Sage, 2020). Some participants exhibited a "laundry-list approach" when describing diversity, where they classify a wide variety of traits as relevant to diversity—many of which are irrelevant to protected demographic identities (Dingel and Sage, 2020). This "laundry-list approach" exhibits entrenched colorblind thinking in its approach of including everyone in diversity; it also demonstrates how an "all-inclusive" definition can obscure systematic inequality (Dingel and Sage, 2020). Therefore, colorblind ideologies might be an appealing

strategy employed by individuals who are more anti-egalitarian to obfuscate systematic inequality. We use the term "colorblind-inclusion" to refer to an ideology that includes *everyone* in diversity (i.e., the ideology is inclusive by definition, but enacts a form of colorblindness).

Accordingly, we expect anti-egalitarian belief to be associated with endorsement of colorblindness, and therefore White Americans adopting a "colorblind inclusion" mindset and considering non-protected demographic groups and advantaged demographic groups as part of their conceptualization of diversity. One possibility is that colorblind-inclusion will manifest as including a range of groups as part of their diversity definitions, including protected-demographic groups. However, because colorblindness downplays race-based inequalities and historical oppression, it could also be associated with White participants being less likely to include disadvantaged demographic groups in diversity.

Present research

Past research has demonstrated that definitions of diversity are shifting to include more non-demographic groups (Edelman et al., 2001; Kirby et al., 2023). The present research aims to understand the underlying ideologies that may be associated with this process among White Americans. Specifically, we predict that anti-egalitarian attitudes will be associated with stronger colorblind endorsement, which will be associated with including fewer disadvantaged demographic groups (e.g., racial minorities), more non-demographic groups (e.g., mathematical thinkers), and more advantaged demographic groups (e.g., White people) in their conceptions of diversity[1].

Materials and methods

Participants

We recruited 549 White undergraduate participants from the participant pool at a public Midwestern University in the U.S. We excluded 19 participants who were under the age of 18, 26 who identified as a race other than White, and 6 who failed the manipulation check, leaving a final sample of 498 (age M = 18.63, SD = 0.96). Of these, 320 identified as women, 174 identified as men, and 4 identified as non-binary or another identity. The majority (78%) of participants indicated U.S. American as their nationality.

As pre-registered[2] we needed to recruit 352 participants to obtain d = 0.3 according to the t-test function for two independent groups in GPower (Faul et al., 2009). To account for possible participant exclusions, we aimed to collect data from 375 participants. Given our obtained sample size, a sensitivity analysis using GPower 3.1 suggested that we could detect an effect size as small as η^2 = 0.02 with 80% statistical power at an alpha level of 0.05.

Procedure

Participants were brought into the lab by research assistants and completed the survey on lab computers. In a 2-level design, they were randomly assigned to either read about changing demographics at their university, where racial minorities will become the majority of the student body, or a control article about geographic mobility after graduation (adapted from Craig and Richeson, 2014). While the original manipulation describes either shifting racial demographics or shifting geographic mobility of United States citizens (Craig and Richeson, 2014), our adaptation discusses shifts in the university student body. After reading the manipulation article, they completed the dependent measures in the order described below, as well as manipulation checks and demographics.

Measures

Count measure of diversity definition

To determine participants' definitions of diversity, they decided which identities should be included in four campus diversity initiatives (mentoring, college application outreach program, having a designated space on campus, and extra resources) and also directly responded about who they included in their definition of diversity. They read a list of 21 identities that included 9 disadvantaged demographic groups (e.g., black people; α = 0.98), 9 non-demographic groups (e.g., mathematical thinkers; α = 0.98), and 3 advantaged demographic groups (e.g., white people; α = 0.93) and responded on a scale from 1 (definitely do not include) to 6 (definitely include). Because the anchors had no midpoint, the measure served as a forced choice inclusion or exclusion measure. See **Table 1** for specific groups included in each category.

We pre-registered that we would first create a mean of participants' overall desire to include the three different categories of groups in the diversity initiatives and definition as our primary dependent measure (our pre-registered hypothesis). We pre-registered we would then create another measure where we dichotomize participants' answers in a binary variable and average the total number of groups they included for each category. We collapsed across conditions and shifted our focus to understand variables that might be associated with diversity definition shift. Thus, we chose to have the latter variable (the dichotomized measure) as our primary measure of diversity definition shift since it conceptually aligns with our research questions. Specifically, the dichotomous measure directly denotes participants' conception of "who" counts as diverse. We report the mediation results for the first diversity definition measure in the **Supplementary material**, but it fully replicates the findings reported in the main text for the count measure.

1 We pre-registered the study to have a 2-level design where we manipulate racial demographic change at participants' university to examine how racial demographic change impacts participants' definitions of diversity. As discussed in the method section, we ultimately collapsed the data across experimental conditions and shifted our focus to exploratory analyses. Thus, our predictions were secondary predictions that we did not pre-register.

2 https://osf.io/b2dgz/?view_only=f23026a9e9d34e21ada3763882d24b84

TABLE 1 Quantitative definition categories.

Category name	Groups included in the category
Disadvantaged Demographic Groups	Gay or lesbian people, transgender people, women, Black people, Muslim people, Asian Americans, Native Americans, neurodivergent people (e.g., people with autism), and people with physical disabilities
Non-demographic Groups	introverts, free spirited thinkers, people who are night owls, mathematical thinkers, visual learners, left-handed people, passive communicators, tactile learners, and deductive problem solvers
Advantaged (or Neutral) Demographic Groups	White people, Christian people, and conservative people

We first dichotomized participants' answers into a binary variable, where responses ranging from 1 to 3 (definitely do not include to maybe do not include) were recoded as 0 (i.e., exclude) and responses ranging from 4 to 6 (definitely include to maybe include) were recoded as 1 (i.e., include). Next, we summed the number of groups of each category participants included within the five initiative types. Finally, we created a mean across the initiative types go give a single mean sum for each identity type: disadvantaged demographic groups (M = 8.29, SD = 1.17), non-demographic groups, M = 5.60, SD = 2.68), and advantaged demographic groups (M = 2.19, SD = 0.82).

Open-ended definition of diversity

To assess participant's definition of diversity, they answered the question "What factors should determine if a group should be included in a diversity initiative (e.g., who should be included in diversity efforts?)? Do different groups matter in different ways? Why do you feel that way?" with an open-ended response. Their responses were then coded by two research assistants. See **Table 2** for content coding categories. Research assistants coded responses for whether participants discussed each of the categories with the following codes: −1 = Mentioned (should not be included), 0 = Not mentioned, 1 = Mentioned (should be included). Because mentioning that a group should be excluded was rare (n < 10), we recoded these values (−1) into 0, such that the variables were binary (1 = Group should be included, 0 = Group should be excluded or wasn't mentioned). We also coded for colorblind inclusion rhetoric, where coders assessed whether participants' responses suggested that everyone should be included in diversity, or that no particular groups should be prioritized over others.

After coding two practice rounds of 20 statements to refine the coding categories, research assistants coded the full set. When discrepancies arose, research assistants discussed until they agreed on how to code the response.

Anti-egalitarian beliefs

Participants indicated their agreement with eight items from the shortened Social Dominance Orientation scale ($SDO_{7(S)}$; Ho et al., 2015; α = 0.80) measuring their anti-egalitarian beliefs on a 1 (*Strongly Disagree*) to 7 (*Strongly Agree*) scale (e.g., "An ideal society requires some groups to be on top and others to be on the bottom"). We averaged all items to form a measure where higher values corresponded to higher anti-egalitarian beliefs.

Colorblindness

We measured colorblindness with the Color Evasion subscale of the Multidimensional Assessment of Racial Colorblindness scale (Whitley et al., 2022; α = 0.92; e.g., "Talking about racial issues causes unnecessary tension"). We focused on the Color Evasion subscale because it reflects a desire to downplay the importance of race and ethnicity and instead highlight similarities (Whitley et al., 2022). Participants indicated their agreement with nine items on a 1 (*Strongly Disagree*) to 7 (*Strongly Agree*) scale. We averaged all items to form a measure where higher values corresponded to higher colorblind endorsement.

Political orientation

To assess participants' political orientation, they answered two questions ("What is your political ideology with respect to social issues?" "What is your political ideology with respect to economic issues?") on a 1 (*Extremely Liberal*) to 7 (*Extremely Conservative*) scale (α = 0.78). We averaged the two items to form a measure where higher values corresponded to more conservative political orientation.

TABLE 2 Content coding categories.

Category name	Definition of category
Specific disadvantaged demographic groups	Disadvantaged demographic groups that are protected by law from discrimination, such as ethnicity, race, gender, sex, sexual orientation, nationality (includes language, being from another place), religion, disability status, or age.
Non-specific disadvantaged demographic groups	Specific disadvantaged groups are not listed, but participant discusses groups that have experienced stigmatization in the past more generally (e.g., "minority groups," "underrepresented groups")
Non-demographic groups	Individual characteristics, such as personality, skills, abilities, perspectives, beliefs, talents, life experiences, background, working styles, work expertise, professional experience, or political views
Advantaged demographic groups	Advantaged demographic groups such as White people, men, Christians
Colorblind inclusion	Response suggests that everyone should be included or that no particular groups should be prioritized over others (e.g., "people from all different types of backgrounds should be included")

Results

Analytic strategy

The demographic shift manipulation had an effect on one of three dependent measures, $p < 0.001$, $d = 2.67$. Because it was the opposite of our hypotheses and past findings (Craig and Richeson, 2014) and only emerged on one out of three measures, we believe it should be interpreted cautiously. Thus, we shifted our focus to exploratory analyses understanding potential variables that are associated with diversity definition shift (collapsed across experimental conditions).[3] We report all original pre-registered analyses in the online Supplementary.

Specifically, we ran multiple regression analyses with colorblindness and anti-egalitarian beliefs as independent measures and the indices of diversity definition shifts as dependent measures. We used the PROCESS macro version 4.2 (Model 4, 10,000 bootstraps; Hayes, 2013) to test whether colorblindness mediated the relationship between anti-egalitarian belief beliefs and diversity definition shifts, operationalized as the inclusion of disadvantaged demographic groups, non-demographic groups, advantaged demographic groups, and the use of colorblind inclusion rhetoric. Since the qualitative dependent variables are binary variables, we utilized PROCESS macro's function to run logistic regressions on the binary dependent variables.

To assess whether our proposed model held beyond the effects of political orientation, we ran all the above mediation analyses controlling for political orientation. We also examined political orientation as an alternative predictor variable (in place of anti-egalitarian belief) in the mediation model. We report the results in the online Supplementary.

Previous research has also demonstrated that anti-egalitarian belief moderates the association between colorblindness and outgroup attitudes, suggesting the possibility that anti-egalitarian belief moderates the association between colorblindness and diversity definition shift (Yogeeswaran et al., 2017). Because the results from the moderation model were unexpected and showed divergent patterns across dependent measures, we believe they should be interpreted cautiously until they are replicated. They are reported in full in the online Supplementary[4].

TABLE 3 Descriptive statistics and correlations for study variables.

Variable	*M*	*SD*	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
1. Social Dominance Orientation	2.49	0.92	—										
2. Colorblindness	3.55	1.51	0.49**	—									
3. Political Orientation	3.99	1.30	0.45**	0.61**	—								
4. Quantity of Disadvantaged Demographic Groups Included	8.29	1.17	−0.31**	−0.30*	−0.28**	—							
5. Quantity of Non-Demographic Groups Included	5.60	2.68	−0.00	0.13**	0.10*	0.35**	—						
6. Quantity of Advantaged Demographic Groups Included	2.19	0.82	0.09*	0.21**	0.26**	0.45**	0.70**	—					
	n	%											
7. Mention of Specific Disadvantaged Demographic Groups	223	44.8	−0.07	−0.09*	−0.11*	−0.01	−0.11*	−0.07	—				
8. Mention of Non-Specific Disadvantaged Demographic Groups	121	24.3	−0.05	−0.12**	−0.16**	0.02	−0.20**	−0.22**	−0.50**	—			
9. Mention of Non-demographic Groups	55	11.0	0.06	0.00	0.04	0.00	0.11*	0.09*	0.13**	−0.14**	—		
10. Mention of Advantaged Demographic Groups	17	3.4	−0.06	−0.05	−0.08	0.05	0.02	0.07	0.14**	−0.06	0.11*	—	
11. Use of Colorblind Inclusion Rhetoric	159	31.9	0.04	0.14**	0.13**	0.09*	0.33**	0.33**	−0.30**	−0.25**	−0.04	−0.03	—

*$p < 0.05$, **$p < 0.01$.

3 We also ran all the analyses controlling for condition, and condition did not have a significant effect on any analysis we ran in the paper.

4 In the alternative model, we found interactions between colorblindness and anti-egalitarian beliefs on inclusion of disadvantaged demographic groups, $F(1, 494) = 15.34$, $p < 0.001$, and inclusion of advantaged demographic groups, $F(1, 493) = 19.46$, $p < 0.001$. Specifically, at average and high levels, but not low levels, of anti-egalitarian beliefs, colorblindness was associated with participants including fewer disadvantaged demographic groups in diversity. However, at medium and low levels, but not high levels, of anti-egalitarian beliefs, colorblindness was associated with participants including more advantaged demographic groups. These unexpected findings tentatively suggest that even egalitarian-minded participants demonstrate a "broadening" pattern when they hold colorblind beliefs systems. Anti-egalitarians' tendency to include advantaged demographic groups may reflect a desire to be included in diversity and multiculturalism, which dovetails with research suggesting that dominant groups are concerned about being excluded from diversity (Plaut et al., 2011). Because we did not theorize these divergent patterns across dependent measures *a priori* (and interactions often require large sample sizes to achieve sufficient statistical power; Blake and Gangestad, 2020), we believe that these findings should be interpreted cautiously until they are replicated.

Preliminary analyses

Descriptive statistics and correlations between social dominance beliefs, colorblindness, and all diversity definition variables are reported in Table 3. In participants' open-ended responses on diversity definition, 223 (44.8%) participants mentioned specific disadvantaged demographic groups, and 121 (24.3%) participants mentioned disadvantaged demographic groups in general ways (e.g., "minority groups"). Moreover, 55 (11%) participants mentioned non-demographic groups to be included in definition of diversity, and 17 (3.4%) mentioned advantaged demographic groups in their definition of diversity. Lastly, 159 (31.9%) participants used the colorblind-inclusion rhetoric, where they claimed that everyone should be included in diversity or that no particular group should be prioritized over others.

Stronger social dominance orientation was associated with including fewer disadvantaged demographic characteristics, but was not consistently associated with inclusion of other characteristics (see Table 3). Stronger colorblindness was also associated with including fewer disadvantaged demographic characteristics, as well as *more* advantaged demographic and non-demographic characteristics—albeit more consistently for the quantitative than the qualitative open-ended coding measures.

Main analyses

Quantitative diversity definition shift

Consistent with expectations, higher levels of social dominance orientation were associated with higher levels of colorblindness, $b = 0.81$, $SE = 0.06$, $p < 0.001$ (path *a*). Colorblindness, in turn, was significantly associated with including fewer disadvantaged demographic groups, $b = -0.15$, $SE = 0.04$, $p < 0.001$, more non-demographic groups, $b = 0.30$, $SE = 0.09$, $p = 0.001$, and more advantaged demographic groups, $b = 0.11$, $SE = 0.03$, $p < 0.001$, when controlling for social dominance orientation (path *b*).

The mediation models showed significant indirect effects for disadvantaged demographic groups, non-demographic groups, and advantaged demographic groups. Specifically, social dominance orientation was associated with colorblind endorsement, which was associated with participants including fewer disadvantaged demographic groups, $b = -0.12$, $SE = 0.04$, 95% C.I. [−0.20, −0.05], more non-demographic groups, $b = 0.24$, $SE = 0.08$, 95% C.I. [0.09,0.39], and more advantaged demographic groups, $b = 0.09$, $SE = 0.02$, 95% C.I. [0.05,0.14] (see Figure 1 for one example mediation model and Table 4 for full mediation pathway results).

Because of the limitations of cross-sectional mediation analysis (see Fiedler et al., 2018), we also tested the reverse pathway (see Table 5). This pathway revealed significant indirect effects for the quantity of disadvantaged demographic groups, but not for the quantity of advantaged demographics groups. Although this suggests that this alternative model is possible, the other model has slightly more consistent results, and we consider our proposed pathway to be more theoretically plausible.

Qualitative diversity definition shift

The direct effects for the qualitative diversity definition variables showed that colorblindness was negatively associated with participants mentioning disadvantaged demographic groups in non-specific ways, $b = -0.20$, $SE = 0.08$, $p = 0.018$, and positively associated with participants using the colorblind inclusion rhetoric, $b = 0.22$, $SE = 0.07$, $p = 0.003$, when controlling for social dominance orientation (path *b*). However, colorblindness was not significantly associated with participants mentioning specific disadvantaged demographic groups, $b = -0.10$, $SE = 0.07$, $p = 0.158$, mentioning non-demographic groups, $b = -0.08$, $SE = 0.11$, $p = 0.476$, and mentioning advantaged demographic groups, $b = -0.10$, $SE = 0.19$, $p = 0.595$.

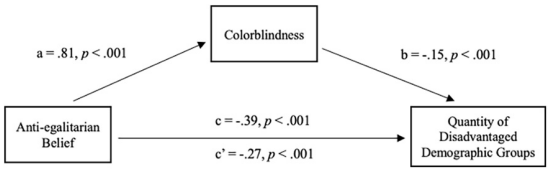

FIGURE 1
Regression coefficients for the relationship between Social Dominance Orientation and quantity of disadvantaged demographic groups included by participants as mediated by color evasion.

Inconsistent with our quantitative measure, the mediation tests revealed that colorblindness did not mediate the association between social dominance orientation and participants' mention of specific disadvantaged demographic groups, $b = -0.08$, $SE = 0.06$, 95% C.I. [−0.20,0.03], non-demographic groups, $b = -0.06$, $SE = 0.10$, 95% C.I. [−0.27,0.12], or advantaged demographic groups, $b = -0.08$, $SE = 0.17$, 95% C.I. [−0.46,0.23]. However, consistent with our quantitative measure, colorblindness significantly mediated the association between social dominance orientation and participants' mention of non-specific disadvantaged demographic groups, $b = -0.16$, $SE = 0.07$, 95% C.I. [−0.31, −0.03], and use of the "everyone" rhetoric, $b = 0.18$, $SE = 0.06$, 95% C.I. [0.06,0.31]. In other words, social dominance beliefs were associated with colorblindness endorsement, which was associated with participants mentioning disadvantaged demographic groups less frequently and using the "colorblind inclusion" rhetoric more frequently. See Table 4 for full mediation pathway results.

Similar with our quantitative measure, we also tested the reverse pathway (see Table 5) of social dominance orientation mediating the association between colorblindness and dependent variables. Neither of the indirect effects for the reverse pathway were significant, further supporting our proposed pathway.

Main analyses controlling for political orientation

We also examined the mediation effect of colorblindness on the association between social dominance orientation and diversity definition shift, controlling for political orientation. The effects on quantity of disadvantaged demographic groups and non-demographic groups remained statistically significant. However, the effects on quantity of advantaged demographic groups, mention of non-specific disadvantaged groups, and use of colorblind inclusion rhetoric did not hold when controlling for political orientation. Overall, the mediation pathways held on 2 out of 5 models controlling for political orientation, suggesting that the effects only remain robust for diversity definition shift regarding

TABLE 4 Mediation pathway results for diversity definition shift variables.

	b	*SE*	*p*
Model: SDO → Colorblindness → Quantity of Disadvantaged Demographic Groups			
a (SDO → Colorblindness)	0.81	0.06	< 0.001
b(Colorblindness → Quantity of Groups)	−0.15	0.04	< 0.001
c(SDO → Quantity of Groups)	−0.39	0.05	< 0.001
c' (Direct Effects)	−0.27	0.06	< 0.001
Model: SDO → Colorblindness → Quantity of Non-demographic Groups			
a (SDO → Colorblindness)	0.81	0.06	< 0.001
b(Colorblindness → Quantity of Groups)	0.30	0.09	0.001
c (SDO → Quantity of Groups)	−0.01	0.13	0.952
c' (Direct Effects)	−0.25	0.15	0.093
Model: SDO → Colorblindness → Quantity of Advantaged Demographic Groups			
a (SDO → Colorblindness)	0.81	0.06	< 0.001
b(Colorblindness → Quantity of Groups)	0.11	0.03	< 0.001
c(SDO → Quantity of Groups)	0.08	0.04	0.035
c' (Direct Effects)	−0.01	0.05	0.849
Model: SDO → Colorblindness → Mention of Specific Disadvantaged Demographic Group			
a (SDO → Color Evasion)	0.81	0.06	< 0.001
b(Colorblindness → Mention of Group)	−0.10	0.07	0.158
c' (Direct Effects)	−0.07	0.11	0.529
Model: SDO → Colorblindness → Mention of Non-specific Disadvantaged Demographic Group			
a (SDO → Colorblindness)	0.81	0.06	< 0.001
b(Colorblindness → Mention of Group)	−0.20	0.08	0.018
c' (Direct Effects)	0.02	0.13	0.894
Model: SDO → Colorblindness → Mention of Non-demographic Group			
a (SDO → Colorblindness)	0.81	0.06	< 0.001
b(Colorblindness → Mention of Group)	−0.08	0.11	0.476
c' (Direct Effects)	0.27	0.18	0.124
Model: SDO → Colorblindness → Mention of Advantaged Demographic Group			
a (SDO → Colorblindness)	0.81	0.06	< 0.001
b(Colorblindness → Mention of Group)	−0.10	0.19	0.595
c' (Direct Effects)	−0.30	0.34	0.367
Model: SDO → Colorblindness → Use of Colorblind Inclusion Rhetoric			
a (SDO → Colorblindness)	0.81	0.06	< 0.001
b(Colorblindness → Use of Rhetoric)	0.22	0.07	0.003
c' (Direct Effects)	−0.08	0.12	0.486

Note. SDO = social dominance orientation

including fewer disadvantaged demographic groups and more non-demographic groups in diversity.

General discussion

Using multiple methodologies assessing White Americans' definitions of diversity, the present research suggests that certain diversity definitions may have underlying motivations focused on maintaining the current social hierarchy in the US. In particular, White participants' higher social dominance orientation was associated with stronger colorblind ideology endorsement, which was then associated with shifting of their definition of diversity. This shifting was associated with participants including more non-demographic groups and advantaged demographic groups in their definition, a phenomenon previously termed "broadening" diversity (i.e., including more characteristics than diversity's original focus on protected demographic groups;

TABLE 5 Indirect effects from mediation models.

	Social Dominance Orientation→ Colorblindness → Dependent Variable			Colorblindness → Social Dominance Orientation → Dependent Variable		
Dependent Variable	*b*	*SE*	95% CI	*b*	*SE*	95% CI
Quantity of Disadvantaged Demographic Groups	−0.12	0.04	[−0.20, −0.05]	−0.08	0.02	[−0.14, −0.04]
Quantity of Non-demographicGroups	0.24	0.08	[0.09, 0.39]	−0.07	0.04	[−0.16, 0.01]
Quantity of Advantaged Demographic Groups	0.09	0.02	[0.05, 0.14]	−0.01	0.01	[−0.03, 0.02]
Mention of Specific Disadvantaged Demographic Group	−0.08	0.06	[−0.20, 0.03]	−0.02	0.04	[−0.09, 0.05]
Mention of Non-specific Disadvantaged Demographic Group	−0.16	0.07	[−0.31, −0.03]	0.01	0.04	[−0.07, 0.08]
Mention of Non-demographic Group	−0.06	0.10	[−0.27, 0.12]	0.08	0.06	[−0.02, 0.19]
Mention of Advantaged Demographic Group	−0.08	0.17	[−0.46, 0.23]	−0.09	0.10	[−0.31, 0.08]
Use of Colorblind Inclusion Rhetoric	0.18	0.06	[0.06, 0.31]	−0.03	0.04	[−0.10, 0.05]

Unzueta et al., 2012; Trawalter et al., 2016; Kirby et al., 2023). Participants shifted the definition further, however, by also including *fewer* disadvantaged demographic groups in their definition of diversity when they were higher in anti-egalitarian and colorblind motives. One possible way of shifting diversity definitions is to include so many characteristics (a "laundry list") that the original focus on demographics is obscured (Dingel and Sage, 2020). However, increasing the number of characteristics while simultaneously reducing the number of protected characteristics (relative to those lower in colorblindness) is a particularly strong demonstration of the phenomenon. This hints at the possibility of a strategic shift in diversity definition that depends on participants' motivations related to the current social hierarchy.

These associations between anti-egalitarian and colorblind motivations with definition shifts did not replicate in some of the open-ended coding variables, where participants responded about their definition of diversity. However, anti-egalitarian belief was associated with participants using the "colorblind-inclusion" rhetoric (i.e., endorsing the notion that everyone should be included in diversity) and being less likely to include disadvantaged characteristics in their definition of diversity—with both effects mediated by colorblindness beliefs. Thus, the findings are fairly consistent overall in supporting the idea that anti-egalitarian motives are associated with colorblind beliefs thus a strategic shift in diversity definition to include more characteristics beyond disadvantaged demographic groups and fewer disadvantaged demographic characteristics.

Theoretical implications

The present research contributes to the literature on motivated construal of diversity by showing that anti-egalitarian belief is associated with colorblindness, which in turn is associated with the type of groups dominant group members tend to include in their definitions of diversity. In addition to revealing anti-egalitarian beliefs motivating participants to "broaden" their conception of diversity by including more advantaged demographic groups, and non-demographic groups, and using the colorblind inclusion rhetoric, our findings indicate a simultaneous "narrowing" of diversity to include fewer disadvantaged demographic groups. These findings suggest that anti-egalitarian motives do not simply perpetuate a "broadening" effect of diversity; they might simultaneously engender a "narrowing" effect where dominant group members downplay the importance of enhancing the treatment of historically marginalized and oppressed groups. This simultaneous "broadening" and "narrowing" of diversity definition mirrors previous research on dominant group member's double standard on the definition of discrimination (West et al., 2022), and extends previous research on showing the flexible definitional boundary of diversity driven by anti-egalitarian belief and colorblind motives.

Another major contribution of the present research is that we directly assessed what the concept of diversity entails for dominant group members. While diversity initiatives originally served to enhance the experiences of underrepresented minorities in the society (Edelman et al., 2001), less than half (42%) of the participants in the present study mentioned specific disadvantaged demographic groups in an open-ended response asking for their definitions of diversity. Furthermore, over thirty percent of the participants displayed "colorblind inclusion" rhetoric—claiming that everyone should be included in diversity, or that no particular groups should be prioritized over others. Consistent with the findings of Dingel and Sage (2020), these patterns of White's definitions of diversity generally reflect a colorblind approach to defining diversity.

Relatedly, the present research contributes to the existing literature on colorblind racial ideology by showing another potential downstream consequence of colorblind ideology—the strategic "broadening" and "narrowing" of diversity among dominant group members. With the increasingly pervasive endorsement of colorblindness in the society (Apfelbaum et al., 2012), it is possible that a shifted definition of diversity will also pervade over time, ultimately distracting from diversity initiatives' original focus on disadvantaged demographic groups.

Limitations and future directions

A key methodological limitation of the current study concerns its correlational nature, given our interest in understanding motivations for shifting definitions of diversity. We examined the association between anti-egalitarian belief, colorblindness, and diversity definitions with mediation analyses, but we cannot draw causal inferences from our data. Relatedly, our mediation model draws on cross-sectional data, which limits our ability to rule out the possibility of other models (see Fiedler et al., 2018) or establish temporal inferences based on the mediation analysis. Future research should manipulate anti-egalitarian belief or colorblindness experimentally to establish the causal effects of social hierarchy-enhancing beliefs on diversity definition shifts.

In addition, the main findings should be interpreted with caution given the possibility of political orientation and anti-egalitarian thoughts both being associated with diversity definition shift. In the present research, anti-egalitarian beliefs were highly correlated with political orientation, in line with previous research (Wilson and Sibley, 2013). When controlling for political orientation, anti-egalitarian belief's association with diversity definition shift became less robust. When using political orientation as an alternative predictor in the mediation model, political orientation was associated with higher colorblindness beliefs, which was associated with inclusion of fewer disadvantaged demographic groups in diversity. While we cannot tease apart the effects of political orientation and anti-egalitarian belief in the current study, future research should examine the unique effect of anti-egalitarian belief on diversity definition shift.

The present research hypothesized that anti-egalitarian belief and colorblindness would be associated with targeted broadening and narrowing of diversity. However, other mechanisms related to individuals' egalitarian beliefs (e.g., right wing authoritarianism, ingroup favoritism) could also be associated with diversity definition shifts. Additionally, our manipulation only had a significant effect on one of the dependent variables, thus the overall effect of the manipulation is not robust. Future research could use a different threat manipulation—for example, information activating more self-relevant realistic threat (Rios et al., 2018) might lead dominant group individuals to shift their definitions of diversity.

To obtain a general sense of participants' definitions of diversity, we provided participants a variety of demographic groups and asked them to decide which groups to include across four diversity initiatives and their own definition of diversity. We recoded participants' answers into binary variables and calculated the number of groups participants included out of the three group categories (i.e., disadvantaged demographic group, non-demographic group, advantaged demographic group). However, there might be more nuances within each category in participants' decision-making process.

Given our interest in disadvantaged demographic groups in general (not minoritized racial groups in particular), the use of colorblindness instead of a more general identity-blind measure was somewhat mismatched with the dependent measures. Although colorblind ideologies might function similarly to identity-blind diversity ideologies, this has not been established thus far. For example, people interpret gender-blind and colorblind ideologies differently (Martin, 2023).

Conclusion

Discourse around who should be included in diversity has gone through substantial changes over the last few decades. This study shows that dominant group members' definitions of diversity closely align with their anti-egalitarian motives and colorblindness endorsement. A colorblind mindset may be one key motivator for White Americans to "broaden" their conception of diversity to include groups that were not the traditional focus of diversity and "narrow" their conception of diversity to include fewer oppressed or marginalized groups. Understanding the divergent definitions of diversity and the possible motivations underlying strategic shift could offer insights into the paradoxes of implementation of diversity-related policies. Taken together, these findings contribute to previous literature on motivated construal of diversity and have implications for the subtle ways in which colorblind ideology may be enacted.

Data availability statement

The datasets presented in this study can be found in online repositories. The names of the repository/repositories and accession number(s) can be found below: https://osf.io/32ahc/.

Ethics statement

The studies involving humans were approved by the Purdue's Institutional Review Board. The studies were conducted in accordance with the local legislation and institutional requirements. The participants provided their written informed consent to participate in this study.

Author contributions

JZ: Formal Analysis, Writing—original draft, Writing—review and editing. TK: Conceptualization, Methodology, Project administration, Supervision, Writing—review and editing.

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Conflict of interest

The authors declare that the research was conducted in the absence of any commercial or financial relationships that could be construed as a potential conflict of interest.

Publisher's note

Supplementary material

The Supplementary Material for this article can be found online at: https://www.frontiersin.org/articles/10.3389/fpsyg.2024.1297846/full#supplementary-material

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MANdatory - why men need (and are needed for) gender equality progress

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While much progress has been made towards gender equality, diversity and inclusion in the workplace, education and society, recent years have also revealed continuing challenges that slow or halt this progress. To date, the majority of gender equality action has tended to approach gender equality from one side: being focused on the need to remove barriers for girls and women. We argue that this is only half the battle, and that a focus on men is MANdatory, highlighting three key areas: First, we review men's privileged status as being potentially threatened by progress in gender equality, and the effects of these threats for how men engage in gender-equality progress. Second, we highlight how men themselves are victims of restrictive gender roles, and the consequences of this for men's physical and mental health, and for their engagement at work and at home. Third, we review the role of men as allies in the fight for gender equality, and on the factors that impede and may aid in increasing men's involvement. We end with recommendations for work organizations, educational institutions and society at large to reach and involve men as positive agents of social change.

KEYWORDS

gender, social equality, social change, men and masculinity, gender roles, precarious manhood

Introduction

While much progress has been made towards gender equality, diversity and inclusion, recent years have also revealed continuing challenges that slow or halt this progress. For example, the covid-19 pandemic has revealed and increased gender inequality (Fisher et al., 2020; Yerkes et al., 2020); the MeToo movement has shone a light on still persistent sexual harassment at work (see Keplinger et al., 2019; Lisnek et al., 2022 for discussions); abortion has now been newly banned or restricted in several EU countries and US states, and austerity policies following the global financial crisis have hollowed out social services supporting gender equality, including access to affordable childcare, housing, and legal services. Indeed, the UN (2022) concluded that if the current rate continues it will take close to 300 years to achieve full gender equality.

We posit that we should not tackle such challenges without rethinking how gender equality is approached, for whom it is beneficial, and what mechanisms are responsible for its slow or stalled progress. To date, most gender equality practitioners, policy makers and researchers have approached gender equality from one side: focused on the removal of barriers for girls

and women, and to create organizations, structures and societies allowing girls and women to thrive and succeed - especially in traditionally male-dominated spaces. We aim to show that this is only half the battle: Existing gender inequalities result from the multifaceted nature of gendered power dynamics in various areas of life where women and men are interdependent and play key roles in maintaining or changing the existing status quo.

Much of the research we review here is based on a western binary view of gender, where people are defined (both by others and by themselves) as either women or men. We fully acknowledge that the gender binary is a social construct and does not reflect how a growing number of people define themselves and others (e.g., non-binary, gender fluid, etc., see Hyde et al., 2019). While challenging the gender binary is an important part of change, here we focus on progress towards gender equality as it relates to challenging restrictive traditional gender roles for women and men (girls and boys). That is, we focus on understanding how to remove the pervasive power of gender stereotypes that prescribe and proscribe the gender norms women and men are held to and hold to. We argue that while men's adherence to masculine norms is a large part of the problem, men are and should also be a large part of the solution, and that the improvement of the situation for women (and men, and nonbinary individuals) depends on men. Paradoxically then our goal is to show that barriers for women will not be removed without removing gender-restrictive barriers for men, and that gender equality will not be achieved without providing men - as well as women and those who identify as non-binary - true freedom from the pervasive power of gender stereotypes. In examining men's roles we of course recognize the tremendous heterogeneity and intersectionality within men, and that many men are not necessarily privileged in terms of ethnicity, social class, physical ability or sexual orientation (Coston and Kimmel, 2012).

In this review we highlight men's roles in gender equality in three ways: First, we focus on how men's privileged higher status is threatened by gender equality progress, and consequences of this threat for gender-equality initiatives. Specifically, although women comprise half the world's population, men continue to have more power than women. Existing hierarchies and inequities also mean that men may perceive women's gains – in politics, education and work – as a threat to men's status. We explain how withdrawing support for gender equality helps men maintain their advantageous position in the gender hierarchy and restores their threatened manhood status. We describe how gendered hierarchies and gender inequities are maintained by cultural ideologies that justify and rationalize men's power over women, and discuss research on precarious manhood and zero-sum beliefs - plus their links to men's reluctance to support gender equality. We note that understanding these threats and their consequences is an important step in addressing gender equality in a potentially more inclusive and effective way.

Second, we focus on men as themselves falling victim to restrictive gender roles. We argue that despite their dominance in the hierarchy, existing gender roles can also affect men's ability to thrive and do well in education, work and social life. Men continue to be under pressure to uphold unrealistic and unhealthy expectations about ideal or 'real' manhood, and we show how such expectations affect men and others in various ways: They encourage men to engage in risky behaviors and aggression and prevent men from taking care of their mental and physical health. Also, they create masculinity contest cultures in organizations, and strong work devotion in men that may both harm men's health and wellbeing, and lead men to shy away from positive caring roles known to benefit the self and others, such as caring roles in education and health care, and for children and others at home.

Third, we focus on the importance of men as allies in gender equality progress: on how men have been stepping up alongside women to make a difference, and how their investments are critical for gender equality progress. We discuss factors that can contribute to men recognizing the problem of sexism - including interventions that encourage emotional empathy for women as targets of sexism and reduce empathy towards men as perpetrators. We further discuss factors that may encourage men to become involved in change, such as how feminist men are portrayed, whether movement norms are inclusive of men's involvement, and women's reactions to men's ally behaviors.

We conclude with men as pivotal agents for change: those who have power to make a difference in work organizations, educational institutions, and society.

The current status of gender equality and men as agents within this

Over the past few decades much research in social psychology, sociology, business studies and organizational psychology has addressed diversity and inclusion by focusing on the representation and involvement of women in work, education and society. This important research has documented women's underrepresentation in key domains generally, and in traditionally male domains and at higher levels of organizations and society more specifically. Much attention has been focused on understanding the mechanisms that maintain and can reduce this underrepresentation. For example, the mechanisms that lead to lower selection of women job candidates, that lower the likelihood of women's promotion, and that increase the likelihood women will exit organizations or occupational domains. This research shows that women face more lack-of-fit and prejudice; less welcoming social climates, plus hostility and sexual harassment, that lead them to feel a lower sense of belonging in work and education (Eagly and Karau, 2002; Berdahl, 2007; Heilman, 2012). Further, this research highlights the impact of women's care roles on their work involvement and ways in which motherhood is associated with disadvantages at work (Barnett et al., 2004; Cuddy et al., 2004; Williams et al., 2016). Traditionally, social scientists have focused on ways to rectify these issues as ways of increasing gender equality.

Undoubtedly, these endeavors have at least partially succeeded (UN, 2022): We have made considerable progress in some areas, with women (at least in the global North) increasingly represented in work: working more hours, in more domains, and at more and also higher levels of organizations and society. Nevertheless, the progress has been partial and despite considerable efforts we are a long way from gender being irrelevant to work, educational and health outcomes. Gender continues to be highly predictive of the domains in which people work, how much they work, their status in organizations as well as their salary (Vuorinen-Lampila, 2016; Blau and Kahn, 2017; Dämmrich and Blossfeld, 2017). Indeed, organizations report difficulties reaching their gender equality goals, despite strong motivation and effort - including various programs, changes in formal policies, opportunities and training regarding diversity, equality, and

inclusion (DEI) (Dover et al., 2016b, 2020a; Saba et al., 2021). Moreover, there are considerable differences in gender equality across countries. For example, in the EU Sweden scores 84 on the Gender Equality Index, whilst Greece scores at a 53 (European Institute for Gender Equality, 2022). In the wider world, even greater disparities exist, with Rwanda having closed 79% of its overall gender gap whilst Afghanistan still has the global worst scores of 41% gender parity (World Economic Forum, 2023).

Such persisting gender inequality is not only at odds with the goals most democratic societies strive for and with UN Developmental Goals (UN, 2015), but also has direct negative impacts on lives. For example, women remain much more economically dependent on others than are men, and this lack of independence has serious consequences for women and children when women are or become single or single parents (Malone et al., 2010; Gonçalves et al., 2021). Moreover, the continuing inequality means societies do not benefit from the full range of talent and qualities women can contribute. In the meantime, not only women and minority gender groups are disadvantaged: It is becoming increasingly clear that men are also negatively impacted by strong gender roles and inequities, for example in their health, well-being and social relationships, and in opportunities to connect with their children (Croft et al., 2015; Meeussen et al., 2020; Van Rossum et al., 2024). Children meanwhile are denied access to their fathers, with increasing research showing negative consequences of this low involvement (Amato and Rivera, 1999; Aldous and Mulligan, 2002; Fletcher, 2011; Croft et al., 2014; Opondo et al., 2016; Rollè et al., 2019; Cano and Hofmeister, 2023).

We argue that continuing to singularly focus on women no longer optimally serves progress towards gender equality. Rather, broadening our perspective to bring men's role into focus is now needed: We below outline the different ways in which a focus on men can help us understand and advance gender equality progress.

Gender equality progress as a potential threat to men

To date, women have been the driving force of gender equality strategies and struggles (Holter, 2014). Data from 34 countries show that women place more importance on gender equality than men, and that they are less optimistic about the likelihood of attaining gender equality (Pew Research Center, 2020). Compared with men, women declare a stronger willingness to support gender-related collective actions (data from 42 countries, Kosakowska-Berezecka et al., 2020); devote more time to foster DEI within organizations (Women in the Workplace Report, 2022); and more often actively participate in promoting gender equality (Radke et al., 2016). Although men often report favorable attitudes toward gender equality, they are also reluctant to support policy initiatives, and to feel that gender equality has already been achieved (Levtov et al., 2014; DIT, 2023).

While there is a strong and successful history of men's allyship in gender equality progress (we return to this in section three), below we shed light on three underlying mechanisms explaining why some men are either not allies, or actively resist DEI programs. First, we focus on men's perception of gender equality progress as achieved at the expense of men. Then, we discuss the role of strong legitimizing beliefs leaving men less likely to recognize women's unfair treatment. And finally we describe how, on an individual and deeper level, prescriptive and proscriptive masculine norms present in our societies, and the precarious nature of manhood fuel men's resistance. While some of these mechanisms are specific to gender (e.g., the precarious nature of masculinity in response to gender change), other mechanisms are relevant more generally in understanding why men - as an advantaged group in most contexts - might resist general diversity change and pro-minority inclusion, including for example resistance to the inclusion of those with different ethnic backgrounds, or challenges to the status quo more generally.

Women's gains = men's losses

One of the underlying mechanisms explaining men's ambivalence can be related to the fact that as the higher-status group in society, men might be seen as having more to lose than to gain from gender equality. Men universally tend to have more agency and power than women: making more money and holding higher power positions in most countries (Global Gender Gap Report, 2022). When analyzing gender equality progress, it is crucial to understand that collective action by less privileged groups (such as women) is likely to highlight the unfair privilege of high-status ones (here men). This, in turn can trigger the need in men to legitimize their higher status (Sidanius and Pratto, 1999; Leach et al., 2002; Iyer and Leach, 2009).

In general, people like to see the sociopolitical contexts that favor their ingroup as fair and just (Cichocka and Jost, 2014). Changes to the existing economic or political hierarchies may be stressful and perceived as threatening, especially to those with the most to lose (Scheepers and Ellemers, 2018). As such, men as the high-status group may be especially motivated to defend the status quo, and manifest their resistance to gender equality actions both openly and more subtly (Osborne et al., 2019). Some men may view women's advances at work as threatening to men's power, and may thus see women as usurpers of male power and as men's competitors (Fiske and Taylor, 2013). Such a mindset, which is referred to as the "belief in a zero-sum game," can lead men to believe that more power and money for women means less power and money for men (*cf.* Ruthig et al., 2017; Kosakowska-Berezecka et al., 2020). Evidence indeed shows that men show stronger belief in this "zero-sum game" than women, and generally view gender relations through a more threatening and competitive lens (Bosson et al., 2012; Wilkins et al., 2015; Kuchynka et al., 2018). As DEI policies target the gender hierarchy, men may think that they have more to lose, both materially ("women will take over our positions, jobs, money") but also symbolically ("women will challenge traditional men's beliefs and values") (Stephan and Stephan, 2000). As a result, some men, especially those with higher gender identification (Maass et al., 2003), may feel they are themselves victims of discrimination, and manifest defensive responses to status threats (see also DIT, 2023). Such a response was voiced in 2023 by Chemistry Noble Laurate Kurt Wüthrich, who warned against "discrimination against men" in STEM fields resulting from (in his perception) too much focus on DEI measures (Heidt, 2023). Affirmative action encouraging the selection of women candidates, rewarding teams hiring ethnic minorities, or highlighting women's success more than men's may then be perceived as directly harming men. Indeed, there is evidence that men's zero-sum thinking increases after reminders of women's societal status gains (Kuchynka et al., 2018), and that men viewed decreases in discrimination against women as directly linked

with increases in discrimination against men (Kehn and Ruthig, 2013). Not surprisingly, zero-sum beliefs can then fuel hostility towards women in positions of power: Indeed, recent research shows that men endorsing zero-sum beliefs about gender were more inclined to endorse hostile sexism against women, which in turn reduced men's gender equality support (Ruthig et al., 2017; Kosakowska-Berezecka et al., 2020).

Counter-intuitively, such resistance may be especially present in contexts in which gender equality is perceived as (increasingly) valued and where DEI actions are perceived as (becoming) successful. A recent cross-cultural study indeed shows that men manifest lower support for gender equality actions in countries with higher gender equality levels (where DEI programs are more prevalent), and that this lower support may in turn stall gender equality progress (Kosakowska-Berezecka et al., 2020). This translates to organizations as well: if men perceive DEI messages as more robust and as favoring women over men, they might reduce their support for DEI actions. There is evidence showing that when exposed to diversity statements, advantaged groups (e.g., White men) were more likely to view their group as disadvantaged, and manifest cardiovascular reactions signalizing threat (Dover et al., 2016a,b, 2020b). Practitioners should thus be aware that programs promoting DEI can be challenged by some men who feel threatened and see themselves as victims rather than beneficiaries, and that effectively managing threat reactions is likely to strengthen program effectiveness.

Blindness of the privileged

Apart from perceiving gender equality progress as benefiting women at the expense of men, another potential mechanism underlying men's resistance is linked to the fact that - on average - men are less likely than women to recognize unfair treatment of women (Drury and Kaiser, 2014). Men find it harder than women to detect discriminatory acts (Swim et al., 2001), to recognize derogatory statements about women as prejudiced (Rodin et al., 1990), and to notice unfavorable employment practices that disadvantage women (Blodorn et al., 2012; DIT, 2023). Men may have even more trouble detecting discrimination if it is manifested in a subtler form of paternalistic and benevolent acts, as they may see these as well-intentioned and harmless forms of support and protection favoring women (Glick et al., 2000; Gervais et al., 2010; Becker and Swim, 2011). Pratto and Stewart (2012) address this issue even more broadly by pointing out a wider cultural phenomenon also for other social inequalities (e.g., based on ethnicity): noting the acceptance of social inequality linked with the implicit assumption that the dominance of a group is normal. Thus, men might not recognize their status as advantageous, as it is culturally considered default, and this disguises their privileged position as "normal" while perpetuating stereotypes and maintaining the lower position of other groups. Additionally, men, as a dominant group, can be more inclined to promote their power, and as hierarchy-enhancing discrimination is often institutionalized, no individual effort is necessary to maintain men's group dominance (Pratto and Stewart, 2012). Men's lack of recognition of their privilege and their lower sensitivity towards subtle forms of discrimination poses a difficult barrier for gender equality progress as it lowers the likelihood that men will oppose such more subtle and derogating forms of discrimination, and can decrease men's willingness to support change (Ellemers and Barreto, 2009; Becker and Wright, 2011; Van Laar et al., 2019).

The "blindness" men can face to recognize unequal treatment of women is linked to the fact that men are also more prone than women to endorse meritocratic-type beliefs that individuals are responsible for their life successes, and that life outcomes are purely the result of one's efforts and achievements. At the same time, men are more likely to neglect structural barriers and pervasive gender stereotypes that contribute to status differences faced by women (Jost et al., 2004). Indeed, men show stronger legitimizing beliefs, such as the belief in individual mobility (i.e., the belief that regardless of one's group membership one can achieve merit-based success; Major et al., 2002), stronger social dominance orientation (support for social hierarchy and acceptance of superiority of some groups over others, Sidanius and Pratto, 1999), and stronger beliefs that their high status is earned (Sidanius and Pratto, 1999). Such legitimizing beliefs help men rationalize their privileged status, and to perceive less privileged groups (such as women) as not having worked hard enough. Perceiving the existing social hierarchy as fair, legitimate and well-deserved allows men to maintain the status quo, and their own psychological and moral comfort (Jost et al., 2004). Recognizing the structural barriers and status hierarchy as unfair to women would force men into a potentially unpleasant realization that they do not deserve their personal or group status (Adams et al., 2006). Not being fully aware of their privileged status, and failing to recognize when and why discrimination happens, men may thus find it hard to be DEI allies.

However, seeing only women and not men as the victims of these processes is a fallacy. Even though men tend to have more power than women, men's decisions and behaviors are also restricted by social and cultural expectations related to masculinity (we return to these issues in the section on men themselves as victims of restrictive gender roles).

Male identity and precarious manhood

A third and potential deeper mechanism underlying men's resistance to support gender equality is the nature of male identity and the potential perceived precariousness of that identity. On one hand, men have more power than women: greater control over the creation, distribution of, and access to resources (which predicts their safety, health, freedom and quality of life, e.g., Rivers and Josephs, 2010). Also, men's greater size and thus strength makes them more apt to take power by force; and finally, there are numerous beliefs permeating social life that maintain and legitimize the higher status of men over women (Pratto and Walker, 2004; Alesina et al., 2013). Indeed, hierarchies and gender inequities are maintained and reinforced by gender differences in resource control and physical strength, and by cultural ideologies that justify and rationalize men's power over women (Pratto and Walker, 2004). Such a high place in the hierarchy, however, also leaves men vulnerable to having to prove this status (Bosson et al., 2022).

Although men have greater structural power than women in most cultures, the nature of manhood (relative to womanhood) in most societies today is precarious, it is "hard won and can be easily lost" (Vandello et al., 2008; Bosson et al., 2022). In order to prove their higher status, men need to consistently demonstrate agency and dominance, and avoid femininity to garner respect. As the value of

being seen as manly is high, and femininity is valued less, gender prescriptions and proscriptions are endorsed more strongly for men than women (Bosson et al., 2022), and when their masculinity is threatened men are inclined to take actions to restore their masculinity. There is growing evidence that manhood is threatened by for example making men appear feminine (Kosakowska-Berezecka et al., 2016a,b) and that this can lead to a wide array of compensatory behaviors, including aggression (Bosson et al., 2009); harassment of women (Maass et al., 2003); financial risk-taking (Weaver et al., 2013); avoidance of feminine behaviors (Rudman and Mescher, 2013); and manifesting greater liking for prototypical compared to non-prototypical men (Schmitt and Branscombe, 2001). Men may face masculinity threats as a result of engaging in DEI efforts: For example, as gender equality is often seen as a "women's issue" (Kaufman, 2004) men can be hesitant to support it because they fear such opinions or actions might make them appear less masculine. The term "feminist man" is often associated with traits considered anti-masculine, non-attractive, and low in potency (Anderson, 2009), as well as linked with femininity, weakness and homosexuality (Rudman et al., 2012). Research has shown that such labels can have consequences for men's willingness to support gender equality– when actions are described as "feminist" (vs. without that label) they are less likely to be supported by men (Conlin and Heesacker, 2018). Defensive reactions to threatened masculinity may also increase men's prejudice towards women and minority groups (Glick et al., 2007; Weaver and Vescio, 2015; Alonso, 2018; Ching, 2021; Wellman et al., 2021; Vallerga and Zurbriggen, 2022), increase denial of discrimination against women (Weaver and Vescio, 2015), and decrease men's support for and participation in DEI initiatives (Kosakowska-Berezecka et al., 2016a). Men who endorse masculine work ideals may feel that diversity and inclusion put their privileged masculine status at risk (Dover et al., 2016a) further reducing their interest in DEI policies (Hill, 2009; Marchlewska et al., 2021).

Presumably, withdrawing support for gender equality helps men restore their threatened manhood status and maintain their position in the gender hierarchy (Herek, 1986; Sidanius and Pratto, 1999; Vandello and Bosson, 2013; Kosakowska-Berezecka et al., 2016b). Similar threat reactions are observed in other high-status groups, for example when white Americans are informed that by 2050 minority Americans will outnumber non-Hispanic white Americans (Craig and Richeson, 2014). Research has shown that white individuals who are made aware of this experience more anger and fear toward minorities, express more explicit and implicit anti-outgroup attitudes, and show greater support for anti-minority policies (Craig and Richeson, 2014; for similar results in Canada, United Kingdom and United States see Stefaniak and Wohl, 2021). Masculine threats and need for compensatory actions to regain power posit an important barrier for gaining acceptance and support for DEI. The need to compensate for masculinity loss experienced by men who endorse precarious manhood beliefs can thus backfire on DEI programs. As such, perceiving DEI policies as targeting men's privilege and as aiming to change the status quo at the expense of men is an important challenge that practitioners cannot afford to neglect.

Taken together, DEI programs may never be fully successful as long as they are perceived as focused on women (or minorities in general) only. As long as gender equality is seen as progressing at the expense of men, men may resist gender equality and measures by withdrawing support, or by actively protesting against DEI actions. One of the most crucial and promising questions therefore is to understand when and how men can perceive gender equality as beneficial for them. There is a robust evidence showing that men do gain from gender equality in terms of health, well-being, and their overall happiness, as we discuss in the next section.

Men themselves as victims of restrictive gender roles

Most attention in research and public debate has focused on the negative consequences of gender roles and stereotypes for women. In no way do we as the authors minimize the myriad of hardships women face because of gender inequality. However, we make the case that these hardships are also in part the result of our failure to consider the effects of restrictive gender norms for men, and that an examination of the complete set of processes is needed to adequately address gender inequality, and to include men in overcoming gender inequality.

Substantial research shows the pervasive restrictions that gender roles impose on men. First, traditional views on masculinity discourage men to care for their physical and mental health, and encourage dangerous and risky behavior, leading to worldwide gender discrepancies in health outcomes and longevity (Brannon, 1976; Courtenay, 2000; WHO Regional Office for Europe, 2018; Vandello et al., 2022). Second, men are still commonly expected to be ambitious, successful and devoted to their work, which creates unhealthy pressure and hinders men's domestic engagement (Berdahl et al., 2018). Third, it is still often disapproved for men to show interest in traditionally feminine domains, such as childcare and HEED occupations (Healthcare, Early Education and Domestic domains – Croft et al., 2015), while such interest is known to benefit men's wellbeing and women's position in society (Meeussen et al., 2020). Below, we discuss gender role restrictions for men in each of these three domains: men's health and well-being, workplace masculinity norms, and domestic engagement and HEED interests, and argue that bringing attention to these processes is necessary to engage men in the pursuit of gender equality.

Risks to men's health and wellbeing

Physical health and risk behavior

Across the world, men have a lower life expectancy than women (OECD and European Union, 2020; WHO, 2020). Among the leading causes of men's premature death are life-style related conditions such as cancer, cardiovascular disease and respiratory illnesses (WHO Regional Office for Europe, 2018). Health behaviors that may in part cause such conditions are displayed more by men than women: consuming alcohol (Erol and Karpyak, 2015), eating meat (Stoll-Kleemann and Schmidt, 2017), and smoking (WHO, 2022); and these health behaviors are predicted by men's endorsement of and adherence to traditional views on masculinity (Mahalik et al., 2007; Iwamoto et al., 2011; Iwamoto and Smiler, 2013; Roberts et al., 2014; Houle et al., 2015; Wilkinson et al., 2018; Rosenfeld and Tomiyama, 2021). Indeed, research has suggested that certain unhealthy behaviors are seen as a 'sign' of masculinity (Nichter et al., 2006; Vartanian et al., 2007; de Visser and McDonnell, 2012; Vartanian, 2015), and that men may thus choose unhealthy behaviors to prove their masculine status,

and to fit prevailing gender norms (Chiou et al., 2013; Fugitt and Ham, 2018; Nakagawa and Hart, 2019; Mesler et al., 2022). Importantly, men are also less likely to consult a doctor when they experience pain or are ill (European Commission, 2011). Traditional masculinity norms are at odds with help-seeking, as men are expected to be self-reliant and discouraged from showing weakness or being overly emotional (Prentice and Carranza, 2002). A systematic literature review of 41 papers has indeed identified masculinity norms that present barriers in men's help-seeking, such as need for independence and control, restricted emotional expression, and embarrassment (Yousaf et al., 2015a). Also, especially men who more strongly attach their self-worth to how well they live up to masculine expectations report inhibitions against and delays in seeking healthcare (Himmelstein and Sanchez, 2016).

Another major cause of premature death for men is non-intentional injuries (WHO Regional Office for Europe, 2018). This again has been tied to gender roles: Men have been found to overall take more risks than women (Byrnes et al., 1999; Dohmen et al., 2011; Breivik et al., 2017), and risk taking is more appreciated for men as it conveys courage and toughness (Bosson et al., 2009; Fowler and Geers, 2017). This however can come at high cost for men's own wellbeing and that of others', as reflected in the higher incidences for men of traffic accidents (WHO, 2021a), drug-related deaths (European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction, 2022), sports injuries (National Safety Council, 2022), and incarceration (Federal Bureau of Prisons, 2023). Risk-taking is a way to protect or prove one's status as a 'real man' (Vandello et al., 2008; Giaccardi et al., 2017), for example through aggression (Bosson et al., 2009; Braly et al., 2018; Borgogna et al., 2022) and risky financial decisions (Weaver et al., 2013; Parent et al., 2018). Men who feel distressed about not meeting masculinity standards reported more assaults causing injuries and armed assaults (Reidy et al., 2016a), and reported engaging in more risky sexual behavior (Reidy et al., 2016b). Moreover, men whose masculinity was threatened showed higher pain tolerance (Berke et al., 2017), suggesting another pathway through which precarious manhood may lead to health risks: by overstepping one's own physical boundaries. Also cross-nationally, recent findings showed that country-level variations in precarious manhood beliefs predict men's risky health behaviors - such as transportation accidents and contact with venomous animals (Vandello et al., 2022). Indeed, in countries where precarious manhood beliefs are more prevalent, men's life expectancy is shorter by 6 years (Vandello et al., 2022).

Mental health

Men's mental health also shows detrimental effects of male gender roles. Research showed that adherence to traditional masculinity norms relates to poorer mental health (Wong et al., 2017), higher suicidal ideation (Coleman, 2015; King et al., 2020) and later suicide (Coleman et al., 2020). Worldwide, men commit suicide more than twice as often as women (WHO, 2021b) and in 2021 almost 80% of US suicides were committed by men (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2023). Keeping others at a distance may be an important factor in the negative relation between masculine gender norms and men's mental health. Indeed, recent research shows that boys and men are generally more socially isolated than girls and women (Way, 2013; Umberson et al., 2022), which could form a major health and mortality risk for men (Holt-Lunstad et al., 2010). Attempts to meet masculine expectations may stand in men's way towards close connections, social support, and if needed, professional help. For example, after a gender threat, men reported lower closeness and commitment to their romantic partner to re-establish their masculine status (Lamarche et al., 2021). Also, as with medical care, men less often seek psychological help than women (Möller-Leimkühler, 2002; Milner et al., 2020), and especially when they endorse traditional masculine ideals (Berger et al., 2005; Vogel et al., 2011; Yousaf et al., 2015b), adhere to masculine norms such as self-reliance and emotional control (Mahalik and Di Bianca, 2021), and self-stigmatize seeking help (e.g., feel seeking help threatens self-esteem; Vogel et al., 2011; Mahalik and Di Bianca, 2021). Such issues may also be of particular consequence for trans-individuals and those who consider themselves nonbinary: mental wellbeing is significantly more vulnerable in these individuals (Timmins et al., 2017; Newcomb et al., 2020; Puckett et al., 2020), and male roles and prescriptions to avoid seeking help may not aid in addressing any mental health issues.

Men who have attempted suicide described inhibitions against expressing negative emotions to others and not being quite able to identify or to put into words their feelings and emotional pain (Cleary, 2012). Such trouble identifying and describing own emotions - or *alexithymia* - is associated with depression (Li et al., 2015) and is more prevalent among men (Levant et al., 2009). Researchers have argued that as a result of gender socialization, some men show a mild form of alexithymia normative for the male gender role (i.e., normative male alexithymia; Levant et al., 2006). Importantly, this mild form is related to lower psychological wellbeing, reduced social relationship quality, and fear of relational intimacy (Karakis and Levant, 2012; Guvensel et al., 2018). Men may indeed fear expressing intimacy as research shows this can put them at risk for social rejection and negative evaluations, especially from other men (Gaia, 2013).

These severe consequences for men's physical and mental wellbeing tend to stay under the radar and are not sufficiently addressed in societal conversations and policy making. Better understanding and acknowledgment of these processes is crucial also to increase men's awareness about the personal benefits of gender equality and what is in fact at stake for them (Holter, 2014), and likely will also motivate men more as allies in gender equality progress.

Pitfalls of masculinity contests in the workplace

Constraining masculinity norms are also at play at work, as shown by research on "masculinity contests" and "work devotion norms." Masculinity contests refer to organizational environments that require employees (men, women and other) to prove their adherence to masculine work ideals (Berdahl et al., 2018). These ideals require employees to avoid showing weakness and seeking support, and to instead display strength and endurance, prioritize work, evidencing a strongly competitive mindset (Glick et al., 2018). Such organizational environments cultivate work devotion norms encouraging employees to dedicate high time and effort to work, for example through overtime and pushing to meet deadlines (Williams, 2000; Blair-Loy, 2001). Working part-time is looked down upon, which can create obstacles for employees to engage in domestic work or childcare, and to achieve work-family balance. Masculinity contests are (perceived as) more prevalent in male-dominated organizations (Glick et al., 2018; Munsch et al., 2018). For example, in stereotypically masculine

fields such as academics and STEM (Cooper, 2000; Damaske et al., 2014) working overtime is often glorified, and seen as endurance and toughness (e.g., people showing off their exhaustion; Cooper, 2000) whereas seeking flexibility is stigmatized (Williams et al., 2013).

Such masculinity contest and work devotion norms may detrimentally affect employees' wellbeing. For example, masculinity contest at work are related to lower general (Glick et al., 2018) and psychological health (e.g., increased stress levels and burnout; Glick et al., 2018; Matos et al., 2018; Rawski and Workman-Stark, 2018; Workman-Stark, 2021). In addition, organizational cultures characterized by masculinity contests are related to increased imposter feelings and lower belonging (Vial et al., 2022), increased turnover intentions (Glick et al., 2018; Matos et al., 2018; Rawski and Workman-Stark, 2018; Workman-Stark, 2021), and poorer work-life balance (Glick et al., 2018; Matos et al., 2018). Such a restrictive and competitive work culture mirroring the masculine gender role is not only detrimental to members of groups that are typically excluded and discriminated by such a discourse (e.g., women and ethnic-, cultural-, or gender minority groups), but also for (heterosexual) men who are expected to fit well with and thrive under these norms. For instance, research has shown how hyper-masculine occupational stereotypes (e.g., in the military) may discourage not only women but also men who feel they do not fit this stereotypical 'macho' image (Peters et al., 2015). In addition, these contests may be particularly difficult for trans-individuals, those who identify as nonbinary, or who do not fit easily in the gender binary categorization (Köllen, 2016).

Besides these negative health and wellbeing consequences of masculinity contest and work devotion norms that affect everyone, there are also specific repercussions harming men. For example, research has shown that working men who adhere more (vs. less) to traditional masculinity norms rated their own overall wellbeing and the wellbeing of other traditional working men as lower (Kim et al., 2020). Moreover, men who fail to meet or actively resist masculine work standards not only violate work norms, but also gender norms - thereby risking backlash through social rejection and work-related sanctions (Burke and Black, 1997). For example, Moss-Racusin et al. (2010b) showed that men applicants for a manager position who defied gender norms by being modest were perceived as weaker and less agentic, and were less liked than modest woman applicants. Similarly, men who applied for an internal promotion and were described as advocates for their team (instead of for themselves) were estimated as less agentic and competent, and more recommended to be released from the company, compared to similar women (Bosak et al., 2018). Moreover, men leaders who sought more help (vs. less) were rated as less competent, while there was no such difference for women leaders (Rosette et al., 2015). These findings show how men may face significant dilemmas: possible harm to their health and wellbeing if they adhere to masculine work norms, but risking social and work-related backlash if they do not.

Restrictive masculinity norms in the workplace not only harm individuals' wellbeing but can also obstruct efforts to create a more diverse and inclusive workplace. For instance, in organizations where masculinity contest norms are more prevalent, employees report more sexism and sexual and ethnic harassment (Glick et al., 2018; Kuchynka et al., 2018). Furthermore, in such environments masculine status may be especially precarious and easily threatened (Berdahl et al., 2018). Importantly, as noted earlier, research shows that defensive reactions to threatened masculinity may increase men's prejudice towards women and minority groups (Glick et al., 2007; Weaver and Vescio, 2015; Alonso, 2018; Ching, 2021; Wellman et al., 2021) and decrease men's support for and participation in DEI (Kosakowska-Berezecka et al., 2016a). Yet again, this shows the importance of considering the restrictions posed by masculinity norms, for the sake of both men's wellbeing and gender equality at large.

Underrepresentation of men in domestic and HEED roles

A third domain in which men face gender role restrictions is in domestic engagement, and more generally, representation in HEED domains (Health care, Elementary Education and the Domestic sphere - Croft et al., 2015; Meeussen et al., 2020). While women have increasingly moved toward traditionally masculine domains (e.g., STEM fields, management positions) men are still underrepresented in traditionally feminine (HEED) domains. Across the world there are substantially fewer men in traditionally feminine occupations, for example with men being only 33% of the primary education teachers worldwide (World Bank, 2023) and 24% of the human health workers in the EU (European Institute for Gender Equality, 2023). Men also continue to engage less in housework and childcare than women (US Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2023). For instance, European men spent on average about 21 h a week on childcare (vs. 39 h by women -European Institute for Gender Equality, 2020). Such traditionally feminine roles typically build on a communal orientation, which refers to being warm, empathic and caring towards others (Bakan, 1966). Even though these roles are often still devalued relative to traditionally masculine roles (Block et al., 2018), adopting a communal orientation has been shown to be good for people's relationships and wellbeing (Carlson et al., 2016; Kosakowska-Berezecka et al., 2016b; Le et al., 2018; Petts and Knoester, 2020). For example, people with more communal values report higher life satisfaction and more positive emotions (Hofer et al., 2006; Sheldon and Cooper, 2008; Le et al., 2013), and US men (and women) expect higher wellbeing should paternity leave become paid (Moss-Racusin et al., 2021).

One reason for the persisting underrepresentation of men in HEED is that gender associations linking men to agency and women to communion are generally internalized (see Croft et al., 2015). According to gender norms it is both typical and desirable for men to be agentic and for women to be communal (Heilman, 2001; Prentice and Carranza, 2002; Bosson et al., 2022). Recent research shows that especially this association between women and communion has increased over the years, and that it is stronger than the association between men and agency (Eagly et al., 2020). These gender norms become part of people's self-concept early in life, e.g., through parents' and others' socializing behavior (Edwards et al., 2003; Martin and Ruble, 2010) and may steer boys' and men's interests away from HEED (Chaffee and Plante, 2022).

Secondly, men's communal engagement may be hindered by external barriers (see Croft et al., 2015 and Meeussen et al., 2020 for reviews). Men who do have a traditionally feminine occupation may experience a conflict between their work identity (requiring communality) and their identity as a man (requiring agency; Cross and Bagilhole, 2002; Simpson, 2005), which could reduce their wellbeing (Wolfram et al., 2009). In order to protect their masculine identity against threats, men may indeed turn away from HEED roles (Chaffee et al., 2020; Kaplan and Offer, 2022). Not only may men themselves choose HEED roles less in order to avoid gender role

conflict and masculinity threat, but men are also sometimes directly discouraged from making such choices. For example, mothers may discourage fathers from getting more involved in childcare and housework, as they believe that men are less skilled in that regard, and as they seek to affirm their own identity as a mother (i.e., maternal gatekeeping; Allen and Hawkins, 1999; McBride et al., 2005; Gaunt, 2008; Gaunt and Pinho, 2018; Meeussen and Van Laar, 2018; Bareket et al., 2020). In addition, men who do show communal involvement may receive backlash from others. For instance – and as noted earlier - men who seek flexibility arrangements at work have been found to be evaluated more negatively (Vandello et al., 2013), and at risk for work-related sanctions (Rudman and Mescher, 2013). Similarly, negative evaluations may occur for men in stereotypically feminine professions such as early education, or positions aimed at fostering interpersonal relationships at work (Heilman and Wallen, 2010; Moss-Racusin and Johnson, 2016; Halper et al., 2019).

Importantly, besides benefits for their own personal wellbeing, men taking up more communal roles would also promote more gender equality at work (Croft et al., 2015; Meeussen et al., 2020; Reverberi et al., 2021). Since women still take up most of the housework and childcare (e.g., the percentage of stay-at-home mothers in the US was almost four times that of stay-at-home dads, Livingston, 2018; and in parts of Europe 70% of women work part-time, compared to only 28% of men, CBS, 2022) there would be more opportunities for women in heterosexual couples to pursue a work career if men were to take up more housework and childcare (Meeussen et al., 2019; Moss-Racusin et al., 2021). Importantly, research suggests there is pluralistic ignorance among men about having communal values, with men overestimating how much their peers endorse a traditional view of men as agentic rather than communal – which in turn has negative consequences for their own involvement (Van Grootel et al., 2018). It is therefore of great importance to break this misconception and to bring people's attention - and especially men's attention- to the value of cultivating a stronger sense of communality. Indeed, there are signs that men may be moving in this direction, as for example a majority of interviewed men in academia expressed wanting to be more involved at home and reported making efforts to do so (Damaske et al., 2014). Research has moreover shown that highly educated and career-driven women find communally oriented men more attractive than men who are not (Meeussen et al., 2019), suggesting norms may indeed be changing at least in some (often leading) subsections of society.

In conclusion, men's contributions to gender equality can then also be increased through involvement in domestic and more general HEED domains. Paired with attention to other ways in which men are negatively restricted through gender roles (e.g., in their health and wellbeing, in their strong devotion to unhealthy work environments) such a focus on gender restrictions for men, and their effects on men, women, other gender groups, and their children can help pave the way for men's involvement in gender equality. Indeed in the next section we consider men's role as allies in gender equality progress.

Men as allies in gender equality progress

The importance of mobilizing men to advance gender equality has become a topic of increasing focus (Kimmel et al., 2004; Flood, 2011). As highlighted in earlier sections of this paper, women - the disadvantaged/low power group with the most to gain from challenging gender inequality - have historically been at the center of gender movement theorizing and research (see Maddison and Sawer, 2013; Radke et al., 2016). Yet there is increasing recognition that achieving positive and sustainable change requires a change to men's attitudes and behavior at the interpersonal and intergroup level (Mahalik et al., 2003; Locke and Mahalik, 2005; Parrott, 2009; Fox and Tang, 2014; Croft et al., 2015; Meeussen et al., 2020); along with changes to the broader systems and processes over which men still preside that maintain their power and privilege. First, we discuss men's orientation to gender equality and gender equality movements. Second and third, we discuss factors that aid and may interfere with men's advocacy for gender equality.

Changing men's attitudes towards gender equality and gender equality movements

The involvement of men as allies for gender equality is not new - there is a long history of men being willing to confront sexism. For example, in the early twentieth century, the US Men's League for Women's Suffrage provided critical support to the women's suffrage movement, including speeches, fundraising and lobbying government officials (Kroeger, 2017). During the second wave of feminism in the 1970s, anti-sexist men's groups - such as Men Against Patriarchy (MOP) - emerged in Australia to support the women's cause (Flood, 2014). Today through international organizations such as The White Ribbon Campaign, He For She (UN), and the MenEngage Alliance, a small but growing number of men around the world are becoming involved in gender equality activism, including the prevention of violence against women (Flood, 2014). Particularly active in gender change are trans-men and those who identify as non-binary, who themselves fight daily against restrictive gender norms.

Changes in men's attitudes over time have also been encouraged and inspired by worldwide feminist movements, and their accompanying changes in gender relations at home and work. Research shows that men's attitudes towards feminism and gender equality have become more progressive over time as the feminist movement has provided women greater rights and freedoms (Bolzendahl and Myers, 2004; Donnelly et al., 2016; Scarborough et al., 2019). Moreover, research has found men's exposure to feminism through awareness raising/education, and through feminist exemplars in their lives, an important determinant of men's feminist attitudes. For instance, using nationlly representative US data (1974–1998), Bolzendahl and Myers (2004) showed that having a female spouse in the labor force was the most important determinant of men's feminist attitudes in the four areas examined (abortion, pre-marital sex, gender-roles, and family responsibilities,). In addition, more highly educated men, and with more highly educated mothers, were also more likely to have feminist attitudes (also see Stoltenberg, 1990; Casey and Smith, 2010).

Yet, support for gender equality has not fully taken root among men. While surveys tend to show a steady increase in men's support (but see important nuances, e.g., Levtov et al., 2014; DIT, 2023), only a minority of men self-identify as feminist (Silver et al., 2019). This too is tied to social norms: men's feminist identification and activism is

influenced by norms surrounding men's participation (see Kutlaca et al., 2022) as well as by portrayals of feminist men. For instance, Wiley et al. (2013) found that men's feminist identification and willingness to engage in gender-related collective action was greatest when feminist men were portrayed positively, and when men's involvement was considered necessary for progress. This was in comparison to conditions where men's involvement was depicted as a barrier to progress, and to a neutral control condition where a history of feminism was described without mentioning men. Below we discuss the factors that may aid and that may prevent men from involvement in gender equality progress.

Factors that may aid men's involvement in gender equality progress

The above findings provide inroads to compel men's support for gender equality. We below discuss several leverages for change that can aid men's support: explicit encouragement of men's involvement; positive contact with feminists; raising awareness about the costs of masculinity for men; and more generally appealing to men's group-based and personal interests; encouraging empathy for women as targets of sexism and reducing empathy for men as perpetrators.

Encouragement of men's involvement

Explicit encouragement of men's involvement may be an important factor in engaging men in gender-related change. For example, Sherf et al. (2017) found that more explicit encouragement of men to partake in workplace gender-equality initiatives can have positive effects. This is because men's low involvement can be due to a perceived lack of psychological standing, or perceived low legitimacy to act on behalf of this cause. In this research, participants were asked to volunteer to be part of a companywide taskforce on gender parity (the control condition) and some participants also received information that the CEO had made a request for both men and women volunteers. As expected, this additional information provided a boost to men's volunteerism, increasing to 55% (vs. 33% in the control condition without a specific invitation for men's participation).

Positive contact with feminists

Inspired by intergroup contact theory (Allport, 1954; Pettigrew and Tropp, 2006; Wiley et al., 2021) showed that men's positive contact with feminists can also facilitate support. In two studies (one cross-sectional, one half longitudinal), straight men living in the US were asked to indicate the extent to which they had had positive contact with feminist women (interactions that made them feel "accepted," "supported" and "welcomed"). Participants were also asked to indicate how much solidarity they felt with the feminist cause, their public and domestic support for gender equality, and their awareness of gender privilege (i.e., that men are afforded greater opportunities because they are men). Across studies, those who reported more positive contact with feminists also reported more solidarity with feminists. Solidarity with feminists was in turn positively associated with greater awareness of gender privilege. However, only in the cross-sectional study was men's solidarity with feminism also positively associated with public and domestic support for gender equality. Nonetheless, the benefits of positive contact with feminist women to men's solidarity, and in turn their gender privilege awareness, points to a potential important avenue to aid men's involvement (for related findings, see Case et al., 2014; Vázquez et al., 2021; Wu et al., 2024).

Programs that raise awareness about the costs of masculinity for men

Programs promoting awareness about the costs of masculinity for men may also increase men's involvement, with as prime example programs on health and well-being. It is notable, for example, that none of the wellbeing programs targeting boys and young men reviewed in a recent meta-analysis by Gwyther et al. (2019) incorporated masculinity as a framework with which to understand and address mental-health issues. Men's adherence to (some) masculine norms can be damaging, not only to women and the gender-equality cause, but also to the physical and mental health of men. This was one important conclusion of Wong et al. (2017) meta-analysis on masculinity and mental-health outcomes incorporating 78 studies with almost 20,000 mostly White, heterosexual US men. In included studies, participants were asked about their conformity to up to eleven different masculine norms, along with assessment of positive mental health (e.g., life satisfaction) and negative mental health (e.g., depression). Men's adherence to three norms in particular: power over women (desire to dominate women); playboy (desiring multiple, non-committed sexual relationships); and self-reliance (unwillingness to seek help), the first two of which were strongly associated with sexism, and were significantly, robustly, and unfavorably associated with all mental-health outcomes. In part these factors may make it more difficult for men to have positive relationships with women, with this in turn leading to lower mental health (Wong et al., 2016). Educating men and boys on the benefits of rejecting unhealthy masculine norms may therefore be a promising avenue to boost men's support for gender equality (see, e.g., Case et al., 2014; Lux et al., 2024; Equimundo).[1]

Appealing to men's group-based interests

More generally, research has found men to be more likely to participate in gender equality initiatives when they are framed to appeal to men's group-based interests, such as greater access to paid parental leave or greater workplace flexibility for men. For instance, Farrell et al. (2021) examined support for gender equality initiatives amongst STEM faculty members. Initiatives framed as benefiting men and women, (vs. just women), received more support from men by reducing their program fairness concerns, and increasing their internal motivation to engage. There is also some evidence that leaders who frame gender equality as a common cause for men and women (vs. a women's issue) can facilitate men's engagement (Hardacre and Subašić, 2018; Subašić et al., 2018).

It follows that men would be motivated to support action framed as consistent with their group-based interests and/or of benefit to men and women. However, this focus may also be counter-productive to the extent that it normalizes men's engagement only in circumstances where men stand to visibly benefit. For many gender-inequality issues, men's engagement is needed, even and perhaps especially, when change requires removing their group-based privileges, and/or challenging problematic behaviors and systemic factors that help

1 www.equimundo.org

maintain men's privilege. For instance, in the case of challenging men's violence against women, change requires confronting victim-blaming narratives and organizational responses that protect men accused of wrongdoing from accountability (Bergman et al., 2002; McDonald, 2012).

Encouraging empathy for women as targets and reducing empathy for men as perpetrators

Increasing men's empathy for women as targets of sexism and gender-based violence may also be effective in increasing men's support for gender-related social change. This focus may make men more empathetic to women facing sexism and gender-based violence, but also to men and non-binary people as victims. As highlighted above, there are numerous examples of men supporting feminism and participating in gender equality initiatives out of a concern for justice for women (e.g., to prevent men's violence against women) rather than self-interest. Experiences that prompt men to feel empathy for women targets of sexism are likely to be important to this. For example, Becker and Swim (2011) conducted a diary study whereby men were asked to consider the frequency of sexist incidents experienced by women. Men in an "empathy inducement" condition were also asked to consider how the women targets of sexism felt. The empathy inducement was critical to producing a significant reduction in men's endorsement of sexist beliefs. Other research looking at sexual violence and rape myth acceptance (i.e., men's greater tendency to blame victims/survivors and downplay negative effects) has also found that empathy interventions with men that described men as the victim/survivors of sexual assault increased men's empathy for, and reduced rape myth acceptance, when it came to women victim/survivors (Foubert and Newberry, 2006; Stewart, 2014). Also, Mazzuca and colleagues showed that as men experienced more relative deprivation on behalf of women they were more motivated to engage in gender equality collective action at work, with this mediated by increased guilt about gender inequalities and decreased fear of backlash, plus the moral conviction of acting for gender equality (Mazzuca et al., 2022).

In addition to increasing men's empathy for women who suffer sexism, research by Bongiorno et al. (2020) has shown that reducing men's empathy for men accused of sexism may also be important. In this research, participants read about a young woman student sexually harassed by a man student. Men reported higher victim blaming than women (consistent with previous research), and men's greater empathy than women for the man accused fully explained this gender difference in victim blaming. Men's and women's empathy for the complainant was high overall and did not differ significantly. In a second study, Bongiorno et al. (2020) found that both men's greater empathy for the accused and victim blaming could be reduced by having men consider how the sexual harassment affected the complainant's (vs. the accused's) life. Moreover, both lesser empathy for the accused and greater empathy for the complainant were important in explaining lower victim-blaming in the complainant (vs. accused) -perspective-taking condition.

Bongiorno and colleagues' research indeed shows that men may be more prone to excusing men's wrongdoing than women because they are more likely to focus on the perspectives and feelings of men accused of sexism. Yet when prompted to consider the perspectives and feelings of the women men on average respond in more prosocial and less sexist ways. Other research has highlighted how men's involvement with gender-equality advocacy out of a concern for justice for women is linked to a focus on women's perspectives. For instance, Casey and Smith (2010) interviewed 27 men involved in programs to end men's domestic or sexual violence against women. Amongst the three factors critical to men's involvement was having "sensitizing" experiences, such as hearing first-hand accounts from women on the reality of violent victimization. More generally, experiences of feeling devalued may aid men in taking others' perspective with devalued identities (see Moss-Racusin et al., 2010a).

Factors that stand in the way of men's advocacy for gender related social change

The above research highlights key factors known to be related to men's positive engagement with the promotion of gender equality. Yet, it is important to acknowledge that there is still much in men's social environments that works against their positive engagement. This includes, for example, media focuses on men's perspectives, including the foregrounding of the plight of men accused of wrongdoing rather than those victimized by men (Meyers, 1996; Kahlor and Eastin, 2011); and gender-segregated networks that provide men more ready access to the perspectives of men accused of sexism (McDonald, 2012). We discuss these below. Also, we consider lip-service to gender-related change, and the benefits and downsides of including men as allies.

Biased media

Much of media that individuals, including men, consume (e.g., news, movies, TV shows, video games) is owned, produced, directed, and/or reported by men (or those who work for men; Women's Media Centre, 2021). This has led to narratives that create and help to reproduce gender inequality, as men's experiences and perspectives tend to be prioritized, often in ways that serve men's interests. For example, myths about rape are common in mainstream media reporting, including the myth that women are most likely to be raped by a man stranger in a dark alley (rather than by a man they know), or that women who are raped while under the influence of alcohol are partly responsible (see Tranchese, 2019). There are concerted efforts by feminists to tackle this media bias, including through social media (see Rentschler, 2014) and broader efforts to diversify media to better represent the perspectives, experiences and realities of women (e.g., see BBC's 50:50 equality project).[2] However, until this media landscape is changed, men's exposure to narratives that challenge dominant interpretations serving their interests will remain elusive. This may in turn prevent the widespread development of understandings that could build men's solidarity with the gender equality cause.

Gendered-segregated networks

Another factor that can stand in the way of men's understanding of and advocacy for gender equality is gender segregation as an ongoing feature of social life, including at work and in friendships (Mehta and Strough, 2009). Indeed, outside family relationships and heterosexual intimate partners (discussed above as an avenue for

2 seejane.org

men's positive gender equality engagement), much of social life is gender segregated, keeping men from developing friendships and comparisons with women that could promote a better understanding of women's perspectives and experiences (see also Major, 1994). Feminist theorists have argued that in patriarchal cultures, the domination of women by men is sanctioned and promoted through bonds between men (see Sedgwick, 1985). Flood's (2008) research highlights how such bonds can shape deeply problematic attitudes and behaviors towards women. Ultimately then, challenging the development and normalization of gender-segregated social networks is an integral part of the change to facilitate men's support for gender equality. Promising research by Hilliard and Liben (2010) has shown that de-emphasising gender in US preschools (e.g., avoiding gendered language to describe children) does lead to a reduction in children's gender stereotyped attitudes, and importantly, their preference to only play with same-gender classmates.

Lip service to gender-related change

In addition, men's advocacy for gender equality, when it does happen, is not always based on good intentions or the right approach. Men's advocacy may be motivated by a desire to boost personal reputation, public or company profile, rather than out of a genuine commitment for change. Referred to as "performative allyship" this is where easy and costless actions are taken by men that look good on the surface, and benefit reputation, but can cost the movement because an appearance of change replaces actual change (Kutlaca et al., 2022). There is also increasing evidence showing further negative consequences of such lip-service to gender-related change (Bromley and Powell, 2012; Bourke et al., 2017; Mor Barak et al., 2021; Baker et al., 2023).

Considering effects of the involvement of men in gender advocacy

In considering the engagement of men allies though, it is also important consider potential inadvertent effects. On the one hand men advocates for gender equality are likely to receive more recognition for their work and may have bigger, quicker wins by virtue of their greater access to power and influence (Connell, 2003). Men may be more effective gender advocates because they are perceived as more credible and considered less motivated by self-interest than women (Czopp and Monteith, 2003; Roden et al., 2021). Men's greater traction as advocates – especially men in significant positions of power and influence – underscores the importance of their engagement. On the other hand, gender inequality of influence within the movement is also an aspect of gender injustice that, if not challenged, can generate resentment from women that forms barriers to effective collaboration (Flood, 2011). Related to this, some men's engagement may also intentionally or unintentionally reproduce gendered dominance/subordinate relationships (see also Good et al., 2018; Estevan-Reina et al., 2020 for examples when men confront sexism through a paternalistic duty to protect). For instance, Macomber's (2012) research on "engaging men" groups found that some men would dominate interactions and make claims to expert knowledge in areas they knew little about. Research by Piccigallo et al. (2012) examining men's participation in anti-rape groups on campus also found some men to be more focused on and affected by men's than women's evaluations. In related areas, Bridges (2010) presented a case study of men protesting violence against women through performances of drag at "Walk a Mile in Her Shoes" marches. They observed that because the use of drag by men was derisive, it was ultimately reinforcing, rather than challenging, of gender inequalities.

How men's participation in gender-equality efforts affects women and their engagement is also an important consideration. In Sherf et al. (2017) research, the impact of a CEO inviting men and women to partake in a taskforce on gender parity (vs. an invitation with no explicit mention of men or women) led to 10% fewer women volunteering. Iyer and Achia (2021) also found that a gender-equality organization described as having a leadership team with a majority (vs. minority) of men reduced women's collective action intentions via reduced hope and reduced perceptions that the leaders had sufficient awareness of gender inequality. Research by Kutlaca et al. (2022) showed that men's equal participation with women in gender inequality protests– in comparison to women-only protests –increased women's identification with the movement only if men played a supportive (vs. leadership) role. Other research by Droogendyk et al. (2016) indeed highlighted that to be good allies, men must consider the challenges of their participation, including the harm if men's perspectives and feelings are privileged. It is important then in considering men's ally behavior to understand both the goals this allyship has, and the effects of men's allyship on other men, as well as on women and others.

Conclusion: men as agents for change

In the current paper we have provided an overview of why men are needed – and themselves need – gender-related change. While much gender-equality effort focuses on women, we argue that not only are men needed for gender-equality progress to be successful, but that gender restrictions also have significant underexamined effects on men. This new attention towards men will also increase the likelihood that gender-equality efforts will engage men, as it makes clearer what all have to gain. In such endeavors, it is important not to lose sight of the goal: to benefit all, not just those groups or individuals directly affected by specific measures.

We focused on men's role in gender equality progress in three key ways (see Table 1 for an overview): First, on men's privileged status as potentially threatened by gender equality progress: how women's gains may seem men's losses, how being privileged may lead one to be blind to the disadvantage of others, and how the precarious nature of male identity may make it entertaining gender-related change difficult for men. Second, we focused on men as themselves victims of restrictive roles, and the consequences for men's physical and mental health, for their engagement at work and at home, and in communal HEED domains in broader society. Third, we considered the men's role as allies: what is currently known about men's attitudes to and involvement in gender-related social change, about the factors that impede and may aid in increasing involvement, and about the benefits as well as potential drawbacks of how male engagement is secured.

The knowledge reviewed here identifies effective tools to leverage change for men's involvement, and in avoiding tools that may backfire or have negative side-effects. First, it is important that gender equality efforts are cognizant and communicate the fact that gender change is not only for women and gender-minority groups, but that gender stereotypes are a many-edged sword, negatively impacting women's, and others' well-being, including men and boys (Eagly et al., 2000; Croft et al., 2015; Meeussen et al., 2020; Morgenroth and Ryan, 2021). Communicating the benefits for all, and considering effects also

TABLE 1 Overview of the key factors playing a role in involving men in gender equality progress.

Men's privileged higher status as threatened by gender equality progress	Consequences for: • Cultural ideologies that justify and rationalize men's power over women. • Perception of women's gains as men's losses. • Blindness of the privileged. • Male identity and precarious manhood. • Restoration of status through withdrawal of support for gender equality.	Factors that may aid men's involvement in gender equality progress: • Socialization among men more free of gender-related expectations and restrictions. • Providing identity safe environments, alleviating precariousness of masculinity and concerns for masculine identity. • Raising awareness among men about negative consequences/restrictions of gender norms for men themselves. • Lowering pluralistic ignorance among men as to men's attitudes towards communal traits and roles. • Education to raise awareness and knowledge among men of gender-bias, the workings of gender bias and gender-related processes. • Promoting more gender diverse networks allowing men to come into direct contact with those who experience gender-related disadvantages and increase their perspective taking and empathy to victims of discrimination. • Encouragement of men's involvement in gender equality progress, also by showcasing male agents and champions support DEI initiatives. • Appealing to men's group-based interests in non-damaging ways (e.g., through appeals to shared common cause). • Moving media attention for the plight of men accused of gender-related wrongdoing onto those who have been victimized.
Men as themselves victims of restrictive gender roles	Consequences for: • Men's physical health and risk behavior. • Men's mental health and wellbeing. • Pitfalls of masculinity contest cultures in organizations and strong single-minded work devotion in men that harm health and well-being. • Underrepresentation of men in communal and HEED caring roles known to benefit self and others.	
Men as allies in gender equality progress	Considerations and consequences: • Men's attitudes towards gender equality and gender equality movements. • Role of social movements related to gender-equality. • Recognition of sexism.	Factors that may dampen effects of men's involvement in gender equality progress: • Presenting men as singular culprits of existing gender inequalities. • Lip service to gender-related change; wrong motivations for involvement in gender-related change. • Ineffective involvement of men in gender equality efforts (reproduction of paternalistic or status/dominance relations).

specifically in areas where men face significant impact (e.g., health, well-being, work organizations, access to children and care for others) is more likely to generate broader support, and to reduce effects of restrictive gender roles in key areas where men face consequences. Such efforts can involve attention to gender equality in parenting, schools, the workplace, and in the media and society at large (see Croft et al., 2015; Van Laar et al., 2019; Meeussen et al., 2020 for reviews and specific recommendations). More broadly, such efforts are also likely to reduce polarization and zero-sum conflicts at the base of many political battles in societies on gender, socioeconomic status and immigration - where privileged high-status groups may focus on their own victimhood (see also Norton and Sommers, 2011; Knowles et al., 2014; Esteve et al., 2016; West, 2016; Williams, 2017; Does et al., 2018; West et al., 2021). Working as researchers, educators and practitioners we should communicate the value of gender equality efforts for all – to increase empathy and prevent zero-sum perceptions. In doing so, it is important to avoid becoming gender or color-blind with all its known downsides (i.e., focused on minimizing or ignoring differences; Richeson and Nussbaum, 2004; Dovidio et al., 2017; Gündemir et al., 2019; Leslie et al., 2020). Indeed "All-Inclusive" efforts are most likely to be successful (Stevens et al., 2008; Shih et al., 2013; Hall et al., 2018; Subašić et al., 2018). Also, we need to make clear not only how processes of disadvantage work, but also processes related to privilege and (the threat of) loss of privilege – not to assert blame, but to make explicit what often remains hidden (Schmitt and Branscombe, 2002; Pratto and Stewart, 2012; Case et al., 2014; Knowles et al., 2014; Scheepers and Ellemers, 2018; Phillips and Lowery, 2020; Hodson et al., 2022; Mikołajczak and Becker, 2022).

Many of the insights discussed are relevant not only for gender equality progress but also for other group-based inequalities, such as those based on ethnicity, social class, physical ability or sexual orientation. Indeed, allyship with other movements for equality and inclusion (such as ethnicity, SES and LGBTQ+) is key to transform norms and cultural practices. For instance, zero-sum beliefs, perceived symbolic and realistic threat, and blindness of the privileged are mechanisms that apply more generally to social systems where the historically advantaged group does not recognize the bias and discrimination against disadvantaged groups, and feels threatened by actions made towards social change (Stephan and Stephan, 2000; DiAngelo, 2011; Norton and Sommers, 2011; Pratto and Stewart, 2012). Also, many of the factors that may obstruct or aid men's involvement in gender progress reviewed here can be applied to other social inequalities. For example, research has shown the effectiveness of empathy-inducing strategies to reduce ethnic bias (Finlay and Stephan, 2000). What does seem more specific to gender inequality is that the traditional gender framework not only disadvantages women and non-binary people, but also directly harms the wellbeing of men as the advantaged group. While lower social inequality benefits society in general and thus also the advantaged groups (Wilkinson and Pickett, 2009; Stiglitz, 2012; OECD, 2015), we have argued in this paper that men personally and directly have much to gain from gender equality.

The current paper discussed men largely as one group. In reality of course men have different ethnic, socioeconomic, religious and national identities, and different sexual and gender identities. These can affect the outlook, experiences and concerns men may have, and how the processes discussed affect them. Also, many men are not necessarily privileged themselves (e.g., in terms of ethnicity, social

class, physical ability or sexual orientation - see, e.g., Coston and Kimmel, 2012; Levant and Wong, 2013; Clements et al., 2022; Goodwill et al., 2022). Moreover, much of the research has been conducted on men from WEIRD countries (Western, Educated, Independent, Rich and Democratic, Henrich et al., 2010). Nevertheless there is movement here too, with two large scale cross-national studies on gender and men's roles with data from 62 and 49 countries, respectively, [Towards Gender Harmony project (TGH) and Understanding Communal Roles in Men project (UCOM), see Bosson et al., 2021, 2022; Kosakowska-Berezecka et al., 2022, 2024; Olsson et al., 2023; Saxler et al., 2024]. Efforts to address gender equality for men thus also need to examine the role of such differences in culture, ethnicity, religion, gender and sexual identities. Moreover, gender expectations affect men and boys at all ages – starting before birth and affecting individuals in different ways throughout their lifetimes. Taking a developmental perspective is thus also of importance (see Eckes and Trautner, 2000; Ryan and Branscombe, 2013; Way et al., 2014). Importantly, the goal of gender-related change is not to force individuals into specific nongendered roles, domains and qualities. Instead the goal is to broaden options so that choices are less driven by social constraints based on gender. Paradoxically then, in addressing DEI, we first need to focus on gender – and on men specifically – in order to in the end move away from this focus, and allow individuals to reach their potential free of gender-based restrictions. We hope that by outlining the key roles played by men in gender equality progress that we have provided some insights that aid in moving us towards this goal.

Author contributions

CL: Conceptualization, Funding acquisition, Writing – original draft, Writing – review & editing. AR: Funding acquisition, Writing – original draft, Writing – review & editing. NK-B: Funding acquisition, Writing – original draft, Writing – review & editing. RB: Funding acquisition, Writing – original draft. KB: Writing – review & editing.

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Conflict of interest

The authors declare that the research was conducted in the absence of any commercial or financial relationships that could be construed as a potential conflict of interest.

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Organizational and social justice paradoxes in EDI

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This perspective article positions social justice as an addition to the aims of organizational justice, and core to diversity, equality, and inclusion (DEI). It problematizes simplistic DEI rhetoric and positions paradoxes within DEI, as experienced by employers, based on an explanation of key justice concepts and the introduction of fairness, equality, desert, and need. The paper broadens perspective-taking beyond a sole focus on beneficiaries of DEI, towards tensions that employers experience in working towards the aims of workplace justice, including the embeddedness of social justice within both organizations and social systems. The paper concludes with avenues for future research and a call to carefully examine simplistic notions of organizational justice in effecting DEI, suggesting a paradoxical lens on embracing, rather than avoiding, multiple and often conflicting workplace justice imperatives.

KEYWORDS

social value, social justice, equality, need, deservingness, workplace justice, equality diversity and inclusion

1 Introduction

Justice in workplace decision making is the crafting of policies, including on the allocation of resources, to ensure fair decisions by organizational leaders (Virtanen and Elovainio, 2018: 306). Reasons for the need for justice at work, also referred to as 'organizational justice', revolve around employees' economic and social interests, with less attention paid to moral convictions (Cropanzano and Stein, 2009: 201). It is with the latter that social justice is concerned. Specifically, social justice is aimed at "a person or category of persons [who] enjoy fewer advantages than that person or group of persons ought to enjoy (or bears more of the burdens than they ought to bear), given how other members of the society in question are faring" (Miller, 1999: 15). Workplace justice is therefore concerned with employees' self-oriented interests around fairness, such as minimizing outcomes like unfavorable economic results, reduced status, and a lack of control (Cropanzano and Stein, 2009: 201), and with contributing towards the balancing or correcting of advantages and burdens that may accrue disproportionately to members or groups in a particular society, which is a moral imperative. As such, justice lies at the heart of workplace diversity, equality, and inclusion (DEI), as DEI is founded on the eradication of discrimination and the building of workplace social solidarity through fairness.

However, workplace DEI interventions often suffer from fashionable rhetoric (Oswick and Noon, 2014: 36), and stop short of equipping both leaders and followers with an understanding of the complex and conflicting nature of attaining justice at work. This oversight can be attributed to managers' linear and simplistic arguments that support rapid decision making and the avoidance of paradoxical ideas that are regarded as burdensome to unravel, or are rejected out of hand as counter to progress. Here, an example of fashionable DEI workplace rhetoric is an argument with which to increase political gains, with little consideration of feasibility (Miller, 1999: 11) and societal realities, such as simplistic notions of 'embracing

people that are different to you, else you are bigoted' without the necessary attention to clashing values, beliefs, and cultures, or that "removing power and privilege" is the primary aim of DEI (Kohl, 2022: 5). In a similar way, managers can also use fashionable rhetoric in arguments of purported unfeasibility, towards political gains, by maintaining the status quo. An example is leaders arguing that women should not enter male-dominated jobs because they simply do not belong there.

DEI in organizations is concerned with both fairness and morality. It is morally positioned on universal human rights, which, ironically, may provide a vehicle towards perceived righteousness through fashionable rhetoric — such as taking a stance that those who do not embrace all forms of diversity and equality are ignorant, "greedy and oppressive while proponents [of diversity and equality] are compassionate" (Guerrière, 2019: 26). In addition, Western workplace DEI assumptions may show less concern for the realities and readiness for change in local workplace settings, resulting in a fairness deficit.

I argue that elucidation of the inherent paradoxes within DEI as experienced by employers may result in less rhetoric and more thoughtful approaches towards attaining the ideals of workplace justice. Thus far, I have described the overlap between organizational justice, social justice, and DEI. In addition, the purpose of this paper is to present the mechanisms of social justice that are at the disposal of employers when making DEI decisions, and to present DEI paradoxes as these relate to justice at work. The paper concludes with avenues for future research.

2 Organizational and social justice

Justice is the creation and application of rules based on what is morally right (Furby, 1986: 188). It therefore stands to reason that the rules of justice may be fallacious if their moral underpinning is misguided or without substance. For instance, prior to democracy, South African laws mandated apartheid, a policy of exclusion based on race, which was immoral and, therefore, unjust. Workplace organizational justice is underpinned by three types of justice, namely *distributive justice* (the justice of the outcomes of distribution decisions), *procedural justice* (justice of the procedure of the formal allocation of resources), and *interactional justice* (the justice of interpersonal transactions between people and groups) (Cropanzano et al., 2007: 36). Viewing social justice as part of the ambit of organizational justice, I also include the balancing of the societal advantages and burdens attached to individuals and groups in workplace justice concerns. Whereas social justice may have previously been viewed as solely the responsibility of governments and welfare agencies commissioning measures such as education and poverty alleviation, paid work and employment are powerful means by which societal burdens attached to individuals and groups can be distributed differently. This, in addition to demands for fairness from employees, employers are also squarely tasked with the moral imperative of social justice since workplaces interface with receiving labour from disenfranchised groups and individuals. Workplaces, for instance, are not tasked with social justice as it relates to children directly — unless employers hire children or produce products aimed at children. However, for purposes of this paper, the interface between organizational and social justice relates to individuals and groups of working age who offer skills and labour towards the attainment of organizational outcomes.

3 Fairness and justice

In contrast to justice, fairness relates to "impartial treatment, without favoritism or discrimination" in "the absence of significant differences" between people or cases (Furby, 1986: 155; Kolosko, 2014). Workplace DEI invites difference, not only in group affiliation such as different genders, races, ethnic origin, and classes, but also in individual differences such as cognitive functioning, skill sets, and personality. It follows that there are differences between people at work in any organization, and more so in organizations that deliberately seek out difference. Impartial treatment, which would seemingly lead to fairness, may therefore become complicated for employers. For instance, employees use their levels of relative deprivation to determine the fairness of distributions they receive (Stouffer et al., 1949 in Virtanen and Elovainio, 2018: 306); they do not base their impressions of fairness on absolute levels, but rather on how they regard a comparison of their "rewards with those of others" (Virtanen and Elovainio, 2018: 306). If they feel deprived relative to what they perceive others have, they will consider the situation or outcome unfair. Judgements of fairness are therefore subjective, and fairness is not the same as justice (Goldman and Cropanzano, 2015: 317), as the latter relates to morally informed rules, irrespective of perceptions of fairness.

There are various avenues in understanding how employees judge the fairness of the actions of employers. For instance, in order to be considered fair, components of *procedural justice* relate to consistency in treatment, accuracy of information, representation of all, an absence of bias towards groups or individuals, and the ability to correct errors when discovered (Cropanzano et al., 2007: 36). *Interactional justice* is about preserving the relationship though "dignity, courtesy and respect" and sharing relevant information with employees (Cropanzano et al., 2007: 36). Both procedural and interactional justice hold important implications for leaders' justice decision making and the eventual perception thereof as being fair. It is, however, *distributive justice* that may aid leaders in taking complex decisions, especially as it relates to the social justice and DEI imperative, since social justice is concerned with the balancing (or distributing) of advantages and burdens disproportionately allotted to individuals and groups in society.

4 Principles of social justice at work

For employers, distributive justice relies on leaders creating and applying workplace rules and procedures that balance "claims and counter-claims … in a procedure designed to avoid destructive conflict" (Hampshire, 1989: 63). Distributive justice deals with justice decisions where "not all workers are treated alike" (Cropanzano et al., 2007: 38), and the aim is not necessarily to treat all workers in exactly the same manner. Miller (1999) suggests that there are three social justice principles at play when weighing distributive justice, namely desert (merit), equality, and need.

4.1 Desert

Desert or deservingness "is typically limited to situations involving merit" (Furby, 1986: 188), whereby employees receive rewards according to their contributions (Cropanzano et al., 2007: 36). From an organizational justice perspective, employers that apply criteria of merit reward individual excellence, which leads to perceptions of fairness.

However, merit is a concept in DEI that is fraught with contestation (Vijay and Nair, 2022: 315), mainly regarding the assumptions that underpin criteria to determine merit. Leaders may evaluate outcomes by applying historical criteria without examining structural historical — often invisible — inequalities inherent in workplaces. Such historical criteria develop over time based on assumptions about the capabilities of employees present in workplaces, without regard for differences in the life journeys and daily realities that have an impact on their capabilities. Individuals who wish to enter or have entered workplaces and have different lived experiences to those who were traditionally in those spaces may agitate for an adjustment of the criteria used to determine merit or desert, with the aim of establishing fairness. Merit then contains a social justice imperative. It is not only about a favored group or individuals who have enjoyed a specific life journey leading to outcomes in line with the benefits of that journey, but also about an acknowledgement and taking into account differences in life journeys, as these differences may lead to barriers to reaching outcomes that are, under existing criteria, regarded as meritorious. Social justice at work means that merit is no longer only about the contributions that a person makes according to pre-determined criteria and employers determining rewards at the end of a process or project. Merit, or deservingness, under social justice manifests when employees who, either individually or as part of a group, share disproportionately in societal burdens are selected for entry, for instance, to the organization's employ or participation in a work project. When considering social justice, merit thus involves the contributions that employees have the *potential* to make in future, even though they have not yet had the opportunity to showcase these.

4.2 Equality

Equality is a cornerstone concept of DEI and distributive justice. Buchanan and Mathieu (1986: 15) provide guidance in stating that "inequality of treatment is not in itself unjust; what is unjust is unequal treatment for irrelevant reasons." Paradoxically, equality is then not sameness or the exact same treatment for all. Egalitarian leaders may specifically focus on equality of outcome — the distribution of social and material goods towards equal results (Phillips, 2004: 1). Simply put, each person should end up with, roughly, the same as the rest. Equality of opportunity, on the other hand, focuses on every employee having an equal chance to succeed, which requires 'leveling the playing field' at the start of the game (Roemer and Trannoy, 2016: 1289). Simply put, everyone gets the same at the start, but may not end up having the same at the end. However, equality of opportunity should be tempered through the lens of *complex equality*, as "we need to situate [equality] in the context of concrete and historical relationships" (Walzer, 1983: 68) that flow from unequal social arrangements resulting in differential starting points and outcomes for individuals and groups. The concept of equity is often used to deal with matters of complex equality. Equity may be seen as based on merit "to each in accordance with their contributions" (Cropanzano et al., 2007: 37), or with an introduction of needs to address complex equality — to each in accordance with their needs.

4.3 Need

Employers are often perplexed about their responsibility for social justice based on needs. Needs are defined "by reference to a minimal standard of life" in a particular community (Miller, 1999: 225), and will differ between people and societies. Needs introduce differences between people based on aspects that are largely out of their control, such as illness or disability, but can also be related to group differences, such as women requiring lactation facilities at work. Depending on the resources in a society, the economic want of the poor may also be considered a need, and government intervention may therefore take the form of making the payment of a living wage mandatory (Stone and Kuperberg, 2008). In economically constrained societies, being poor is a widespread reality, dealt with through subsistence farming and other forms of survival activities, potentially making the payment of a living wage a desired future state but an inappropriate strategy for the realities of that specific society.

For purposes of employers, needs should be agreed on as a set of minimum standards that each employee can legitimately expect to have met and that an employer willingly contributes to, for instance, that all employees must have a computer and access to stable internet to enable them to perform their work, that the workplace will be safe and free of harassment, and so forth. Reflection on needs adds an important dimension to leaders' justice decisions, and also balances decisions about equality and desert by deliberately including those who are most at risk in workplace communities when considering workplace social justice.

5 Paradoxes underpinning social justice at work

The paradoxes discussed below are inherent in social justice and provide a lens of complexity which enriches employer DEI considerations. The interlinkages between employer and societal concerns are evident in each of the paradoxes, pointing towards the embeddedness of DEI, which is ordinarily viewed as within the purview of an organization, within society and its mechanisms that foster justice for all.

5.1 Paradox of needs

The paradox in the discussion of needs relates to leaders having to make decisions about the acknowledgement of *needs as justice*, i.e., the needs that employers are morally obligated to address, such as a blind employee requiring special computer software, even though it may be costly. In contrast, there is the fulfilment of needs through *generosity and humanity* on the part of the employer (Miller, 1999:89). The choice of generosity may differ according to societal needs. In instances where the organization has plenty, the demand for meeting *needs as justice* may be higher. Societies that struggle economically may thus rely on the fulfilment of their needs by benevolent employers.

5.2 Paradox of social value

Societal advantages and burdens are very broad concepts, more so with respect to the responsibility of employers towards balancing them. Therefore, per society, there should be "broad consensus about the social value of a range of goods, services, and opportunities" (Miller, 1999: 22), and the value assigned should be "independent of a particular person receiving them" (Miller, 1999: 23). Broad consensus on the social value (therefore, also the importance) of social justice, brings the responsibility for social justice closer to employers. Social value has to do with "the ultimate meaning of how we are to live" (McMurtry, 2009, cited in Baruchello and Johnstone, 2011) and with human survival that is founded on collaboration (Corning, 2003). Paradoxically, there is an assumption in the domain of workplace DEI that employers subscribe to the value that society — universally — attaches to the inclusion and equality of disenfranchised individuals and groups.

5.3 Paradox of the productive economy

The inclusion of marginalised groups into workplaces is based on assumptions that there are sufficient openings in the job market or that the number of productive jobs or business opportunities are on the increase, and that organizations are therefore able to accommodate new entrants. Sustainable job creation is dependent on a productive economy, including healthy legislative, political, labour, natural and market forces (Wulandari et al., 2017). For instance, due to an ageing population, Europe may welcome migrant workers from diverse cultures to fill multiple job openings (Peri, 2020). However, in South Africa, where there is a very high unemployment rate, high numbers of youth, and shrinking business base (StatsSA, 2024), employers may end up replacing existing incumbents with individuals from marginalised groups, especially where legislation directs who is to be appointed, paradoxically conflating economic scarcity with social justice. The DEI ideal of a broadening participation and inclusion for all is diminished. Even though there is strong recognition for the importance of social justice imperatives in South Africa, when replacement becomes a main feature of workplace DEI efforts under conditions of economic scarcity, a balance between morality and perceptions of fairness is placed under unwarranted pressure, which may amplify perceptions of exclusion.

5.4 Paradox of time

The time horizons attached to workplace justice and social justice are different. Workplace justice relates to self-oriented (Cropanzano and Stein, 2009: 206) employee concerns about justice in relation to a specific employer, which is short-term in nature. Social justice, which involves an employer attending to the distribution of societal advantages and burdens to address disproportional representation, exclusion, or discrimination, has a long-term horizon. Herein lies one of the greatest paradoxes for employers — organizational or workplace justice leads to improved business outcomes in the short term, with near-immediate economic benefit to the employer. Social justice requires employers to make long-term investments that indirectly benefit the employer through social cohesion, the reduction of poverty, and an increase in share of voice — but over the long term.

6 Closing

The debate about fairness and justice in DEI revolves around the shifting of societal beliefs regarding what constitutes legitimate expectations (Furby, 1986: 192) and who has the power and legitimacy to interpret unfairness. Contestations are ever-present, and will continue into perpetuity. Therefore, DEI can no longer rely on simplistic notions in matters of workplace justice in the hope of doing the right thing. It is time to actively introduce complexity into workplace justice decisions by highlighting, acknowledging, and discussing paradoxes and inconsistencies. Such complexities eliminate managers' propensity to over-simplify workplace decisions by likening equality with sameness of treatment and outcome. It also broadens perspective-taking beyond a sole focus on beneficiaries of workplace justice, towards tensions that employers experience in working towards the aims of DEI.

Acknowledging this complexity brings a fresh quest to DEI efforts — both leaders and followers have to be deliberately and thoroughly equipped to think through the various angles from which decisions can be viewed and outcomes shaped. Future research should expand on applications of equality, desert, and need within organizational DEI experiments involving distributive justice. The development of case examples could serve as useful material in developing paradoxical thinking in leaders. An exploration of approaches that achieve broad consensus about social value could add to our understanding of more closely binding employers to the responsibility for social justice. Studies involving multiple economic contexts and economic levers could be correlated with perceptions of fairness amongst employers, beneficiaries of social justice, and those whose disproportionate share in societal benefits are being reduced. Needs as justice should be distinguished from needs as benevolence, as viewed by employers, within specific economic contexts, towards clarification of the criteria that employers may use in making distinctions between needs. Furthermore, exploring theory from social justice disciplines such as philosophy and law may aid inter-disciplinary theory development and provide new insights towards improved DEI social justice outcomes. What is clear is that, in the absence of acknowledging paradoxes inherent in DEI, the runaway train of fashionable simplistic DEI rhetoric threatens to derail interventions towards just workplaces and robs us of our agency in crafting a future that we all regard as fair.

Data availability statement

The original contributions presented in the study are included in the article/supplementary material, further inquiries can be directed to the corresponding author.

Author contributions

AB: Conceptualization, Writing – original draft, Writing – review & editing.

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Walking the tight rope of DEI implementation: paradox mindset and emotional capabilities as preconditions for middle managers' success

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Introduction

In the competitive landscape of modern organizations, middle managers are inherently subjected to immense pressure. Changes in organizational goals and priorities not only threaten but also transform their roles and identities (Thomas and Linstead, 2002), imposing high emotional work demands during the implementation process (Clarke et al., 2007). Occupying a unique structural position, middle managers find themselves at the forefront of strategic change. They are both targets, as their "strategic importance in the social system" of the organization is altered (Van Doorn et al., 2023), and agents of change, tasked with implementing organizational strategy in day-to-day operations (Harding et al., 2014).

As organizations transition to new structures, processes, and technologies, middle managers are the recipients of top-down expectations to facilitate team adaptability and sense-making (Luscher and Lewis, 2008), and implement organizational strategy, while being expected to report on progress toward the expected goals, and champion potential alternatives (Floyd and Wooldridge, 1992; Mantere, 2008). Among all these challenges of being the "boots on the ground" of organizational change, one category of change implementation stands out: DEI strategy execution. The implementation of diversity, equity, and inclusion strategy is a particularly treacherous type of organizational change for middle managers, as it introduces two additional sources of resistance: identity-related intrapersonal and interpersonal tensions (Gorbatai et al., 2021), and paradoxes arising from balancing multiple metrics of organizational performance.

In this opinion paper, we draw on the Leading Diversity (LeaD) model (Homan et al., 2020) to highlight two leadership skills that middle managers, as a uniquely positioned type of leaders working with diversity, can employ when dealing with DEI-related change and its accompanying tensions. LeaD is a functional diversity leadership model that identifies the skills - such as cognitive understanding, social perceptiveness and behavioral flexibility (the latter being mediated by the former two) - needed for success in managing diversity-related work. In applying the leadership skills the model proposes to the middle management position, we discuss how both a cognitive understanding perspective based on a paradox mindset and a social perceptiveness approach rooted in interpersonal and intrapersonal emotional capabilities are important skills a middle-manager can draw upon for a smooth implementation of DEI strategy.

We leverage various academic sources to outline the challenges that middle managers encounter when putting DEI policies into action, and the core capabilities they need to succeed. On the one hand, drawing from organizational change studies, we pinpoint multiple balancing acts expected from middle managers during change implementation efforts. On the other hand, building on diversity and leadership research, we identify the context-specific capabilities crucial for effective diversity management. We further delve into these competencies, tailored to middle managers' unique hurdles: utilizing paradox theory to clarify the advantages of a paradoxical mindset and how to cultivate it, and referencing organizational emotions studies to refine the necessary emotional skills and their cultivation. By synthesizing insights across these fields and aligning them with middle managers' challenges, we provide evidence-based, targeted guidance on critical skills required to effectively navigate DEI initiatives and strategies for their development.

A paradox mindset

DEI-related paradoxes occur at three levels: personal (the ones managers themselves experience - like autonomy), group level, and organization-related (Luscher and Lewis, 2008). On a personal level, managing ongoing, team-level performance goals and objectives while monitoring and improving the team's implementation of DEI initiatives poses pressures and paradoxical challenges on middle management (Gorbatai et al., 2022). As part of DEI strategy implementation, certain processes might be automated, or at least standardized to remove managerial subjectivity and reduce the risk of bias. In this context, similar to other automation changes, managers can find their prior autonomy is restricted (Raisch and Krakowski, 2021), such that decisions like hiring or task allocation, where they could previously rely on their experience and knowledge of team-members are now removed from their purview, reducing their control and authority over their teams. In addition to the tension between autonomy and control, the automation or standardization of people-related tasks in the attempt to reduce the human decision-making variability and bias is bound to elicit more resistance compared to the automation of other tasks, such as financial reporting, due to middle managers' beliefs about their own people-related skills a team leaders, and to fears of peer's judgment if their decision-making and leadership is otherwise constrained (Nolan and Highhouse, 2014; Neumann et al., 2023).

At the team level, middle managers' cognitive understanding of diversity is important for knowing the "favorable and unfavorable processes that can be instigated by diversity" (Van Knippenberg et al., 2004). It is important to recognize that favorable (i.e., information elaboration) and unfavorable (i.e., intergroup bias) processes can unfold simultaneously: it is not always a clear-cut task to foster the cognitive elaboration processes and move away from the intergroup bias ones. Instead, in a team where paradoxes are managed, people can be simultaneously aware of the benefits and drawbacks of diversity; intergroup dynamics can simultaneously acknowledge the need to rebalance the inequities in a system and the sense of continued injustice from marginalized groups with the fear of loss of power and opportunities from those having privilege.

In line with research on most effective framings for DEI implementation success (Thomas and Ely, 1996), team leaders are essential for managing group-level paradoxes to enable a learning-and-effectiveness paradigm based on the integration of diverse members. Specifically, managers can lead change by openly addressing team members' fears and misconceptions as they relate to the DEI initiatives and thus allowing their team to safely learn and explore the avenues for change; while also decisively continuing to address systemic inequalities in the organization and, through their actions, effectively advancing the DEI strategy. This approach fosters a climate of cultural inclusion in the team (Chavez and Weisinger, 2008), such that fears, resistance, and doubts on all sides are actively managed as the team progresses on its diversity goals.

Lastly, on the organizational level, managers are subject to tensions between investment in actions connected to hard-to-achieve short-term financial results required for the organization to perform, as compared against its competitors, and investment in DEI-related behaviors expected to generate long-term benefits for the team and organization, such as spending additional time and resources recruiting a new team member from a minority background or taking into consideration all voices on their team prior to making a decision. Even when managers are aware of the importance of equity and inclusion for capitalizing on the unique perspectives of a diverse workforce (Chavez and Weisinger, 2008; Boroş and Gorbatai, 2023) and personally value such behaviors, managers experience a paradox in the attempt to balance the short-term, result-focused actions with long-term investment in a more diverse and inclusive team climate.

This is why middle managers working on DEI issues must embrace a paradox mindset, in order to successfully work through these tensions. A paradox mindset refers to "the extent to which one is accepting of and energized by tensions" (Miron-Spektor et al., 2018), such that instead of favoring one demand or process over the other, one views tensions as a chance for growth and learning. Embracing the paradox mindset means acknowledging and adapting to the ongoing tensions of conflicting demands, rather than trying to eliminate them. It's about shifting from having to pick one option over another to learning how to continuously manage their demands (Rubin et al., 2023). This mindset encourages people to switch between exploration and exploitation, which, in turn, motivates employees to engage in more innovative behaviors (Liu and Zhang, 2022). Miron-Spektor and collaborators offer three strategies to cultivate a paradox mindset: (1) reframe the question (i.e., from a choice to a "how could both options be pursued"); (2) accept the tension and develop comfort with the discomfort, and (3) distance yourself and search for new possibilities. We see then that a prerequisite of working with a paradox mindset is to have good emotion regulation skills. We will elaborate on this next dimension next.

Emotional capabilities

One visible side of emotional dynamics linked to DEI initiatives concerns the plethora of emotional dynamics that diversity brings along in groups and organizations. Such emotional dynamics can escalate into conflicts and prevent the richness of diversity from materializing. But "when leaders are able to make a correct prognosis regarding the diversity-related process that is most likely

to become dominant in a team they can anticipate which behavior is most likely to be effective in proactively shaping the diverse team's processes in a way that intergroup bias is avoided, or information elaboration is invited" (Homan et al., 2020, p. 1114). Leaders can better read these situations and act accordingly if they have well-developed emotional capabilities (Schlegel and Mortillaro, 2019; Homan et al., 2020) - i.e., emotional awareness (the ability to recognize and understand these emotions – Joseph and Newman, 2010) and regulation (the ability to "influence which emotions they have, when they have them, and how they experience and express these emotions" - Gross, 1998, p. 275).

The burden of emotion work does not need however to fall square on the leaders' shoulders alone. A different avenue to support smoother team dynamics is to build emotion work capacity in teams – i.e., develop collective emotional intelligence. A team's capacity to be aware of (Boroş and Vîrgă, 2020) and work with (Curşeu et al., 2012) emotions can prevent conflict escalation (Boroş, 2020), or can lead to better conflict management strategies (Boroş et al., 2017) when conflict erupts. In both cases, this capacity further impacts group effectiveness and creativity (Curşeu et al., 2015). Research shows that the simple practice of emotion awareness in teams (Boroş and Curşeu, 2013) and organizations (Brouwer and Boroş, 2010) appears to be as powerful an intervention as cultivating a mindset of openness to diversity. Working with the emotions that are right in front of us is step one toward building resilience and inclusion in diverse organizations.

How can managers influence the development of collective emotional intelligence? Research has long proven now how fostering certain group norms leads to developing teams' emotional capabilities (Druskat and Wolff, 2001). Examples of such norms are practicing perspective taking and reciprocal understanding – to develop emotional awareness capabilities, or, confronting norm breakers and showing caring for group members – to develop emotional regulation capabilities (Druskat and Wolff, 2001). Managers can actively and consistently make room to hear minority voices (awareness), and advance and reinforce (by calling out norm breakers and praising good practices) norms leading to inclusion of all members (regulation), and overall, by nurturing a climate of psychological safety (Edmondson and Lei, 2014) that support healthy task-related divergence of opinions and debates without allowing them to escalate to interpersonal conflicts.

While the Leading Diversity (LeaD) model emphasizes the emotional capabilities required for leading a team and managing interpersonal dynamics, middle managers also contend with the internal emotions stirred by the many paradoxes they manage and reconcile within their teams and organizations. Such emotions unfold on two dimensions: one related to the proactive stance of pushing for change (Homan et al., 2020), and the other, as a reactive response linked to the recognition and acceptance of their contribution to the faulty status-quo. From a proactive perspective, middle managers must grapple with complex emotions such as frustration, anxiety, and even anger arising from the tension between accomplishing short-term and long-term goals, balancing people-performance objectives and autonomy vs. control, and the dichotomy of engaging in tasks where one is an expert (i.e., the functional position of a middle manager) vs. grappling with projects where one is a novice (i.e., diversity initiatives).

From a reactive perspective, the other paradox inherent to the internal emotional dynamics of managers working on DEI is the desire to do good combined with the awareness of one's own privilege. Research shows that when individuals confront their own privilege and learn about inequalities, they often experience a range of emotions such as shame, guilt, and fear of losing power. If these emotions are suppressed instead of being recognized and confronted, resistance emerges as a coping mechanism (Thomas and Plaut, 2008). Actively inhibiting the observable expression of the emotional experience (Gross and Thompson, 2007) shields us from the short-term pain of confronting unpleasant realities. However, it can also isolate managers (Boroş et al., 2019), rendering them unable to form the connections needed (Boroş and Van Gorp, 2017) to support their teams in working through the emotional issues that diversity brings.

In the context of acknowledging one's privilege, emotional capabilities such as awareness (Joseph and Newman, 2010) and regulation (Gross, 1998, p. 275) allow for the possibility to choose more effective responses to deal with the complex emotional dynamics elicited by diversity. Specifically, one particular technique of emotional awareness has been shown to be effective in these situations: affirmative introspection, "the ability to take an honest look inward, with curiosity in a non-judgmental way. It involves the ability to gain insights into the multiple layers of your experiences and to accept what you see, both your strengths and your vulnerabilities" (Gardenswartz et al., 2010).

In summary, the emotion work that middle managers are invited to do in order to support the diversity-related processes in teams can be done by advancing norms that foster their own teams' collective emotional capabilities (i.e., awareness and regulation) and by relying on, and developing their own emotional capabilities.

Conclusions

This opinion paper proposes solutions to the unique challenges that middle managers face in implementing DEI strategies in organizations, including the pressure to balance multiple organizational goals, the need to facilitate team adaptability, and the responsibility to implement and report on strategic initiatives. This opinion paper emphasizes the importance of two key leadership skills for managing DEI-related change: a paradox mindset and emotional capabilities. A paradox mindset allows managers to reconcile the tensions and paradoxes inherent in DEI implementation, such as balancing short-term profit metrics with long-term DEI aspirations. Emotional capabilities, such as awareness and regulation, enable managers to effectively navigate the complex emotional dynamics elicited by diversity. These can be developed at both individual level (e.g., through affirmative introspection) or within the team (e.g., by fostering norms that develop collective emotional intelligence). This work applies two core skills of the LeaD diversity leadership model to the context of middle managers and expands on these skills with insights from related research. This is an important contribution to diversity-related change in organizations, as it focuses on how middle managers can best navigate their emotional and cognitive challenges of their organizational roles (Thomas and Linstead, 2002; Clarke et al., 2007), by working with a paradox mindset and

fostering change-related emotional capabilities within themselves and their teams. The insights offered in this paper provide valuable guidance for middle managers seeking to effectively implement DEI strategies in their organizations and for LD consultants who design DEI trainings targeted at middle managers.

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Too old to be included: age diversity statements foster diversity yet fall short on inclusion

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Older employees often face discrimination and exclusion from work teams. In two scenario studies, we tested the impact of age diversity statements on the representation and inclusion of older employees in teams. In Study 1 ($N = 304$), participants had to create a team and were either exposed to a diversity statement or not before selecting two teammates from a list of four differing in age and gender. Then, we measured participants' inclusive behavioral intentions towards a new, older member joining this team. Age diversity statements increased the representation but not the inclusion of older individuals in teams. In Study 2 ($N = 518$), we further manipulated the content of the statement (diversity or diversity and inclusion) and the organizational motive (reputation or change). We replicated the effects of diversity statements on representation. Moreover, statements also increased certain inclusive behaviors, but only when they targeted diversity and inclusion and reflected an organizational commitment to change. Taken together, these results suggest that age diversity statements foster diversity, yet fail to systematically increase inclusion.

KEYWORDS

diversity and inclusion, workplace diversity, work teams, diversity policies, diversity statements, age, age diversity, age discrimination

Introduction

Many countries currently face an increasing proportion of older people in their working population due to longer life expectancies and delayed retirements. In this context, establishing equal opportunities for younger and older employees is crucial. However, older employees often face age-based discrimination at work (e.g., for promotion and training opportunities, Gordon and Arvey, 2004; see also Bal et al., 2011) and experience exclusion from work groups and teams (Marchiondo, 2022). As a result, organizations use a variety of initiatives to foster greater age diversity and inclusion in organizational groups. One of the most frequently used initiatives consists in the implementation of diversity statements (Wang et al., 2023), reflecting the organization's commitment to age diversity and inclusion by promoting the fair treatment of mature workers. These statements aim to advocate the unbiased treatment of older workers by addressing the social identity processes that lead to negative stereotyping and exclusion (Shore et al., 2011; Parker and Andrei, 2020).

In this paper, we examine whether age diversity statements successfully increase the representation and inclusion of older employees. While some studies suggest that diversity statements could help organizations achieve more diversity and inclusion on various dimensions, others raise doubts about this possibility. Shedding light on the effects of diversity

statements is crucial because diversity statements play a key role in determining how diversity is regarded by internal stakeholders (employees) as well as external ones (investors, government, community). Organizations contribute to socially constructing diversity in terms of age, gender, and other attributes by positioning it either as a liability in need of protection or as a source of competitive advantage (Singh and Point, 2006). Understanding whether diversity statements help advance diversity and inclusion or trigger paradoxical and unwanted effects is therefore important both for theory and practice.

From a signaling perspective, organizations use age diversity statements to communicate their values and encourage pro-diversity behaviors among employees (Dover et al., 2020; De Saint Priest and Krings, 2024). By communicating their priorities, they signal what is valued and desired, or, in other words, their expectations regarding employee behavior aligned with organizational diversity goals (Ostroff and Bowen, 2000; Leslie, 2019). Indeed, age diversity statements often explicitly emphasize the value of working in age-diverse groups with a fair mix of older and younger employees while promoting the inclusion of mature workers in teams (Johnson et al., 2020). By doing so, they communicate the desired behavior (i.e., to represent and include older individuals in teams), counteracting processes that may lead to age bias and further exclusion of older employees (Pless and Maak, 2004; Avery et al., 2007; Dover et al., 2020; Parker and Andrei, 2020). Indeed, previous research has demonstrated the positive effects they have on promoting age diversity within teams, even in situations where the stakes are high (De Saint Priest and Krings, 2024). Studies on race and gender diversity statements demonstrate their effects on other dimensions such as organizational perceptions (e.g., attractiveness) and performance of minority individuals (Purdie-Vaughns et al., 2008; Avery et al., 2013; Jansen et al., 2015; Wilton et al., 2015; Apfelbaum et al., 2016; Windscheid et al., 2016).

However, people may also become skeptical about the effectiveness of diversity statements and look for proof of sincerity and progress (Windscheid et al., 2016; Wilton et al., 2020). They tend to evaluate diversity statements as truthful when there is evidence of diversity progress but perceive them as a form of "diversity washing" when diversity progress is lacking (Purdie-Vaughns et al., 2008). Consequences of such forms of counterfeit diversity (Kroeper et al., 2022) or diversity dishonesty (Wilton et al., 2020) include perceptions of the organization as hypocritical and less legitimate as well as decreased inclusion and commitment (De Cock et al., 2024). Diversity statements can also lead to identity threat that undermines performance-related outcomes of individuals belonging to both a racial and gender minority group when these statements are interpreted as institutional pressure to assimilate into the dominant group (Wilton et al., 2015).

Despite these controversial effects, age diversity statements may still be useful in promoting diversity and inclusion in teams for several reasons. First, diversity fatigue and diversity washing effects were mainly found for gender diversity and diversity in general, while the effects of age-specific diversity statements are less researched. Unlike measures targeting gender or race, all workers will eventually benefit from age diversity initiatives as they grow older. Second, research shows that people are sensitive to age diversity statements and act in accordance with its values, without these statements causing unintended side effects (De Saint Priest and Krings, 2024). Emphasizing age diversity may increase workers' perceived person-organization fit by promoting organization-based respect since workers anticipate benefiting from fair treatment inside the organization as they age (Ihme et al., 2016). Thus, we propose that age diversity statements promote behaviors that increase the representation and inclusion of older individuals. We therefore hypothesize that age diversity statements will increase the representation (Hypothesis 1) and inclusion (Hypothesis 2) of older individuals in teams so that teams become more age-diverse and inclusive. We tested these hypotheses in two scenario studies, where we evaluated the impact of age diversity statements on people's willingness to choose older teammates and further include another older person in their team.

Study 1

Method

Participants

We recruited 304 U.S and U.K residents using the Prolific platform. Participants were paid £1.50 for a study we expected to take 10 min, corresponding to an hourly wage of £9. After excluding respondents who failed the attention check ($n = 11$) and who did not indicate their gender ($n = 4$), the final sample consisted of 289 participants (mean age 40.16, $SD = 13.69$, 49.1% men). The majority were employed (53.3% full-time, 21.1% part-time), and the remaining 25.6% were unemployed.

Procedure

Participants were randomly allocated to one of two conditions (age diversity statement: yes or no). In both conditions, they read a business scenario in which they were solely responsible for a challenging project. Participants were informed that they had to create a project team of three persons to complete the project by selecting two teammates out of a list of four, who were all described as equally good and reliable. The four potential teammates varied with respect to age and gender and were described as follows: "The four collaborators currently available to work on your project are Robert, David, Rebecca, and Jennifer. You have met all four of them and got an idea of what they are like. This is what you know about their age: Robert is 60 years old, Rebecca is 62 years old, David is 27 years old, and Jennifer is 29 years old." These four names are among the most frequent in the U.S. (Social Security Administration, 2024).

Before selecting their teammates, participants in the age diversity statement condition were shown the age diversity statement. In line with previous research (De Saint Priest and Krings, 2024), the statement read: "The company you work for cherishes age diversity in teams. Given the current demographic aging, it is very important to encourage work with older employees. Thus, the company encourages you to work in teams where older employees are well represented." This statement appeared on a separate screen. Participants in the other condition were not shown an age diversity statement. After choosing their teammates, participants were informed that another colleague was joining their team (Ronnie, 63 years old). Participants then indicated how much they intended to engage in inclusive behaviors toward this new team member. At the end of the survey, they answered some questions about their demographic background.

Main variables

To measure the representation of older individuals in teams, we counted the number of older teammates chosen by the participant,

which could range from 0 to 2. To measure the inclusion of older individuals in teams, we assessed behavioral intentions towards the additional older team member, avoiding pure spillover effects towards the previously chosen older team members. We used adapted versions of four scales covering different aspects of team inclusion: group involvement (6 items; e.g., "I will make him/her feel part of informal discussions in the workgroup"), influence in decision making (4 items, e.g., "I will make sure that s/he will have a say in the way work is performed"), group belonging (3 items, e.g., "I will give him/her the feeling that s/he belongs") and authenticity (4 items, e.g., "I allow him/her to express him/herself the way s/he is"). Group involvement and influence in decision-making are subscales of the Inclusion–Exclusion scale (MBIE) by Mor-Barak and Cherin (1998), while group belonging and authenticity are subscales of the Perceived Group Inclusion scale (PGIS) by Jansen et al. (2014). Participants indicated how likely they were to engage in certain behaviors towards the older team member on a 6-point likelihood response scale for the MBIE subscales and a 5-point likelihood response scale for the PGIS subscales. Additionally, we measured inclusion through resource sharing by asking participants to distribute a €100 team bonus between their three teammates, including the new older teammate. The order of appearance of the different inclusion measures was randomized.

Control variables

We controlled for participants' gender (1 = *male*, 2 = *female*), age, ethnicity (0 = *non-White/Caucasian*, 1 = *White/Caucasian*), employment status (0 = *unemployed*, 1 = *employed*), and experience of work in age-diverse teams ("How much experience do you have working in teams that are mixed, in terms of age?"; 5-point scale, 0 = *none*, 4 = *a lot*).[1]

Results

Correlations, descriptive statistics, and reliabilities for the study variables are presented in Table 1. To test Hypothesis 1, we conducted an analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) with the number of selected older teammates as an outcome, age diversity statement condition as a predictor, and participants' age, gender, ethnicity, employment status, and experience of work in age-diverse teams as controls. Descriptive statistics per condition and results are displayed in Table 2 (upper half). As expected, participants were more likely to select an older individual for their team with an age diversity statement in place compared to when there was no age diversity statement.

To test Hypothesis 2, we conducted five ANCOVA (see above), each with one indicator of inclusion as the dependent variable. Results showed no significant differences between conditions for all five indicators (see Table 2, upper half). Thus, across all indicators, participants exposed to the age diversity statement did not report more frequent intentions to engage in inclusive behaviors toward the older teammate compared to participants who were not exposed to the statement.

1 Excluding the control variables from the analyses did not affect the pattern of results.

Discussion

The results of Study 1 show that the age diversity statement increases the representation of older employees, which is in line with previous research. However, age diversity statements did not increase inclusion. Participants choose more older individuals into their team after having been exposed to an age diversity statement, but they are not more inclusive towards older individuals on their team. This could be due to the content of the statement used in this study, which referred to "diversity" without explicitly mentioning "inclusion." We tested this possibility in Study 2 by explicitly manipulating the target of the statement (diversity vs. diversity and inclusion).

In addition, some unintended signals of diversity statements (Dover et al., 2020) could explain the absence of impact on inclusion, as reported in Study 1. Diversity statements help organizations promote diversity and inclusion (Jansen et al., 2021), but people become skeptical since they are often used as mere reputational instruments (Point and Singh, 2003; Wang et al., 2023). Thus, diversity statements do not always signal the organization's genuine commitment to diversity (Dover et al., 2020; Wilton et al., 2020) but may be used instead to boost organizational image and reputation (Toma et al., 2023). To assess this, we manipulated the underlying organizational motivation for diversity and inclusion in Study 2.

In this new study, we told participants that the organizational motivation for diversity and inclusion was either true change or a reputation boost. In the change condition, we hypothesized that age-diversity statements would lead participants to choose more age-diverse teams and show more inclusive behaviors (compared to the control condition). In the reputation condition, we hypothesized that age-diversity statements would lead participants to choose more age-diverse teams (compared to the control condition) but that they may not necessarily behave more inclusively.

Study 2

Method

Participants

We recruited 518 U.S. and U.K. residents through Prolific. Participants were paid £1.20 for a study we expected to take 8 min, corresponding to an hourly wage of £9. After excluding respondents who failed the attention check ($n = 31$) and who did not indicate their gender ($n = 9$), the final sample consisted of 478 participants (mean age 39.02, SD = 12.83, 49.4% men). The majority were employed (60.7% full-time, 19.0% part-time), and the remaining 20.3% were unemployed.

Procedure

The experiment had a 2 (age diversity statement: diversity or diversity and inclusion) x 2 (organizational motive: reputation or change) between-subjects design, with age diversity statement and organizational motive as between-subjects factors. Moreover, we added a control condition in which participants were not shown a diversity statement. As in Study 1, participants had to create a team of three persons to complete the project by selecting two teammates from a list of four potential teammates who varied in age and gender. Before choosing their teammates and indicating their inclusive behaviors towards an older teammate, participants saw a general age

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TABLE 1 Study 1: means, standard deviations, reliabilities and correlations between study variables.

		Mean (SD)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
1.	Div. statement	0.50 (0.50)	–										
2.	Nr older	1.03 (0.47)	0.12*	–									
3.	PGIS member	4.69 (0.50)	−0.01	0.12	(0.92)								
4.	PGIS authentic	4.63 (0.54)	−0.03	0.09	0.83**	(0.95)							
5.	MBIE involve	5.58 (0.54)	0.01	0.10	0.60**	0.53**	(0.91)						
6.	MBIE influence	5.18 (0.80)	0.02	0.08	0.39**	0.38**	0.69**	(0.89)					
7.	Share resource	30.55 (5.88)	0.10	−0.10	0.06	0.06	0.09	0.15*	–				
8.	Age	40.16 (13.69)	−0.02	0.14*	−0.06	−0.03	−0.00	−0.06	−0.04	–			
9.	Gender	1.51 (0.50)	0.09	0.11	0.08	0.07	0.09	0.11	0.06	0.04	–		
10.	Ethnicity	0.83 (0.38)	−0.01	0.02	0.17**	0.14*	0.08	0.02	−0.01	0.16**	−0.01	–	
11.	Employed	0.74 (0.44)	−0.02	−0.10	0.10	0.05	−0.03	0.04	−0.10	−0.20**	−0.09	−0.06	-
12.	Exper. teams	5.83 (1.50)	0.01	−0.02	0.21**	0.18**	0.17**	0.12*	−0.07	0.02	0.08	0.09	0.34**

Scale reliabilities are shown in parentheses along the diagonal. Div. statement = Age diversity statement (0 = no statement, 1 = statement). Nr older = Number of older individuals selected into the team. PGIS member = group membership. PGIS authentic = room for authenticity. MBIE involve = work group involvement. MBIE influence = influence in decision making. Share resource = share of 100 Euro team bonus allocated to older team member. Age = participant age (in years). Gender = participant gender (1 = male, 2 = female). Ethnicity = participant ethnicity (0 = Non-White/Caucasian, 1 = White/Caucasian). Employed = participant employment status (0 = currently not employed, 1 = currently employed). Exper. teams = participants' experience of work in age diverse teams. * $p < 0.05$. ** $p < 0.01$.

diversity statement (like in Study 1), followed by a specific one, which varied according to the condition. In the reputation condition, participants read, "The reason the company introduced this policy is to improve its reputation on age diversity." In the change condition, participants read: "The reason the company introduced this policy is to improve the representation of their older employees." The target of the age diversity statement was manipulated in the next phrase. In the condition targeting diversity, the phrase read "Thus, the company encourages you to work in teams in which older employees are well represented," while in the condition targeting diversity and inclusion, it read "Thus, the company encourages you to work in teams in which older employees are well represented and feel included".

As in Study 1, after choosing their teammates, participants were informed that another older colleague joined their team. Subsequently, they indicated how much they intended to engage in inclusive behaviors toward this new team member. At the end of the survey, participants answered demographic questions.

Measures

We used the same measures of representation and inclusion toward older teammates and the same control variables as in Study 1 (see text footnote 1).

Results

Correlations, descriptive statistics, and reliabilities of the main study variables are presented in Table 3. To examine the effects of the age diversity statement's target on team age diversity, we conducted an ANCOVA with the number of selected older teammates as an outcome, age diversity statement condition (diversity vs. diversity and inclusion vs. no statement) as a predictor, and participants' age, gender, ethnicity, employment status and experience of work in age-diverse teams as controls. Descriptive statistics per condition and results are displayed in Table 2 (lower half), showing the main effect of the age diversity statement. Follow-up pair-wise comparisons using Sidak adjustments reveal that both statements increased the number of selected older teammates such that participants were more likely to select an older individual into their team with an age diversity statement and an age diversity and inclusion statement in place, compared to when there was no age diversity statement. There were no differences between the two statements.

To examine the effects of the age diversity statement's target on age-inclusive behaviors, we conducted the same analyses as above, with the five inclusion indicators as dependent variables. The results of the five ANCOVAs reported no significant differences between conditions for all indicators except for resource sharing (see Table 2, lower half). Pairwise follow-up comparisons showed that in both statement conditions, participants allocated slightly more money and thus a more equal share of the bonus to the older teammate, compared to when there was no statement. Thus, both diversity statements increased age-inclusive behaviors when distributing financial resources but did not affect other inclusive behaviors.

To examine the moderating effect of the organizational motivation on selecting older teammates, separately for the diversity statement and the diversity and inclusion statement conditions, we conducted two ANCOVAs. Descriptive statistics per condition and results are displayed in Table 4. First, when looking at the diversity statement condition, results showed that selection rates differed between the three conditions (reputation vs. change vs. control) (see Table 4, upper half). Follow-up pairwise comparisons using Sidak adjustments indicated that compared to the control condition, both the reputation and the change motive increased the number of older individuals in teams. Furthermore, there were no differences between the two organizational motives, $p = 0.794$. Second, when looking at the diversity and inclusion statement condition, results showed that rates differed between the three conditions (see Table 4, lower half). Follow-up pairwise comparisons using Sidak adjustments reported that compared to the control condition, both using the reputation and

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TABLE 2 Overall effects of age diversity and age diversity and inclusion statements on selecting older individuals into teams (diversity) and inclusive behavior toward older teammates (inclusion).

	No statement		Diversity statement		Diversity & inclusion statement				
	M	SE	*M*	SE	*M*	SE	*F*	*p*	Partial η^2
Study 1									
Diversity									
Nr older teammates	0.98	0.04	1.09	0.04	–	–	3.770	0.053	0.013
Inclusion									
PGIS member	4.70	0.04	4.69	0.04	–	–	0.066	0.797	0.000
PGIS authentic	4.65	0.05	4.61	0.05	–	–	0.234	0.629	0.001
MBIE involve	5.58	0.05	5.58	0.05	–	–	0.002	0.963	0.000
MBIE influence	5.18	0.07	5.19	0.07	–	–	0.027	0.870	0.000
Resource share	30.03	0.49	31.09	0.50	–	–	2.308	0.130	0.008
Study 2									
Diversity									
Nr older teammates	0.85	0.05	1.09	0.03	1.05	0.03	9.941	0.001	0.041
Inclusion									
PGIS member	5.54	0.06	5.63	0.04	5.60	0.04	0.956	0.385	0.004
PGIS authentic	5.44	0.07	5.50	0.05	5.49	0.05	0.314	0.731	0.001
MBIE involve	5.37	0.07	5.49	0.05	5.47	0.05	1.397	0.248	0.006
MBIE influence	5.06	0.08	5.14	0.06	5.12	0.06	0.382	0.683	0.002
Resource share	29.16	0.59	31.04	0.40	30.94	0.40	3.929	0.020	0.017

Estimated marginal means are shown. Nr older = Number of older individuals selected into the team. PGIS member = group membership. PGIS authentic = room for authenticity. MBIE involve = work group involvement. MBIE influence = influence in decision making. Share resource = share of 100 Euro team bonus allocated to older team member.

the change motive increased the number of older individuals in teams. There were no differences between the two motivations. In sum, we found no evidence that organizational motives moderated the positive effects of statements targeting diversity and those targeting diversity and inclusion on the representation of older individuals in teams. Statements were equally effective, independently of the organizational motivation.

To examine the moderating effect of organizational motivation on age-inclusive behaviors, we conducted the same analyses as above, with the five inclusion indicators as outcome variables. First, when looking at the diversity statement condition (see Table 4, upper half), the results of the five ANCOVAs revealed that there were no differences between the three conditions (reputation vs. change vs. control) for the PGIS and MBIE indicators. The effect for resource sharing was significant and follow-up pairwise comparisons indicated that participants gave slightly more money to the older teammate in the diversity motivated by reputation condition. No other differences emerged.

Second, when looking at the diversity and inclusion statement condition (see Table 4, lower half), results of the five ANCOVAs showed a significant difference between conditions for treating the older individual as belonging to the group and letting the individual be authentic. Results of the follow-up pairwise comparisons revealed that participants were more likely to display these inclusive behaviors when the diversity and inclusion statement was motivated by change compared to reputation, while there was no difference between the reputation and control conditions. No other differences emerged.

Discussion

Replicating and extending Study 1, diversity statements, regardless of whether they target diversity or diversity and inclusion, and irrespective of the organizational motivation, lead participants to choose more older team members compared to the control condition.

The results were more nuanced and in line with our expectations on inclusive behaviors. Regarding the impact of diversity statements, we found similar results to those of Study 1. Diversity statements, regardless of whether they target diversity or diversity and inclusion, do not influence inclusive behaviors, except for the resource allocation measure. Unlike in Study 1, participants in Study 2 allocated more money to the new, older employee in the two diversity statement conditions compared with the control condition.

Notably, the effects on inclusion depend on organizational motivation, but only when the diversity statements target both diversity and inclusion. When the diversity statement targets diversity only, inclusive behavior is not influenced by organizational motivation and does not differ from the control condition. This replicates what we found in Study 1. The only exception regards the resource allocation measure, as participants allocate slightly more money to the older team member when the motivation is reputation, compared to the control condition; but not when the motivation is true change. While there was no effect on resource allocation in Study 1, indicating that this finding may be less robust, this pattern remains unexpected. It could potentially be explained by the fact that participants were driven to compensate older teammates in

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TABLE 3 Study 2: means, standard deviations, reliabilities and correlations between study variables.

		Mean (*SD*)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
1.	Div. statement	1.22 (0.74)	–											
2.	Org. motive	1.21 (0.74)	0.63**	–										
3.	Nr older	1.03 (0.45)	0.15*	0.14**	–									
4.	PGIS member	5.60 (0.51)	0.04	0.10*	0.16**	(0.90)								
5.	PGIS authentic	5.48 (0.61)	0.03	0.08	0.11*	0.74**	(0.94)							
6.	MBIE involve	5.46 (0.62)	0.05	0.10*	0.17**	0.73**	0.69**	(0.93)						
7.	MBIE influence	5.12 (0.75)	0.03	0.08	0.09	0.53**	0.60**	0.75**	(0.87)					
8.	Share resource	30.65 (5.55)	0.09*	0.07	−0.01	0.08	0.09*	0.19**	0.23**	–				
9.	Age	39.02 (12.83)	−0.06	−0.08	0.21**	0.13**	0.07	0.10*	−0.32	−0.05	–			
10.	Gender	1.51 (0.50)	−0.02	0.05	0.16**	0.08	0.09	15**	0.10*	−0.02	0.01	–		
11.	Ethnicity	0.85 (0.36)	−0.12**	−0.06	0.03	0.05	0.09*	0.10*	0.10*	−0.04	0.19*	0.05	–	
12.	Employed	0.80 (0.40)	−0.02	0.02	−0.10*	−0.08	0.00	−0.09	−0.02	0.03	−0.20**	0.00	−0.03	–
13.	Exper. teams	5.79 (1.49)	0.06	0.09	0.01	0.13**	0.20**	0.15**	0.15**	−0.01*	0.16**	−0.02	0.06	0.35**

Scale reliabilities are shown in parentheses along the diagonal. Div. statement = Age diversity statement (0 = no statement, 1 = diversity statement, 2 = diversity and inclusion statement). Org. motive for diversity (0 = no statement, 1 = reputation, 2 = change). Nr older = Number of older individuals selected into the team. PGIS member = group membership. PGIS authentic = room for authenticity. MBIE involve = work group involvement. MBIE influence = influence in decision making. Share resource = share of 100 Euro team bonus allocated to older team member. Age = participant age (in years). Gender = participant gender (1 = male, 2 = female). Ethnicity = participant ethnicity (0 = Non-White/Caucasian, 1 = White/Caucasian). Employed = participant employment status (0 = currently not employed, 1 = currently employed). Exper. teams = participants' experience of work in age diverse teams. * $p < 0.05$. ** $p < 0.01$.

TABLE 4 Study 2: effects of organizational motivation for age diversity (upper half) and age diversity and inclusion (lower half) on selecting older individuals into teams (diversity) and inclusive behavior toward older teammates (inclusion).

	Diversity: reputation		Diversity: change		No statement				
	M	SE	*M*	SE	M	SE	*F*	*p*	Partial η^2
Diversity									
Nr older teammates	1.12	0.05	1.06	0.05	0.86	0.05	8.960	0.001	0.061
Inclusion									
PGIS member	5.64	0.05	5.61	0.05	5.54	0.06	0.996	0.371	0.007
PGIS authentic	5.54	0.06	5.47	0.06	5.44	0.07	0.657	0.519	0.005
MBIE involve	5.51	0.06	5.49	0.06	5.37	0.07	1.153	0.219	0.011
MBIE influence	5.19	0.08	5.10	0.08	5.06	0.08	0.852	0.428	0.006
Resource share	31.30	0.57	30.71	0.59	29.26	0.61	3.132	0.045	0.022

	Div.& Incl.: reputation		Div. & Incl.: change		No statement				
Diversity									
Nr older teammates	1.02	0.05	1.08	0.05	0.85	0.05	6.453	0.002	0.045
Inclusion									
PGIS member	5.51	0.06	5.69	0.06	5.54	0.06	3.492	0.032	0.025
PGIS authentic	5.38	0.06	5.58	0.06	5.43	0.07	3.030	0.050	0.021
MBIE involve	5.39	0.06	5.53	0.06	5.36	0.07	2.014	0.135	0.014
MBIE influence	5.02	0.08	5.22	0.08	5.05	0.08	2.036	0.133	0.015
Resource share	31.25	0.62	30.65	0.62	29.18	0.65	2.750	0.066	0.020

Estimated marginal means are shown. Nr older = Number of older individuals selected into the team. PGIS member = group membership. PGIS authentic = room for authenticity. MBIE involve = work group involvement. MBIE influence = influence in decision making. Share resource = share of 100 Euro team bonus allocated to older team member.

financial terms when the organizational commitment to inclusion was perceived as superficial (i.e., when the diversity statement only targeted representation and when the organization's motive was reputation).

However, in line with our expectations, when the diversity statement targets both diversity and inclusion, we find that participants intend to be more inclusive if the motivation is true change compared to reputation. This effect is significant for providing belongingness and

leaving room for authenticity but not significant for group involvement and providing influence in decision-making. Thus, while diversity and inclusion statements that reflect organizational motivation for true change can foster inclusion, their effect may be limited to certain behaviors.

General discussion

In two studies, we found consistent evidence for the assumption that diversity statements increase the representation of older employees in teams, but that they do not trigger inclusive behaviors alone. These results have important theoretical and practical implications. At the theoretical level, we contribute to the debate about whether diversity statements are useful to create more diverse and inclusive teams. While organizations use diversity statements to publicly signal that they value diversity (Wang et al., 2023), employees may not behave as expected (Leslie, 2019; Dover et al., 2020). Some studies suggest that diversity statements that are not accompanied by evidence about the results (Wilton et al., 2020; De Cock et al., 2024) or about the organization's motivation (Cole et al., 2022) can lead to mixed or negative outcomes. We find that diversity statements can be nevertheless effective and lead to more age diversity also when the organization's motivation is unknown reproducing earlier findings from a context where team performance was real and financially incentivized (De Saint Priest and Krings, 2024), However, we find people are not more inclusive toward older team members. This paradoxical effect may be due to moral licensing (Effron and Conway, 2015), as people may perceive their choice for older team members as a moral behavior that 'liberates' them from inclusion towards the new member. Only when the statement stresses both diversity and inclusion and when the organization explicitly communicates its commitment to true change, we find positive effects for some inclusive behaviors (e.g., creating feelings of belongingness) but not for others (e.g., providing opportunities to influence decisions).

These findings also have important practical implications. It suggests that the diversity statement's content and the underlying organizational motivation matter for diversity and inclusion. Because organizations' goal is to create inclusive work climates, having broad diversity statements without explicit reference to inclusion may not be enough. In addition, it is key for organizations to clearly communicate their motivation to create change in the workforce. Without this information, employees may be skeptical and infer that organizations use diversity statements for reputational concerns. It is important to note that this effect might not be limited to age diversity. The present results might be relevant for other diversity dimensions, such as gender, race, sexual orientation, disability, etc., suggesting that the massive use of diversity statements may lead to paradoxical and unintended effects.

This research has some limitations that should be addressed in future studies. In addition to being based on hypothetical scenarios and using samples limited in size, another important limitation is that we did not directly examine the underlying mechanisms explaining the impact of diversity statements on diversity and inclusion. While previous research suggests that diversity statements may increase representation primarily because they clearly signal what is desirable in the organization (De Saint Priest and Krings, 2024), this process may further depend on the organization's motives. We argued that the organizational motivation for true change can be a powerful driver of employees' motivation for diversity and inclusion, which translates into concrete behaviors for diversity and inclusion. We also suspect that the motivation for reputation triggers compliance, perhaps coupled with a moral licensing effect. Future research is needed to test these mechanisms and further comprehend the complex interplay between diversity and inclusion.

In conclusion, age diversity statements increase the representation of older employees in teams but may not necessarily promote inclusion. Inclusive behaviors require the organization to be explicit about inclusion and its motivation to achieve change.

Data availability statement

The raw data supporting the conclusions of this article will be made available by the authors, without undue reservation.

Ethics statement

The studies involving humans were approved by Ethics Committee, LABEX, Faculty of Business and Economics (HEC), University of Lausanne. The studies were conducted in accordance with the local legislation and institutional requirements. The participants provided their written informed consent to participate in this study.

Author contributions

ODSP: Formal analysis, Methodology, Writing – original draft, Writing – review & editing. FK: Conceptualization, Formal analysis, Methodology, Writing - original draft, Writing – review & editing. CT: Conceptualization, Methodology, Writing – original draft, Writing – review & editing.

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Conflict of interest

The authors declare that the research was conducted in the absence of any commercial or financial relationships that could be construed as a potential conflict of interest.

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Social inclusion gone wrong: the divisive implementation of the Temporary Protection Directive in Ireland

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There were 96,338 Personal Public Service Numbers (PPSNs) given to people from Ukraine who arrived in Ireland under the Temporary Protection Directive (TPD) before October 2023. From the end of 2022 into 2023, there was also a rapid rise of far-right anti-refugee rhetoric in Ireland. We analysed how TPD policy, the Irish political discourse around it and its implementation through national institutions and local communities affected TPD beneficiaries and other groups in Ireland. This study used a combination of qualitative analysis of a governmental debate on the housing needs of TPD beneficiaries and ethnographic observations gathered while the authors worked to support the needs of TPD beneficiaries. We provide an explanation of how the TPD implementation in Ireland resulted in the social exclusion of its beneficiaries despite aiming for streamlined integration. In addition, the shortcomings in the TPD implementation had negative effects on different groups within Irish society. We use the 3N model—Narratives, Networks, and Needs to explain how the data and trends that we documented at different levels of analysis—national, intergroup and intragroup, and individual—were interconnected. This paper is focused on the first of the three studies in the ongoing research project and primarily addresses the *Narratives* (i.e., policy and its implementation, political discourse) while connecting them with some observed social inclusion/exclusion outcomes on the *Networks* and *Needs* dimensions. We explain how political *Narratives* influenced TPD implementation and the different actors involved in this process: public service providers, the general public, and TPD beneficiaries in Ireland. The uncoordinated implementation of accommodation provision led to serious disruptions of TPD beneficiaries' *Networks*. This hindered individuals' access to services which resulted in individual *Needs* remaining unmet. We also documented how racialised elements underlying the EU TPD contributed to exclusionary mechanisms within the TPD implementation in Ireland and how that created a double standard in service provision.

KEYWORDS

Ukraine, refugees, social exclusion, 3N model, Temporary Protection Directive, Direct Provision, diversity

1 Introduction

The European Union (EU) Temporary Protection Directive (TPD) was activated on the 4th of March 2022 to provide swift aid and temporary protection for individuals fleeing the Russian invasion of Ukraine (European Parliament and Council, 2022).

As of October 2023, there were 96,338 Personal Public Service Numbers (PPSNs) given to arrivals from Ukraine in Ireland (Central Statistics Office, 2023a,b). According to the European Council's data from May 2023, Ireland had the fifth-highest number of Ukrainian refugees as a proportion of the population in the EU. The Eurostat figures show Ukrainian refugees account for 1.5% of the population in Ireland (2023). Out of all arrivals from Ukraine, only 1.5% or 1,134 PPSNs were issued for non-Ukrainian nationals (Central Statistics Office, 2023a,b). Nevertheless, this is a significant number of third-country nationals who sought refuge in Ireland after escaping Russian aggression in Ukraine. According to The Irish Central Statistics Office, most of the people who arrived from Ukraine are based in the West of Ireland (Central Statistics Office, 2023a,b). Thus, taking into account that the authors are based in the midwest region of Ireland, this paper focuses specifically on the Munster region, which is divided into Clare, Cork, Kerry, Limerick, Tipperary, and Waterford counties. While this research mentions some recent developments around TPD provision in Ireland, we focused our attention on the detailed analysis of the 2022 events.

Most literature on the issue of the double standard in how racialised-white Ukrainians are received and treated in comparison to racialised-Black refugees from Ukraine or asylum seekers from non-European countries is editorial in nature or present policy analysis (Berg and Fiddian-Qasmiyeh, 2023; Jackson Sow, 2022; Stapleton and Dalton, 2024). The most recent publication touching upon the effect of the TPD on public service provision in Ireland presented a case for how the beneficiaries of international protection were antagonised and further marginalised by the double standard of the system (Daly and O'Riordan, 2023). That research focused on the perspective of beneficiaries of international protection and highlighted some of the challenges they faced as a result of failed policy implementation. Our research builds on the previous literature by proposing a comprehensive analysis of the implementation of TPD and its impact on refugees from Ukraine in Ireland, using data from a parliamentary debate, and ethnographic observations by the authors. We discuss mechanisms of social exclusion, showing how instead of successful integration the TPD resulted in societal disintegration and divisive effects (Quigley, 1979; Stapleton and Dalton, 2024).

We had two main research questions: (1) How was the TPD implemented in Ireland? (2) How did the TPD implementation affect the experience of refugees from Ukraine and other groups in Ireland? Specifically, we ask if the reception and treatment of racialised-white refugees from Ukraine differed from that of TPD beneficiaries of other ethnic backgrounds and nationalities, or from that of other refugees seeking international protection (IP) in Ireland. We were also interested in the impact of political narratives around the TPD on the Irish community, specifically: public service providers and members of the general public who actively supported refugees from Ukraine.

The 3N model (Narratives, Networks, Needs) provides a comprehensive framework to structure our findings on how TPD policy, the Irish political discourse around it and its implementation through national institutions and local communities affected TPD beneficiaries and other groups in Ireland. The 3N model highlights that narratives encompass the forces shaping individuals' beliefs and worldviews, including cultural, political, economic, and social narratives (Kruglanski et al., 2019; Bélanger et al., 2020). Narratives are associated with macro-level forces influencing interpersonal and intergroup dynamics. Networks capture different social networks: friends, family, community members, and online communities and social media groups, helping us understand interpersonal and intergroup dynamics. Needs encompass individual-level factors such as a sense of significance, belonging, and personal autonomy, extended to other individual- or group-level variables. The 3N model accounts for the dynamic interconnectedness of various factors explaining the complex ecology of social issues (Kruglanski et al., 2019). Hence, this model is useful to structure our findings on how TPD policy and the Irish political discourse around it (Narratives) impacted interpersonal, intra- and intergroup dynamics between different stakeholders (Networks) involved in TPD implementation in Ireland. We also examine how the trends across Narratives and Networks dimensions addressed the individual needs of various TPD stakeholders in the Irish context.

2 Theoretical framework and context

Refugees and asylum seekers often undergo social exclusion, systematically denied the same rights, opportunities, and resources available to other members of a country of refuge who do not hold asylum-seeker or refugee status (Bloemraad et al., 2023; Ekins, 2020). These essential rights and resources encompass housing, employment, healthcare, civic engagement, democratic participation, and fair legal proceedings.

The Temporary Protection Directive (TPD) provides temporary protection to those displaced by the Russian war in Ukraine, requiring member states to grant access to rights and services, facilitate family reunification, and offer reception facilities. TPD beneficiaries are not required to seek international protection (asylum) to receive support and protection from EU states, including Ireland. The EU temporary protection offers a quicker, more streamlined alternative to the typical asylum-seeking procedure. Hence, TPD beneficiaries do not hold refugee status but benefit from temporary protection. In this paper, we use the terms "beneficiaries of temporary protection" (BoTPs) and "refugees from Ukraine" interchangeably, given the sociological definition of a refugee as someone "fleeing generalised catastrophe," in this case, the Russian invasion and war (Owen, 2020).

Initially, the hospitality and solidarity shown towards refugees from Ukraine across European countries received widespread praise. However, academics and practitioners have strongly denounced the racist and orientalist double standards evident in responses to displacement from Ukraine (Bayoumi, 2022; Berg and Fiddian-Qasmiyeh, 2023; Jackson Sow, 2022). While Ukrainian refugees were welcomed with open borders across EU countries, racialised Black, Brown, and Roma individuals, along with third-country nationals, faced significant challenges crossing those same borders due to institutionalised discriminatory policies that perpetuate hostility and suspicion towards immigrants and refugees of African, Middle Eastern, and Roma descent (Banerjee, 2023).

The TPD is not the first time EU states have invoked measures of temporary protection. For example, European states introduced various schemes to admit displaced people temporarily after the

war broke out in Bosnia and Herzegovina in 1992 (Doeland and Skjelsbaek, 2018). That case also exemplified differential treatment of racialised-white and European refugees vs. non-European or racialised-Black, racialised-Brown, and Roma refugees. The paradox between policy intentions and their actual implementation is evident, with many romanticising the response to Bosnian migrants in the past (Gray and Franck, 2019). Baker (2017) previously showed how racism and cultural biases resulted in Bosnian Muslims being treated more favourably than refugees from Syria. Light-skinned Bosnians wearing Western clothes were not perceived as Muslim within the symbolic politics of Europe (Baker, 2017; Gray and Franck, 2019). Even before the arrival of visibly darker-skinned Muslim refugees from Syria, Europe treated Roma and ethnically ambiguous refugees from Kosovo with more xenophobia and racism than Bosniaks. While religiously diverse, many individuals fleeing Kosovo were of Roma or Albanian descent, racialised as "people of colour." In Britain, these refugees were met with prejudice and anti-Roma attitudes (Baker, 2017). Previous policy analyses on why the TPD was not activated during the influx of refugees from Syria also cited underlying racialised, anti-African, and anti-Middle Eastern elements (Genç and Sirin Öner, 2019; Ineli Ciger, 2022).

Various psychological theories explain social exclusion and intergroup conflict, often focusing on threat and competition. If an outgroup is seen as a threat to ingroup resources, this often leads to discrimination, prejudice, and dynamics of social exclusion to protect the ingroup's position. The perception of finite resources distributed in a "zero-sum" calculation leads to intergroup conflict (Group Position Model and Realistic Group Conflict, Bobo and Tuan, 2006; LeVine and Campbell, 1972). Refugees and asylum seekers often become targets of prejudice and discrimination due to perceived realistic (economic consequences, public safety threat) or symbolic threats (cultural values) that nationals of the country of refuge associate with them, particularly through political and public discourse narratives (Integrated Threat Theory, Badea et al., 2017; Stephan and Stephan, 2000).

Policy and political discourse are crucial for answering our research questions and understanding the TPD's impact on multiple actors and stakeholders involved in its implementation in Ireland. To systematise our findings and show how different levels of our data interact, we used the 3N model and its key factors: narratives, networks, and needs (Kruglanski et al., 2019). Our study shows how Irish political narratives impacted the networks of service providers and the general public involved in helping refugees from Ukraine, as well as BoTPs' networks dependent on the different types of accommodations they were staying in. We also show how these intra- and intergroup dynamics helped address the needs or resulted in unfulfilled needs of all the actors involved in TPD implementation in Ireland.

We propose that the three components of the 3N model can be mapped onto ecological models or levels of analysis frameworks (e.g., Bronfenbrenner, 1981; Doise and Valentim, 2015) to analyse other social phenomena, involving people as actors in wider and interacting ecosystems. The 3N framework has been adopted and used by researchers within the field of social sciences beyond psychology when examining social behaviour or complex social phenomena (Kossowska et al., 2023; Szumowska et al., 2020; Zubareva and Minescu, 2023). By bridging theoretical perspectives, we can better describe and analyse pressing social challenges, such as the inclusion of refugees (Pedersen, 2016; Dalton et al., 2022).

Narratives play an important role in the structural-psychological approach, centering the context of societal power while maintaining a focus on the individual level and conceptualising structures and individuals as inseparable (Eekhof et al., 2022; Willems et al., 2020). The Narratives dimension allows for the dual investigation of external information sources, discourse, and structural characteristics of social systems, and their relationship with and impact on an individual's beliefs, attitudes, and cognition (Eekhof et al., 2021; McLean et al., 2023; Rubin and Greenberg, 2003; Willems et al., 2020). This paper, however, focuses on the first of a series of studies in the ongoing research project, and hence, we only examine the systemic or macro-level narratives and not the individual ones.

This study reveals how within a specific parliamentary debate, Irish politicians navigate policies and discourse and contribute to the socio-political discourse on refugee inclusion/exclusion. Policies are treated as narratives because they are shaped by policy decisions, implementation, and outcomes (Atkinson, 2019). Atkinson (2019) acknowledges the subjective and socially constructed nature of policy, highlighting the significance of narrative analysis in comprehending policy phenomena and their impact on policy discourse, public opinion, and problem-solving framing. It is also important to account for societal narratives in the form of historic processes, laws and policies, and public discourse, to understand how people end up on the vulnerability continuum of social inequalities (Adam and Potvin, 2017; Bobo and Tuan, 2006; Campbell, 1965; Jackson, 1993; Weber, 1978) and how economic, political, social, and cultural exclusionary mechanisms unfold dynamically across different levels of analysis and social structure (SEKN, Popay et al., 2008; Bloemraad et al., 2023; Penninx and Garcés-Mascareñas, 2016). Some trends discussed across the 3N dimensions in our study also align with the three policy gaps identified by Czaika and De Haas (2013) in their analysis of immigration policies: narratives dimension addresses the shortfalls of the TPD implementation vs. the written policies (i.e., implementation gap), networks cover the elements of discrepancy between public discourses and policies on paper (i.e., discursive gap), and needs cover the impact TPD in the Irish context had on its beneficiaries and migration (i.e., efficacy gap).

Our 3N model approach, combined with qualitative analysis and ethnographic observations, shifts the focus from government to governance to examine not only how policies are organised but also how they are implemented (Penninx and Garcés-Mascareñas, 2016). In this study, Narratives account for the Irish political discourse and the actual policies on paper concerning TPD beneficiaries in Ireland. Networks and Needs address policy implementation and its impact on various groups and individuals within Irish society. Networks explore: (1) how different service providers and general public volunteers overcame systemic challenges of policy incoherence and how their actions were informed by the political narratives people's social networks, (2) how BoTPs' social networks and interpersonal, intra- and intergroup relationships varied depending on the different types of accommodation they were placed in and how this affected their

access to services. Needs refer to how well the TPD implementation in the Irish mid-west region addressed and fulfilled the needs of the different actors across the society involved in and with this process.

3 Method

3.1 Qualitative analysis of the Dáil Éireann (from Irish: assembly of Ireland) debate

To assess the political narratives around the TPD, we employed thematic coding as a methodological approach to analyse the statements from the transcript of a Dáil Éireann debate on the topic of "Accommodation Needs of Those Fleeing Ukraine" that took place on the fifth of May 2022 (could be accessed through the House of Oireachtas online archive: Vol. 1021 No. 5). Dáil Éireann is the lower house and principal chamber of the Oireachtas, the Irish Parliament. It is the main forum for parliamentary debates, legislative decision-making, and representation of the people in Ireland. It consists of 160 members, also known as Teachtaí Dála (TDs). The authors treated TDs statements as the primary data for analysis.

When it comes to refugee inclusion, policies, discourse, and public attitudes are always changing. However, this particular debate was held at the crucial time when Ireland was dealing with drastic demographic changes following the peak of arrival of TPD beneficiaries. Moreover, the topic of the debate related directly to the most pressing issue in Ireland—the housing crisis (Kitchin et al., 2015; Hearne, 2022; Lima, 2023). Most of the statements during the debate were directly related to the topics of the needs of those fleeing Ukraine, the shortcomings of the TPD provision, and how political decisions and legislation shaped the general public's willingness to help refugees from Ukraine. Also, by May 2022 the TPD implementation challenges were well-documented by public sector organisations and presented to different governmental offices. So, the political narratives shared during this debate and the Irish government's decision not to take any measures to address the presented challenges until later in autumn 2022 were very consequential.

3.2 Ethnographic observations

For 6 months the first author worked full-time as a Migrant Service Assistant with the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) UN Migration Agency in Ireland (March to August 2022). During this period, the first author worked directly with people who fled the Russian war in Ukraine and was responsible for managing over 300 cases involving family units. The primary focus of their work was on a project initiated by the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration, and Youth (DCEDIY) in Ireland: relocation of refugees from Ukraine from temporary accommodation (such as hotels, former religious buildings, sports halls, youth hostels, student accommodation, other repurposed properties, and previously closed DP centres) to medium-term privately pledged accommodation. Irish Red Cross was another organisation involved in this project implementation. There were two types of pledged accommodation available to the TPD beneficiaries at the time when the first author worked with IOM Ireland: (1) vacant properties including apartments, houses, and granny flats; (2) shared accommodation where Irish residents pledged spare bedrooms in their apartments/houses. The first author worked in the Munster region, namely in counties Limerick, Cork, Kerry, and Clare. In addition to facilitating the housing transition, the first author also played a role in introducing beneficiaries to other available services and providing psycho-social support aligned with trauma-informed care principles. This employment experience provided the first author a deep and comprehensive understanding of the challenges different stakeholders encountered as the result of the TPD implementation in Ireland.

The second author was also engaged in supporting refugees from Ukraine in psycho-social support programs run together with a local community development organisation in the midwest of Ireland. The two investigators discussed their experiences, comparing journal notes and documenting their observations in meetings and conversations within the research team. The authors' observations are complementary to the analysis of the parliamentary debates and allow for the understanding of the group and individual level dynamics: the networks and needs of service providers, general public volunteers, and TPD beneficiaries. These experiences of working with the frontline service providers and refugees from Ukraine allowed the authors to identify the practical and logistical shortcomings of the TPD policy implementation processes.

The ethnographic observations documented within this study did not contain any individual data and are secondary in nature, indirect, generalised, and completely anonymous (no individuals were interviewed as part of this research; even though the first author conducted interview-based vulnerability screenings with TPD beneficiaries as part of their work duties). Despite their secondary nature, the authors attribute immense value to these observations at the frontline of refugee inclusion. They transcend mere trends highlighted in media discourse as both authors personally encountered and navigated the challenges and deficiencies inherent in the implementation of the TPD within distinct settings.

4 Analyses and findings

Overall, we use the data from the Dáil Éireann debate to identify the main narratives around TPD implementation and political discourse about TPD beneficiaries. We use the ethnographic observations to explain how the narratives impacted service provision, the general public's response, and TPD beneficiaries' experience of social inclusion/exclusion in Ireland. Irish political economy constraints and political narratives resulted in multiple challenges to public service providers, the general public volunteering to help refugees from Ukraine, and to refugees' abilities to access certain services and resources as well as their hindered ability to maintain existing social networks or form new ones. These network level challenges resulted in unmet needs of the Irish community members supporting TPD beneficiaries and unfulfilled needs of refugees from Ukraine leading to their economic, social, and cultural exclusion. Lastly, both the thematic

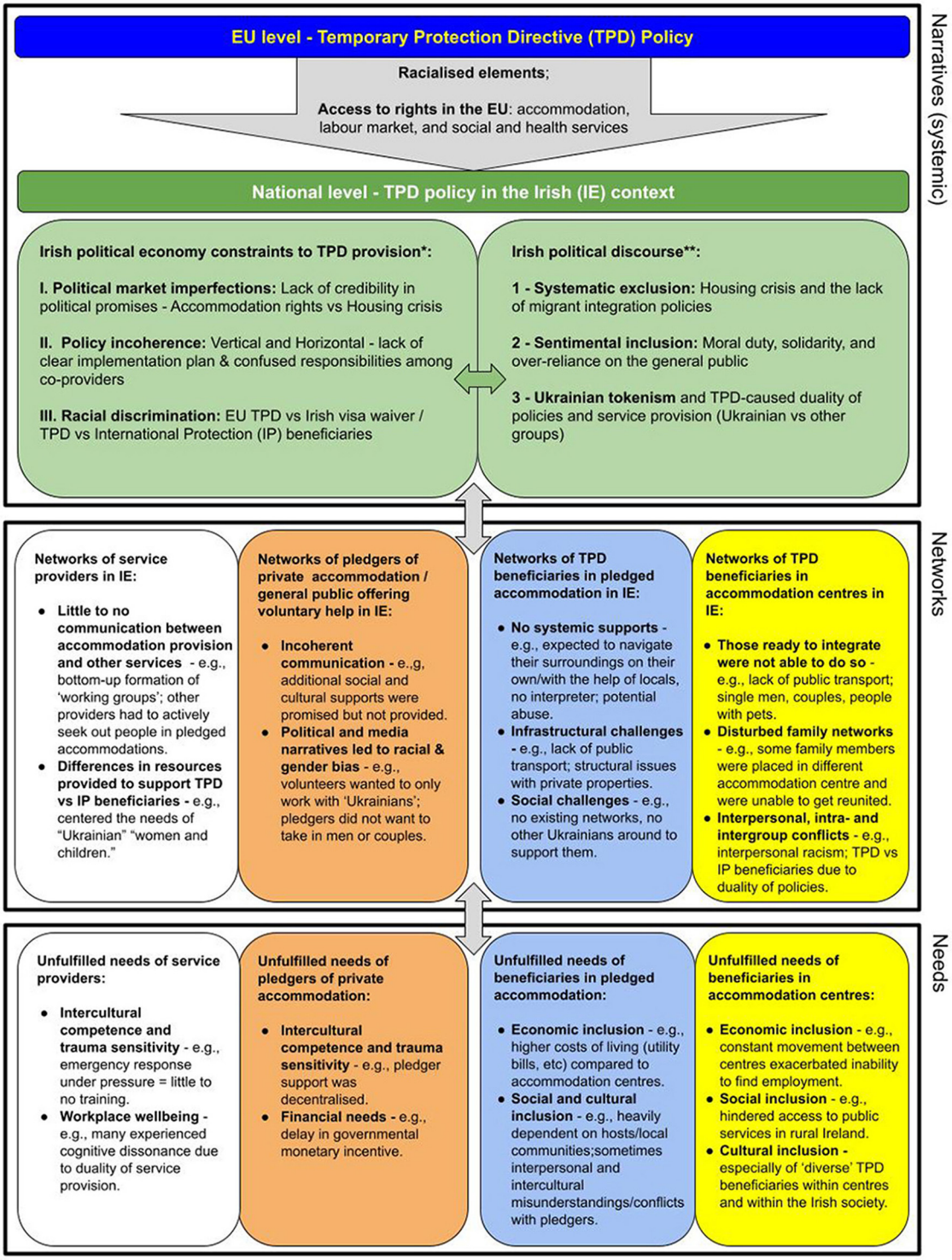

FIGURE 1
Key findings, synthesised according to the 3N model dimensions (Narratives, Networks, Needs), and connexions between them. *Adopted from the common political economy constraints and incentive problems that affect public service delivery (Wild et al., 2012). **The following three themes emerged from thematic analysis of Dáil Éireann debate (Vol. 1021 No. 5) on topic of "Accommodation Needs of Those Fleeing Ukraine" that took place on the fifth of May 2022.

analysis data and authors' ethnographic observations address the extent to which the needs of TPD beneficiaries were compared with the needs of other vulnerable groups in Ireland (e.g., IP beneficiaries).

Our key findings, synthesised according to the 3N model dimensions, and their interconnections are presented in Figure 1. A summary of the main themes and sub-themes of the thematic analysis is presented in Table 1. We identified three main themes:

TABLE 1 Thematic analysis of the Dáil Éireann debate results: three major themes with corresponding sub-themes and frequencies of references.

Codes: themes and sub-themes	References
1—Systematic exclusion: housing crisis and the lack of migrant integration policies	125
1.1—Lack of integration policies and inadequate resources: Lack of coordination or clarity caused delays, overwhelmed public services, no exit strategy	45
1.2—Acknowledging how politicians could manipulate vulnerable Irish groups to become xenophobic	37
1.3—The housing crisis is the government's fault: Rich looking for profit, derelict properties, unused planning permissions, etc	24
1.4—Housing crisis: "Ukrainians" and "Irish" solidarity (excluding other refugee and immigrant groups)	19
2—Sentimental inclusion—moral duty, solidarity, and over-reliance on the general public	65
2.1—State as a moral entity: Common identity in the face of adversities	36
2.2—Over-reliance on the general public: Putting the responsibility on Irish citizens and residents	19
2.3—Irish response as exemplary: Benevolent messages with a positive outcome focus	10
3—Ukrainian tokenism and TPD-caused duality of policy and service provision	45
3.1—Ukrainian tokenism and false messages homogenising the refugee population	33
3.2—TPD and the double standard of service provision and supports available to refugees (racialized elements; TPD vs. DP)	12

"Systematic exclusion: Housing crisis and the lack of integration policies," "Sentimental inclusion: Moral duty, solidarity, and over-reliance on the general public," "Ukrainian tokenism and TPD-caused duality of the system and service provision." We discuss these in the next section on narratives.

4.1 Narratives: TPD policy on the EU level and in the Irish context

The EU TPD has been critiqued for containing racialized and Islamophobic elements (Genç and Sirin Öner, 2019; Ineli Ciger, 2022). These narratives have subsequently influenced the national policies and service provision practises in Ireland (Daly and O'Riordan, 2023). An illustrative example concerns the visa requirements for TPD beneficiaries. Although legal eligibility for TPD was extended to include individuals who were permanent residents or benefited from international protection in Ukraine prior to the full-scale Russian invasion, as well as their close relatives, the visa requirements to Ireland were waived solely for Ukrainian nationals. This discrepancy resulted in numerous TPD-eligible individuals, who were non-Ukrainian nationals, being prevented from joining their relatives who entered Ireland without undergoing a lengthy visa process (Malekmian, 2022). The fact that many of these individuals lacked the necessary bureaucratic documentation required by the Irish immigration service made this TPD-eligibility vs. entry visa requirements discrepancy more complex. Some diverse refugees from Ukraine lacked the needed social support of their family members who were allowed to cross the Irish border. Interestingly enough, this policy decision seemed to have been potentially contradicting the TPD briefing by the European Parliamentary Research Service in March 2022 (PE 729.331) which stated that: "All persons fleeing Ukraine should in any event be admitted into the EU on humanitarian grounds, without requiring, possession of a valid visa (where applicable), or sufficient means of subsistence, or valid travel documents, to ensure safe passage with a view to returning to their country or region of origin, or to provide immediate access to asylum procedures" (Lentin, 2022).

Moreover, while TPD beneficiaries were guaranteed access to accommodation, labour market, and social and health services rights in the EU, the implementation of the TPD in Ireland has been hindered by various political economy constraints. According to Wild et al. (2012), unfulfilled political promises that hinder the relationship between state citizens/residents and politicians can have a significant and serious negative effect on public service delivery. The TPD guaranteed accommodation rights to its beneficiaries, but Ireland's housing crisis made fulfilling this promise difficult (Daly and O'Riordan, 2023; Stapleton and Dalton, 2024). When talking about the public service provision to refugees in Ireland it is important to take into account three other recent issues confronting the Irish public: the housing crisis, lack of investment in mental health services, and the cost of living crisis (Social Justice Ireland, 2023a,b; Citizens Information, 2023a,b,c,d). There is an Irish homelessness crisis: significant increases in homelessness rates are matched by a lack of affordable housing and government investment in social housing. By March 2022, at least 9,825 individuals were homeless, including 2,811 children, and this number rose to a record high of 10,568 individuals experiencing homelessness by August 2022 (Simon Communities of Ireland, 2022). The crisis is influenced by factors such as insufficient housing supply, rising rental costs, poverty, unemployment, and policy shortcomings, which were accentuated during the COVID-19 pandemic. The complex housing crisis was rooted in an economic downturn, insufficient investments, and inadequate regulation of the private rental market, resulting in a generation of Irish nationals being "locked out" of housing opportunities despite government initiatives (Hearne, 2022). Moreover, mental health issues affect 18.5% of the population (Mental Health Ireland, 2023). The mental health crisis is compounded by gaps in mental health service provision, historical stigma, and inadequate government funding (Power and Burke, 2021). Lastly, the cost of living crisis has become a pressing issue, impacting health service recruitment and retention and exacerbating the mental health crisis. The combination of all these issues significantly hindered the Irish state's ability to look after immigrants and refugees.

Additionally, there was a serious obstacle to TPD implementation and public service provision to BoTPs in 2022 due to policy incoherence (Wild et al., 2012). A lack of clear implementation plans and confused responsibilities among co-providers further complicated TPD implementation. There was not enough communication between different governmental departments for at least the 5 months that the first author spent

working with IOM. International Protection Accommodation Service (IPAS) is a division of the DCEDIY, while homeless services are provided with the close partnership of the Health Service Executive (HSE), Department of Social Protection and voluntary housing bodies, and the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage (DHPLG) is responsible for housing, planning and local government supporting the sustainable and efficient delivery of well-planned homes, and effective local government. This further resulted in little to no communication between co-providers of public services.

When it comes to racialised elements within the EU TPD policy, these sentiments spilled over into the Irish implementation of the directive. In Ireland, TPD eligibility initially focused on Ukrainian nationals due to visa waiver. Apart from the instances of "racial" and ethnic discrimination of racialised BoTPs by the Irish border control and immigration officers, the TPD accentuated the difference in how European refugees from Ukraine were welcomed and treated vs. the inhumane conditions that international protection applicants and beneficiaries were subjected to by the Irish state (Daly and O'Riordan, 2023). For asylum seekers and beneficiaries of international protection, Ireland has set up a program of accommodation provision, called Direct Provision (DP). DP was initially introduced as a temporary measure, but remained a longer-term solution for asylum seekers. The extended stay in a system designed to be temporary has been heavily criticised for its substandard living conditions, limited privacy, and restricted access to human rights and socio-economic services (Daly and O'Riordan, 2023). Dehumanisation and isolation are significant challenges within the DP system (Lentin, 2022; Murphy, 2021). Calls for reform have emerged from human rights organisations, and the Irish government has proposed reforms for a more humane accommodation and support system, but limited capacity and external factors have hindered progress (Coakley and MacEinri, 2022; Murphy, 2021). Unlike TPD beneficiaries, asylum seekers in Ireland are generally not entitled to the same rights in accessing labour market, education, healthcare, or social welfare. Under the DP system, asylum seekers receive a weekly personal allowance of €38.80 per adult and €29.80 per child (Citizens Information, 2023a,b,c,d). TPD beneficiaries in Ireland were originally entitled to social welfare payments of €208 per week, as well as to other welfare benefits including but not limited to Child Benefit, Disability Allowance, and Rent Supplement (Department of Social Protection, 2023). BoTPs also received immediate permission to work, access healthcare, and enrol in education programs, with the government providing free education up to secondary level (Department of Foreign Affairs, 2022).

The influx of individuals escaping the war in Ukraine and seeking temporary protection in Ireland was initially met with a sense of "sentimental inclusion." Perceived as European, racialised-white, and Christians, these refugees were welcomed with messages of sympathy and promises of easy integration into Irish society. However, those welcoming messages propagated by the Irish government were accompanied by misleading narratives. Despite the promises of integration and access to essential services, the reality on the ground proved to be starkly different. The existing grievances such as the housing and homelessness crisis further exacerbated BoTPs' predicament (Daly and O'Riordan, 2023). The Irish government's inability to deliver on promises of integration and access to essential services resulted in the systematic exclusion of Ukrainian refugees.

"Systematic exclusion: Housing crisis and the lack of migrant integration policies" was the theme with the highest number of codes from the Dáil Éireann debate. This theme highlights the ways in which the Irish government excluded and alienated BoTPs. One key message was the overt scapegoating of people fleeing the war in Ukraine for the potential worsening of housing availability, given the pre-existent ongoing housing crisis. Most of the politicians who deployed such polarising techniques in their public speeches denied the allegations during the Dáil Éireann debate. Nevertheless, other TDs (Opposition parties' representatives and independent deputies) called out their colleagues (Fianna Fáil and Fine Gael, centre-right coalition parties members) on those instances of anti-immigrant rhetoric that exploited existing grievances. The following quote illustrates one of the TDs, Paul Murphy (People Before Profit), calling out Darragh O'Brien, the Minister for Local Government and Heritage of Ireland (Fianna Fáil) for his polarising anti-immigrant and anti-refugee rhetoric that aimed to absolve the Irish government from the responsibility for the worsening housing crisis.

> I will start by countering the disgusting attempt by some on the far right to divide and rule and to try to blame the housing crisis on refugees from Ukraine or elsewhere. The Minister shook his head when it was mentioned a moment ago and indicated he did not say what he is reported as having said. He should clarify his comments because what seemed to be said on the radio was that a serious cause of the increase in homelessness is that people were coming from EEA and non-EEA countries and immediately going on the homeless list, as opposed to the very obvious reason for the explosion in homelessness that is the ending of the eviction ban. One can trace the increase in the numbers of homeless people from the end of the eviction ban.

Some codes within the "housing crisis" sub-theme addressed the issue of the government's unrealistic promises about accommodation options available to TPD beneficiaries in Ireland. This trope was quite common through the debate, especially among Opposition and Independent deputies. No precise information about emergency accommodation options was shared with TPD beneficiaries during the first half of 2022 (Department of the Taoiseach, 2022). The information that was shared publicly painted a false reality. The following quote from the Dáil Éireann debate illustrates it perfectly, deputy Michael Collins (Independent):

> Ukrainian refugees are coming here on a false promise announced by a Government that has little or no plan as to where these vulnerable people are to be housed in the long term.

Ireland did not have the resources or capacity to provide free adequate accommodation for all new arrivals up to the standard that the earlier arrivals benefitted from. The largest cluster of codes within the "systematic exclusion" theme was related to the absence of robust integration policies for immigrants and the lack of resources to design exit strategies. That deficiency was evident

from the TDs' statements reiterating that reforms for housing, healthcare, and other public services in Ireland were needed long before 2022. Such messages were shared not only by the members of the opposition, but by some members of the coalition from Fine Gael and the Green Party. Moreover, the COVID-19 pandemic and the emergency measures taken to mitigate it have had a significant impact on the finances of public services and local authorities (Shannon and O'Leary, 2021). As a result, most of these already overwhelmed systems were stretched thin following the arrival of refugees from Ukraine.

For example, some TPD beneficiaries needed the assistance of disability services, however, the Health Information and Quality Authority (HIQA) reported that compliance had declined since 2021 amongst the designated centres for people with disabilities (Health Information Quality Authority, 2022). One of the TDs, Seán Canney (Independent), raised his concerns with the fact that even Irish nationals did not have proper access to the needed disability services, hence, the system was not able to provide adequate support to vulnerable TPD beneficiaries:

> Therefore, we have a huge challenge on our hands. We have a long-term problem in this country with services for disabilities but we now have an added challenge.

This quote illustrates that housing was not the only system that was under-resourced and unable to cope with the increased services demand. Ultimately, these challenges explain some of the political market imperfections in the form of disrupted relationships between Irish politicians and residents as well as lack of credibility in the political promises.

Some other codes under the "lack of integration policies and inadequate resources" sub-theme addressed the lack of coordination between different governmental offices and between agencies working on the TPD implementation. This caused significant delays and posed extra challenges at all levels of service provision. The following illustrates one of the TDs' concerns about the lack of coordination related to the medium-term accommodation provision, deputy Richard O'Donoghue (Independent):

> The Red Cross is overwhelmed with the work it has to do. All the volunteers are overwhelmed. There is complete chaos. [...] the Red Cross wanted to go and see the house. The family agreed to meet the Red Cross there. Little did the family realise that the Red Cross volunteers were on a minibus with eight Ukrainian people with their suitcases. They were coming out to look at the house to see if it was viable for them. They took the suitcases off the bus and moved in straight away. A person with the Ukrainians had a letter but could not explain to the householder what had to be done, and that person was there to help. It is total chaos. The following day, I met a person whose job is to track where Ukrainian people are in order to put a map together so that where they are is known. That person asked me if I knew where Ukrainians had been placed and asked me to notify them because some of the Ukrainians have slipped through. They were put into houses but now it is not known where they are.

This storey was one of many the authors witnessed during their work with BoTPs and other stakeholders. The ethnographic observations also highlighted this lack of clear guidelines for service providers. Such policy incoherences had a serious impact on the Networks and Needs dimensions which we will discuss later in the paper.

The incoherent political narratives about accommodation solutions for TPD beneficiaries caused a growing perception that the government was focusing on the needs of the TPD beneficiaries while ignoring the needs of its own citizens. The third largest sub-theme under the "systematic exclusion" theme contained TDs' statements that emphasised that the housing crisis was the government's fault. Such statements aimed to hold the government accountable for the lack of adequate accommodation and at times shame the chief executives for their decision to bring more people into the broken systems, Réada Cronin (Sinn Féin, opposition, centre-left):

> Sadly, for a lot of the Ukrainians coming the Government has made a shambles of their accommodation needs, adding to our housing crisis. I have people in north Kildare who would love to offer accommodation to people fleeing Ukraine if they only had a house of their own. However, in their 60's they are sleeping in their cars or camped out on their children's sofas.

Additionally, it is worth noting that the public perception of TPD beneficiaries being prioritised over Irish residents was not a mere trope. The uncoordinated response to housing TPD beneficiaries resulted in cases where governmental services did prioritise refugees from Ukraine over other vulnerable groups. The following storey shared by one of the TDs, Eoin Ó Broin (Sinn Féin), illustrates how there was a lack of horizontal communication between the International Protection Accommodation Services (IPAS) and other public services:

> [...] while I fully understand and support the Government's accessing of hotel accommodation through [...] IPAS, there have been at least two instances where homeless service providers in Cork city and Wicklow have expressed some concern that hotels that would otherwise have been the primary source of emergency accommodation for families presenting as homeless are now fully booked up by IPAS. This is one of the imperfect solutions the Minister spoke about, but it is really important that there be the maximum level of coordination between his Department, IPAS and homeless service providers to try to avoid such a difficulty in as much as is possible.

Our ethnographic observations mirror this qualitative finding. The second largest cluster of codes within the "systematic exclusion" theme highlighted some TDs' remarks regarding TPD beneficiaries being prioritised over Irish nationals and residents who had been on a lengthy and slow-moving waiting list for social housing. While those narratives were untrue, some TDs emphasised that they could be used to manipulate other Irish marginalised groups to accept xenophobic and anti-immigrant views based on the perceived competition for limited housing opportunities and other governmental support.

These narratives were echoed by the deputies representing the coalition parties, even though they also reiterated that at the time of the debate the Minister for Housing managed to clarify the government's plan of housing refugees from Ukraine as being separate from projects aimed to address the Irish housing crisis and homelessness; deputy John Paul Phelan (Fine Gael):

> In the past few weeks, I have noticed on social media, particularly WhatsApp groups, memes and jokey picture messages with an underlying, insidious element of racism, to be perfectly honest, in pitting refugees against people in Ireland who are in need of a home. I am glad the Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage has clearly outlined on a number of occasions that the funding for Housing for All is ring-fenced and separate.

Even the Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage, Darragh O'Brien (Fianna Fáil) paradoxically agreed with the criticism that deputies from the opposition addressed to him:

> I do not agree with Deputies who heretofore opposed Housing for All using the crisis as an excuse to repeat their call for an immediate new national housing plan. That would only blur the lines of our response, confuse delivery targets, risk pitting one group against another and achieve nothing but further uncertainty in a volatile situation.

The initial lack of clarity on housing provision for TPD beneficiaries combined with political statements and media messages loaded with anti-immigrant rhetoric created a climate for future exclusion of refugees from Ukraine, and other refugee and immigrant groups in Ireland. However, the extreme rise of the far right sentiments and xenophobia did not really happen until early 2023 (Daly and O'Riordan, 2023). In the meantime, many TPD beneficiaries remained culturally (symbolically) included despite experiencing social and economic exclusion.

During the Dáil Éireann debate on the housing needs of the TPD beneficiaries, some TDs countered the anti-immigrant rhetoric employed by their colleagues. Those messages were included into the "Housing crisis: 'Ukrainians' and 'Irish' solidarity" sub-theme. Such statements emphasised that the government should promote social solidarity since all of the vulnerable groups were the victims of the government's neglect and inaction in relation to the housing crisis; deputy Eoin Ó Broin (Sinn Féin):

> One of the great merits of the response of the Department of Children [...] is that it is seeking emergency accommodation outside the mainstream housing system. It is a sensible approach, particularly because it avoids putting Ukrainians who, rightly, are seeking refuge in competition with other people in acute housing need who experienced the rough end of our own housing crisis. At all times, the Government and the Opposition must ensure that, in everything we do, we do not in any way generate that kind of competition, or the potential resentment that could emerge from it, to ensure those fringe elements of our society who would seek to exploit that resentment are unable to do so.

Despite the systemic discrimination of vulnerable groups including refugees from Ukraine, the prevailing 2022 cultural narrative about TPD beneficiaries amongst politicians and the public was that of "Sentimental Inclusion."

The second major theme of our thematic analysis is "Sentimental inclusion: Moral duty, solidarity, and over-reliance on the general public." These codes reflect the sentiment-driven aspects of the debate, where the Irish state is viewed as a moral entity responsible for extending solidarity and support to those fleeing Ukraine. The following quote from The Minister for Housing, Darragh O'Brien, emphasised the importance of 'sentimental inclusion' of refugees from Ukraine, creating an illusion of care and concern while the government's actions did not reflect those sentiments in practise:

> We will stand shoulder to shoulder with other democracies against authoritarian aggression. We will look after our people as well as those fleeing war and we will live up to the best traditions of fairness and decency towards those who need our support.

This quote presents a portrayal of the state as a moral entity, stressing its commitment to supporting refugees from Ukraine. However, despite the tropes of solidarity between democratic regimes, the Irish government's long track record of depriving immigrants and refugees, as exemplified by the dehumanising conditions within the DP system, raised questions about the sincerity of such statements. Moreover, the ruling party politicians' messages emphasising the commitment to take good care of and provide necessary resources to TPD beneficiaries appeared to be empty promises rather than political optimism. This was because the TDs and the ministers were well aware of the existing shortage of resources and were also informed about the numerous challenges related to the TPD implementation in Ireland before May 2022 (the reports on multifaceted challenges were submitted formally and informally to the Department of Justice, DHPLG, and the DCEDIY).

The theme of "sentimental inclusion" also covered codes describing the government's over-reliance on the general public where the policies and official support fell short. More often than talking about the moral obligation of the Irish government to TPD beneficiaries, the TDs emphasised the role of civil society in aiding refugees from Ukraine. Only a minority of the TDs acknowledged that relying on the Irish public and volunteers was not a sustainable solution. Most of the deputies representing the coalition stressed that Irish civil society would play a crucial role in sustaining the country's emergency response amidst the lack of proper integration policies; the Minister of State at the Department of Social Protection, Joe O'Brien (Green Party):

> Successful integration will also happen very much because of the groundswell of support from individuals and communities across the country. [...] The fast, responsive and adaptable reaction of the community and voluntary sector across the country has been extraordinary.

While that TD's vision of successful integration is somewhat overstretched, given the multifaceted nature of challenges and

crises that most Irish residents face, he was right in highlighting the instrumental role Irish communities played in the integration process of TPD beneficiaries.

Many TDs expressed a sense of hope and optimism, suggesting that there was a plan in place to address the challenges faced by the refugees and commended the public and volunteers for their efforts. The message was that the government and the public would work together to welcome refugees from Ukraine; the Minister of State at the Department of Health, Anne Rabbitte (Fianna Fáil):

> For many their journey is not over just yet, but it will be. It will be soon, through our concerted and co-ordinated efforts. We must work together to realise this endgame. Ireland must show the céad míle fáilte today and every day. We must travel the end of the journey with them, and hold their hand while they assimilate into our country until such time as they can return to their homeland and rebuild their future.

However, we argue that the tone of many similar messages is tokenistic and lacks genuine substance. The repeated emphasis on the refugees eventually returning to their homeland and rebuilding their future may be seen as a way to placate the refugees without addressing their immediate needs and challenges. This sentiment can be viewed as disingenuous, given the significant barriers TPD beneficiaries faced in accessing essential services, accommodation, and integration opportunities, as mentioned in the earlier description of "systematic exclusion." Many TDs employed exaggerated language, including hyperboles, to depict the compassionate and emphatic reception of TPD beneficiaries by Irish communities.

This rhetorical technique could be interpreted as an attempt to manipulate the general public's perception, fostering the belief that the government actually values their actions despite not providing any concrete support. Overall, while the narratives of "sentimental inclusion" could be seen as an attempt to convey a sense of compassion and unity, they are mostly lacking in a genuine commitment to address the complex issues faced by BoTPs and different vulnerable groups in Ireland.

The third theme uncovered during the thematic analysis of the Dáil Éireann debate: "Ukrainian tokenism and TPD-caused duality of the policies and service provision." Citizens Information referred to BoTPs as "Ukrainian refugees" (Citizens Information, 2023a,b,c,d). Which echoes the pattern observed in our qualitative data as well. In all of the statements shared during the debate, the TDs referred to TPD beneficiaries as "Ukrainian guests," "Ukrainians," "our Ukrainian friends," "Ukrainian refugees," "Ukrainian visitors," and so on. There was not a single instance of any TD using the term "beneficiaries of temporary protection." A critical aspect of the exclusion experienced by TPD beneficiaries in Ireland relates to the prevalence of "Ukrainian tokenism."

The dominant public narrative constructed by the government and local media portrayed the refugees as ethnically Ukrainian or holding Ukrainian citizenship, thereby marginalising individuals from diverse backgrounds who resided in Ukraine prior to the Russian invasion in 2022 or hailed from ethnic minority groups. Racialised-Black and racialised-Brown individuals encountered heightened discrimination and exclusion due to their non-alignment with the prevailing narrative that depicted TPD beneficiaries as racialised-white, European, and Christian. Ethnic minority groups from Ukraine, including Roma, similarly faced additional layers of social exclusion and discrimination, compounding their challenges in accessing services and integration opportunities. In addition, that narrative of European, racialised-white, and Christian "Ukrainian refugees" was used by some Irish politicians to further marginalise individuals benefiting from international protection; deputy Mick Barry (People Before Profit-Solidarity):

> A headline in the Irish Independent last Monday morning read, "Migrants from countries other than Ukraine adding to pressure on homeless supports, housing minister warns." Imagine if a few of the words in that were switched around in order that the headline stated, "Migrants from countries other than Ukraine adding to pressure on homeless supports, Le Pen warns." That would fit perfectly well. The Minister is directly quoted in the article, and the headline does not jar in any way with the content of what he said. Unless the direct quotes in the newspaper article are made up or false, that headline reflects what the Minister said.

Since people normally use heuristics to place others into different social categories, the general public, following those narratives from media and political statements, started limiting "TPD beneficiaries" to "Ukrainians." This further emphasised the binary perception of "good" refugees from Ukraine and "bad" refugees who do not fit that "European, racialised-white, and Christian" box. Further examples of systemic racism within the TPD implementation that exacerbated the divide between the beneficiaries of temporary protection vs. those seeking international protection include the government prioritising housing TPD beneficiaries over asylum seekers (Wilson, 2023).

Our qualitative data further supported the claims of the preferential treatment of TPD beneficiaries over asylum seekers in Ireland. During the Dáil Éireann debate, a few TDs voiced their concerns about the possible further marginalisation and worsening housing conditions for individuals benefiting from international protection in Ireland as a result of the mass influx of the new refugee group. However, only a few TDs, including Catherine Connolly, had openly pointed out the double standard of treatment as well as the double standards of sentimental concern and empathy levels that the Irish politicians held and promoted in relation to refugees from Ukraine vs. non-european refugees. Deputy Catherine Connolly (Independent) reflected on the similar sentiments expressed by Professor (Irish: an t-Ollamh) Fionnuala D. Ní Aoláin, United Nations Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection human rights and fundamental freedoms while countering terrorism:

> I will finish by going back to an t-Ollamh Ní Aoláin pointing out that it is a very dangerous policy. An t-Ollamh Ní Aoláin welcomes absolutely the open policy for refugees, as I do, but she makes it perfectly clear that they are white and European or on the European Continent and we have a completely different approach when refugees are not from the European Continent and when they are of a different colour. I raise that as a serious cause of reflection because as we speak, we

> have 2,000 people in Direct Provision who have no permission to go outside. They have the status and can go nowhere. We are ignoring what is happening in Yemen. We have ignored the Amnesty report on Israel in relation to Palestine and the International Criminal Court.

This quote truly highlights the double standards within the systems aimed to protect refugees in Ireland that are dictated by institutionalised racism. The double standards in attitudes that are then transmitted to policy and law—since policymakers are not impartial (Atkinson, 2019)—are also evident from the drastic difference in sentimental benevolence and empathetic concerns many Irish politicians express only in relation to the racialised-white refugees from Ukraine.

It is also interesting that because the debate was centered around the "Needs of Those Fleeing Ukraine" the deputies from the coalition parties did not have to mention the Direct Provision system, or refugees and asylum seekers who were within the Irish International Protection system—the opportunity that the coalition representatives availed of. Moreover, during the debate, as deputy Connolly was speaking the words quoted above, An Ceann Comhairle (the sole judge of order in the house), Seán Ó Fearghaíl (Fianna Fáil) said the following:

> We wandered a bit away. The Deputy is passionate about the issues but wandered a little bit away from the issue of accommodation.

This interruption, given the following context of a quick verbal exchange between the deputy and An Ceann Comhairle, showed that some members of the coalition were indeed reluctant to talk about complex and intersectional issues that were closely tied to the TPD implementation in Ireland.

The further distorted message that shaped public perception of who TPD beneficiaries were repeatedly emphasised by the TDs and Irish media as "single mothers with children;" deputy John Lahart (Fianna Fáil):

> Again, it is striking that when the coaches arrive there are many young girls, babies, women, mothers, and sisters, yet so few men. They are emphatically warmly welcomed.

Our ethnographic observations further explain how this narrative was not completely true, and yet it resulted in social exclusion of TPD beneficiaries who did not fit that "single mother" profile. According to the Central Statistics Office of Ireland, as of June 2023 of all arrivals under the TPD in Ireland 32% were aged under 20 (no sex/gender breakdown available), and of the people aged 20 years and over 46% were women and 22% were men. While adult men did represent the smallest proportion of the TPD beneficiaries compared to women and children, 22% is a large enough number approximately translating to 18,614 people. Nevertheless, men evacuating from Ukraine were excluded from the Irish mainstream media discourse or when included were presented in a way congruent with misandrist tropes emphasising the idea that men should stay in Ukraine and fight.

4.2 Networks and needs of Irish service providers

Preexisting shortage of staff and resources within the Irish public services and political market imperfections, TPD-related policy incoherence, racialised and tokenistic elements within TPD policy and its implementation mirrored by the political narratives of "sentimental inclusion" but "systematic exclusion" of BoTPS created significant challenges for both the Irish communities involved in supporting refugees from Ukraine and the BoTPs in Ireland (see "Networks" dimension of Figure 1).

Policy incoherence especially regarding accommodation provision for BoTPs and lack of clear communication from the DCEDIY with other departments resulted to little to no communication between accommodation provision services like IPAS, IRC, and IOM and other public service providers like the HSE, Education and Training Boards (ETBs), and Intreo (the Irish Public Employment Service). This had a negative effect on public service providers' networks and their ability to effectively and efficiently implement projects aimed at supporting TPD beneficiaries. Moreover, there was a lack of effective performance oversight from the DCEDIY and different divisions and organisations assisting with implementation of accommodation projects. Hence, there was no communication between co-providers of accommodation services. For example, IRC and IOM did not have any official channels of communication while both organisations were assisting the DCEDIY with the same medium-term accommodation project. There was also no official communication between IPAS, who managed temporary accommodation centres and providers involved in moving people from temporary accommodation to privately pledged (medium-term) accommodation.

To cope with these challenges and to try and maximise the efficiency of service delivery to TPD beneficiaries, public service providers had to initiate formations of local or county-wide "working groups" to minimise unnecessary duplication of services and projects that were already provided by other organisations. Some service providers working within the HSE, ETBs, and Intreo had to actively seek out people who were transferred from temporary to medium-term pledged accommodation since there was no official database of BoTPs staying in private houses available. This also meant that many TPD beneficiaries who arrived before the DCEDIY and IPAS rolled out a system of state-provided accommodation to arrivals from Ukraine were staying in private accommodations and lacked the access to systematised service provision that was available to beneficiaries staying in temporary accommodation centres. Moreover, as was observed by the second author: in some mixed DP centres housing both asylum seekers and temporary protection beneficiaries, the numbers of refugees from Ukraine varied significantly from 1 month to the next, and it was difficult to predict or account for especially for service providers who provide English language classes or psycho-social supports. Often the only person with the actual numbers was the manager of the housing facility, who would then communicate this to other local service providers.

The TPD-caused duality of policies and service provision resulted in preferential resource allocation to TPD beneficiaries

over asylum seekers or IP beneficiaries. Moreover, the tokenistic political narratives resulted in services centering the needs of Ukrainian-speaking "women and children." This resulted in systemic discrimination of BoTPs that did not fit this narrow stereotype. Service providers frequently found themselves unprepared to assist "diverse" BoTPs. For example, service providers would have had an interpreter or printed materials that addressed the needs of Ukrainian and Russian speaking BoTPs but not the needs of beneficiaries who spoke Arabic or Hungarian.

This TPD-caused duality of policies and service provision that manifested in the Narratives and Networks dimensions also affected service provider's psychological needs and wellbeing. Our ethnographic observations highlighted that many service providers from various public and governmental organisations in Ireland had concerns about the double standard of refugee treatment that the TPD created in the country. This was still the case at the "Ukrainian Support Staff Working Event" that took place on the 19th of April, 2023, organised by the Limerick community partnerships. Many healthcare providers, youth service workers, and social workers unanimously expressed their frustrations and disappointments in the discrepancy between the funding and support that was allocated for the beneficiaries of the TPD vs. asylum seekers and refugees staying in DP centres. Those frontline workers also struggled personally with their inability to support their clients living in the same accommodation but having different legal rights or financial resources as a consequence of the different sets of rules applicable to temporary vs. international protection beneficiaries. Some referred to the double standards and differential treatment comparing the very recent refugees from Afghanistan with the "Ukrainian" refugees.

Another important need for service providers to effectively work with BoTPs was the need for intercultural competence, basic geo-political and socio-cultural knowledge of ethnic diversity and language politics in Ukraine, and trauma sensitivity skills. However, the policy implementation constraints and political narratives that tokenistically homogenised TPD beneficiaries did not help to fulfil this need. Projects to support TPD beneficiaries were being carried out by the Irish government under a lot of pressure as some policy changes were frequently announced before any personnel responsible for implementation could have been trained.

An example of that was the DCEDIY's decision to roll out the project aimed at transferring TPD beneficiaries from temporary emergency accommodation to medium-term pledged accommodation without any proper announcements or briefings. DCEDIY had the goal of moving people to medium-term accommodation to free up some spaces in emergency accommodations. That pressure was fuelled by beneficiaries being unable to leave the reception centres, e.g., the Citywest Transit Hub, which were not designed to accommodate people for prolonged periods of time. After the bed capacity in reception centres was reached, TPD beneficiaries and asylum seekers had to sleep in armchairs and on the floors (Bray, 2022). There were at least two instances throughout 2022 when the Citywest Transit Hub was closed for new arrivals as the Irish government claimed that there were no more state-provided accommodation options for refugees from Ukraine or asylum seekers in Ireland (Balgaranov, 2022; Bray, 2022; Maliuzhonok and Bowers, 2022). Facing pressure from the DCEDIY to scale up the transfer project, IRC and IOM hired new caseworkers impetuously. As a result, some of those practitioners were not properly briefed and lacked an understanding of the policy or its implementation guidelines. This also resulted in accommodation service providers lacking the needed intercultural competences and trauma awareness and sensitivity. The lack of these skills and knowledge had a negative effect on BoTPs but also on the service providers because they were more susceptible to job burnout and vicarious trauma.

4.3 Networks and needs of Irish general public volunteers and pledgers of private accommodation

Networks and needs of the Irish general public who volunteered to help refugees from Ukraine and who pledged vacant rooms in their houses or their vacant properties to accommodate TPD beneficiaries were affected by Narratives as well as by service providers' Networks.

Following the political narratives of "sentimental inclusion" that called upon the Irish public to support refugees from Ukraine, in April 2022 about half the population were open to taking in a refugee from Ukraine, if they had a spare bedroom in their house. The willingness to do so was higher for Irish residents of middle-class background, Dubliners and Sinn Féin (centre-left), Fine Gael (centre-right), and Green Party (centre-left) supporters as opposed to the ruling party, Fianna Fáil (centre-right), supporters (Reaper, 2022). So, while initially the general public expressed higher levels of support and involvement in helping new arrivals from Ukraine, the shortcomings of the TPD implementation, namely policy incoherence at the governmental and service provision levels, caused the attitudes of Irish residents to change. Many Irish residents who were initially highly motivated to support TPD beneficiaries soon encountered barriers including NGOs' and governmental bodies' inefficient, non-transparent, and delayed communication with people who pledged vacant houses/rooms. Moreover, political narratives of "sentimental inclusion" were combined with the reality of "systematic exclusion," meaning the lack of credibility in the political promises regarding the TPD implementation. Certain supports and resources like interpreters or social workers available to follow up on beneficiaries relocated to private accommodation were promised to the pledgers, however, in reality those supports did not exist. Hence, this ethnographic observation confirmed the authors finding regarding the Irish political narratives that emphasised "over-reliance on the general public."

Hence, the Irish general public eventually shifted from supporting political narratives of "sentimental inclusion" and started shifting to supporting some of the "systematic exclusion" messages. Between February and April 2022 when the general public's support for refugees from Ukraine was still at its highest, around 60% of the Irish population stated that they supported the concept of introducing a cap on the numbers of refugees from Ukraine arriving in Ireland. About one third believed it should have been up to 20,000, with a further quarter not wishing it to exceed between 20,000 and 40,000 (Reaper, 2022). It was not until

recently, November 2023, that the Irish Taoiseach (prime minister) started publicly discussing the government's intention to introduce some measures to 'slow the flow' of refugees from Ukraine, e.g., improving border control and introducing the cuts in TPD beneficiaries social welfare allowance (Hosford and McCárthaigh, 2023). In reality, however, there was a 72.1% increase in the number of refugees from Ukraine seeking temporary protection in Ireland in the 12 months to the end of September 2023 (Eurostat, 2023). This demographic trend combined with the mismatch of the government seemingly centering the needs of refugees from Ukraine in their debates and political narratives led to some groups within Irish society becoming more susceptible to anti-immigrant rhetoric as their own economic, social, political, and cultural needs remained unsatisfied.

Following the racialised elements within policy and political narratives, racial discrimination against "diverse" TPD beneficiaries manifested in the way pledgers and Irish volunteers interacted with BoTPs. The first author had a number of cases when pledgers were blatantly racist and only wanted to host racialised-white, ethnically Ukrainian, single mothers with children. One of the ethnographic journal notes contained a quote from an Irish pledger's response to a call about a potential match for a spare room in her house: "They are Ukrainians, right? [...] we don't need any g*psies. This is a good neighbourhood, we don't need any thieves." Another family contacted the first author to make sure that the Roma family that had been accommodated in their vacant property were actually from Ukraine and were not "taking advantage of the system." Their suspicions began with the beneficiaries only speaking Hungarian and Russian instead of Ukrainian. While those situations reflected the lack of diversity awareness among the general public in Ireland, the governmental statements and the media coverage further exacerbated the perception of the TPD beneficiaries as a homogeneous group of "racialised-White" Ukrainians.

"Ukrainian tokenism" narratives also heightened pledgers' misandry in relation to TPD beneficiaries. While there were many women with children who fled Ukraine to find safety in Ireland, a lot of times those women were not interested in pledged accommodation. There were several reasons for that which we address later when talking about networks of TPD beneficiaries. However, most pledgers were only interested in helping "single mothers with kids" and would sometimes fully withdraw their properties when informed that such a match was not possible. Moreover, most of the pledgers were strongly against single men or childless couples staying at their properties even if the pledged accommodation was fully vacant or detached from pledgers' house.

The first author also witnessed other cases of tokenistic solidarity with people fleeing the war in Ukraine. During her work as a migrant support worker, she witnessed some teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) offered their help on a volunteer basis to refugees from Ukraine but, when approached by a liaison officer, refused to offer the same level of support to refugees and asylum seekers from other countries even though these services are always in high demand in Ireland.

From the first author's ethnographic observations, this willingness to take in a refugee from Ukraine kept gradually declining throughout the summer and autumn 2022 with many Irish pledgers discovering the difficulties of sharing a living space with culturally diverse and sometimes psychologically traumatised strangers. This change in behaviour was to a large extent motivated by the pledgers' unfulfilled needs.

Similarly to service providers' need for intercultural competence and trauma sensitivity, pledgers were not offered any kind of training or briefing by the organisations responsible for the transfer project. The lack of ledgers' intercultural competence and trauma sensitivity skills was yet again exacerbated by "Ukrainian tokenism" narratives. Challenges listed by the pledgers ranged from the economic concerns about the growing utility bills, especially approaching the colder autumn and winter months, to language and cross-cultural communication barriers. And yet again, policy incoherence resulted in pledgers' unfulfilled needs. For example, to address pledgers' economic concerns and financial needs, the government announced the €800 per month incentive for those who chose to host TPD beneficiaries. However, the announcement was made in summer 2022 and the logistics of how to claim this monetary incentive were not made public until late autumn 2022. Hence, the financial needs of pledgers remained unsatisfied and this further exacerbated the general public's lack of trust in the political promises. Since the licence agreements signed by the pledgers and beneficiaries were not legally binding, some pledgers contacted the IOM and IRC to ask for assistance in moving TPD beneficiaries from their private properties back to emergency accommodation centres.

4.4 Networks and needs of beneficiaries of temporary protection in Ireland

TPD beneficiaries' networks and needs were affected by the policy and political narratives as well as by service providers' and private accommodation pledgers' networks and unfullfilled needs. Beneficiaries' networks and needs also differed depending on the type of accommodation they were staying in. We mostly focused on the differences between state-provided temporary accommodation centres vs. privately pledged accommodation (e.g., staying with an Irish host on in a vacant property).

Some BoTPs who arrived in Ireland days after the EU activated the TPD and the Irish state waved the visa requirement for Ukrainian nationals, found themselves in a strange situation, where unless they knew someone in Ireland, hardly anyone was able to provide them with any services or details on any supports available. This was yet again due to policy incoherence and the resulting the lack of training among service providers. In the first few weeks, there was no coherent official procedure on accommodation provision or tracking the TPD beneficiaries beyond the information recorded by the Irish immigration officers at points of entry into the state. Hence, some TPD beneficiaries stayed with Irish residents who volunteered to house refugees from Ukraine. This was not yet part of the official pledged accommodation project that was announced by the DCEDIY and IRC later in spring 2022. This private hosts whom BoTPs found through their social networks if they knew someone in the EU or in Ireland, social media posts, or multiple websites and online platforms that were created to help refugees from Ukraine find a host or shared accommodation (e.g., icanhelp.host, host4ukraine.com). While in many cases this was a nice gesture of generosity and solidarity, there were also

cases of hosts who had questionable intentions in their readiness to house refugees from Ukraine. The first author, unfortunately, had a few cases where TPD beneficiaries in unoffiial private accommodation arrangements were forced into unpaid labour related to construction work or maintenance and cleaning of the property in return for living there. Another challenge that different unofficial living arrangements posed to TPD beneficiaries was that, once the state-run accommodation provision systems were in place, these beneficiaries were left outside of the system and if they had to move out of these private arrangements they frequently had to start from the very beginning and present themselves to the Citywest reception centre and then be placed at the bottom of the list of all the refugees awaiting alocation to temporary accommodation centre. Sometimes these exceptional cases were prioretised for the pledged accommodation project, but even then there was no guarantee that BoTPs were able to remain in the same city/town or even county where they had already established social connexions or secured employment.

Moreover, in line with contrasting narratives of "sentimental inclusion" byt "systematic exclusion" and the lack of transparency in vertical and horizontal communication between service providers, contrary to the expectations set by official online sources, TPD beneficiaries arriving in Ireland after April 2022 often found themselves placed in substandard emergency accommodations. These included community centres, sports grounds, or even tented accommodations that lacked essential facilities such as heating or proper toilet and shower facilities. While it is true that conditions for TPD beneficiaries were comparatively better than those within the DP system, the government and media did not publicly disclose the reality of substandard accommodations faced by later arrivals. This reinforced the false notion among refugees from Ukraine that Ireland was an attractive destination for TPD beneficiaries. When people find themselves under radical uncertainty, situations where outcomes cannot be enumerated and probabilities cannot be assigned, they use narartives to make sense of their situations and to make decisons on what to do (Johnson et al., 2023). Unfortunately for many BoTPs who arrived in Ireland, the political narratives they used for their decision making did not correspond with the reality of TPD implementation and service provision. From February till July 2022 official online sources, including 'Gov.ie' and 'Citizens Information,' failed to provide precise details about the emergency accommodations being utilised for TPD beneficiaries. Instead, these sources presented an incomplete picture, omitting crucial facts about the housing crisis and shortage of suitable accommodation in Ireland.

The housing shortage and high demand for accommodation made it exceedingly difficult for refugees to secure suitable living arrangements, leading to indefinitely long stays in overcrowded reception centres or substandard accommodation centres, and continuous uncertainty of being moved around the country with little to no notice due to the temporary nature of state-provided accommodation. In addition, due to systemic and professional networks challenges IPAS were operating in an emergency mode, consequently, paying little to no attention to how their decisions impacted local communities or TPD beneficiaries. This is corroborated by the second author's observations that the rules about state-provided temporary accommodation were not clearly communicated to beneficiaries, so some BoTPs lost their original allocated accommodation and had to return to the "IPAS list" before being able to be relocated to another location. Moreover, from the first authors' experience, some beneficiaries had disabilities or other serious vulnerabilities, but their specific needs went unnoticed for days or even weeks due to accommodation providers being overworked and language barriers.

Language barriers and the lack of reliable public transport were among other challenges for TPD beneficiaries to access needed public services. This challenge was true for both TPD beneficiaries in pledged and state-provided accommodation. While in some state-provided accommodation centres beneficiaries received HSE support in the form of primary care team (PCT) or public health nurses visiting centres on regular basis, this was not enough to address the needs of beneficiaries who required frequent or specialised medical support. Some vulnerable individuals with disabilities or chronic conditions that required them to be within 15 min of reach from a hospital, were accommodated in remote areas with no access to the needed services. Another example of the inability of TPD beneficiaries to avail of their rights to access healthcare was a married couple housed in a hotel nearby a small town. The wife had an underlying chronic medical condition. The couple were placed in accommodation very far away from the nearest hospital, and public transport in that area was not reliable. Meals provided by the accommodation facility were not suitable for the wife's underlying medical condition, however, the accommodation management did not address the requests from the first author in her capacity as a migrant case worker or from the beneficiary's family doctor to either adjust the menu or to provide the couple with a chance to cook in their room. There were no suitable pledged accommodations to transfer the couple closer to the hospital. Moreover, both spouses were racialised-Brown and practising Muslims who did not speak English, so, the racist and misadric political narratives internalised by the Irish pledgers prevented the IOM team from being able to find this couple a suitable pledged accommodation match.

Those tokenistic political narratives translated into tokenistic general public's support for racialised-white Ukrainian refugees and further exacerbated social, cultural, and economic exclusion of racialised-Black/Brown or Roma beneficiaries. While pledgers wanted to house ethnically Ukrainian single mothers, many pledged accommodations were very remote and that would not be suitable for a single parent without their own vehicle due to the lack of public transport or needed amenities around the accommodation. Moreover, even if the pledged accommodation was shared as opposed to vacant, and the pledger was ready to help beneficiaries with groceries, school runs, and other activities, the chances of finding a job for beneficiaries were very slim in rural areas. And, of course, most of TPD beneficiaries were looking for ways to become self-sufficient. After weighing the costs and benefits of moving to a pledged remote location, it did not make sense to move out of state-provided accommodation centres. At that time TPD beneficiaries were provided with free meals in state-provided accommodation, plus, they had their support networks in those community centres and were able to get support from fellow residents when needed. While when beneficiaries moved to remote pledged accommodation, they were expected to

navigate their surroundings on their own or rely on the help from local Irish communities. Both scenarios were hard given cultural and language barriers. With the cost-of-living crisis and all the challenges that the rural lifestyle in Ireland presents, those remote pledged properties were more suited to single individuals or adult couples with no children. And while some of the beneficiaries were eager to move to such accommodations, the pledgers were biassed against single men, especially racialised-Black men, and were not particularly happy with taking on childless couples either. The intersection of "race" and gender made it virtually impossible for racialised-Black single men to move out of the state-provided temporary accommodation.

In addition, complications arose for some beneficiaries who travelled with pets, as many accommodations refused to accommodate them, leading to difficulties in finding suitable shelter and safety. While the government offered an expedited process for importing pets for those fleeing the war in Ukraine, they failed to warn refugees about the lack of suitable accommodation that allowed pets. This policy incoherence again mirrors political narratives of "sentimental inclusion" but "systematic exclusion" of refugees from Ukraine in Ireland. This created additional stress and logistical challenges for TPD beneficiaries, as even many Irish-pledged properties were not pet-friendly.

The shortcomings of the TPD policy implementation in Ireland also resulted in breaking up beneficiaries' existent social networks separating family members or friends who might have evacuated from Ukraine and arrived in Ireland together. While family reunification rights typically apply to cases of families separated by state borders, a logical step would be to house relatives together or in close proximity once they are in the same country. For instance, single mothers arriving in Ireland with their children or complete family units comprising two parents and children often tried to bring over their children's grandmothers. This move was perceived by beneficiaries as essential to address the challenges of motherhood in a foreign land, as children's needs can be demanding and complex. Moreover, the lack of affordable and comprehensive daycare services in Ireland hindered the integration and self-sufficiency of single mothers, as they struggled to secure employment. Hence, the prospect of bringing their elderly or middle-aged parents to Ireland to provide extra support and free babysitting services was seen as a means to enhance their chances of finding employment and strengthening their social networks.

In practise, many TPD beneficiaries successfully convinced and sponsored their elderly family members to join them in Ireland. Unfortunately, the chaotic nature of accommodation provision shattered the hopes of these families to strengthen their psycho-social support networks or to make it more feasible to seek employment. As we have seen from the section on service providers; networks, IPAS staff operated in emergency mode, disregarding requests for family reunification within the country. As a result, older women who came to Ireland to assist their daughters with childcare often found themselves placed far away from their grandchildren. Accommodated in unfamiliar surroundings without knowledge of English or social ties within the community, those elderly women experienced feelings of restlessness and desperation. This situation imposed an additional stressor on their daughters, who struggled to support their elderly mothers. It is important to note that both the older women and their daughters frequently had poor English language proficiency, making it challenging for them to navigate the complexities of emergency accommodation approval processes, which were overseen by IPAS. Even in cases where hotel or refugee centre managers agreed to accommodate an additional family member, they still required official approval from IPAS, further complicating the reunification process.

The lack of communication between accommodation provision and other services was not the only factor that disrupted BoTPs' family networks. On the systemic narratives level, the Irish government did not make the following information available to either TPD beneficiaries or service providers, even though some EU agencies documented and shared the reality of accommodation provision in Ireland: "Requests to move within temporary accommodation are not facilitated due to the large number of arrivals and those seeking accommodation" (European Union Agency for Asylum, 2022). In the spring or summer 2022 that information was not publicly available at all. Due to this shortcoming of TPD implementation in Ireland, accommodation provision contributed to beneficiaries' unfulfilled needs for social and economic inclusion (Adam and Potvin, 2017).

While in state-provided accommodation centres many BoTPs had access to psycho-social support from culturally similar neighbours, any communal living has a potential for interpersonal, and intra- and intergroup conflict. For example, some TPD beneficiaries racialised as Black or Brown, or of Arab or Roma descent felt that other primarily racialised as white and ethnically Ukrainian residents held prejudicial attitudes and discriminated against them. A few of the first author's cases were families, where parents were non-Ukrainian citizens of African descent who were long-term residents in Ukraine before the Russian invasion and whose children held Ukrainian citizenship and spoke Ukrainian. These families shared with the first author their experience of racial discrimination from other racialised-white beneficiaries in their accommodation centres. Another commonly occurring intragroup conflict revolved around the prejudicial attitudes some Ukrainian-speaking TPD beneficiaries expressed towards their Russian-speaking counterparts. That conflict was rooted in a more complex language politics issue (Higgins and Mazhulin, 2023; Joseph, 2022). Moreover, since the TPD implementation in Ireland furthered marginalised asylum seekers and individuals benefiting from international protection, in mixed DP centres, there were tensions between IP and TPD beneficiaries.

When it comes to translating the impact of narratives and networks on TPD beneficiaries' needs, it is clear that they experienced economic, social, and cultural exclusion. Even for an Irish native access to the social world and public services in Ireland is fully based on one's geographical location. Public service provision is concentrated around towns and cities. Plus, the "Ukrainian Support Centres" were only available in the three largest cities: Dublin, Cork, and Limerick. Consequently, TPD beneficiaries in rural areas experienced greater difficulties in availing of public services, contributing to disparities in wellbeing and overall quality of life between urban and rural populations (Social Justice Ireland, 2021a,b). The reality of rural Ireland was challenging and hard even for some TPD beneficiaries who arrived

in Ireland with their own cars and then moved to vacant pledged accommodations in remote locations. Rural Ireland can be very isolated with no neighbours for miles. Hence, in the absence of neighbours and any amenities around, people who moved to remote vacant pledged houses were probably the most isolated and socio-culturally excluded, especially if the pledgers did not live in the same area. On the contrary, beneficiaries in hotels or in shared pledged accommodation in urban areas were at the most advantage.

The EU TPD policy and the way it translates to the Irish context states that its beneficiaries have rights to accommodation in Ireland, access to the labour market, access to medical care, access to social welfare assistance and means of subsistence, access to education, and family reunification. However, many implementation outcomes differed drastically from the policy on paper. In 2022 many online governmental sources, including "Citizens Information" and "Gov.ie," communicated misleading information on integration practises in place. Many BoTPs came to Ireland expecting a wealthy Western European country that would grant them access to resources and infrastructure; while in reality, there were very limited resources available regarding housing, public transport, and healthcare services (Central Statistics Office, 2023a,b; Social Justice Ireland, 2023a,b). This resulted in TPD beneficiaries feeling disappointed and upset due to their expectations and needs not being satisfied. In October 2022, the Irish Refugee Council reported on its website that the government expressed uncertainty about its ability to provide temporary accommodation to all those fleeing the war in Ukraine (Irish Refugee Council, 2022). The reason cited was the ongoing housing crisis, making it challenging to find accommodation for new arrivals. Later that information appeared in other official online sources. However, we believe that those messages were unjustifiably delayed. It was clear after the first peak of refugees from Ukraine arriving in Ireland that amidst the housing crisis, the post-pandemic economic recovery, and the government's pledge to end the DP system the Irish state was not able to provide safe and adequate conditions for people escaping war horrors.

Despite TPD beneficiaries having the right to accommodation and a need for safe shelter, their experience was marred by constant moving between state-provided accommodation centres and emergency accommodation facilities. IPAS often relocated beneficiaries to less desirable housing conditions, with little agency over their location or the type of emergency accommodation they were moved to. The lack of proper heating and issues with dampness in many repurposed properties and public facilities posed significant health concerns, especially for those with respiratory issues like allergies or asthma. Frequent and abrupt moves between state-provided accommodation centres without sufficient warning caused psychological distress and hindered beneficiaries' chances of successful social and cultural integration. The constant displacement, even in the perceived safe haven of a new country, re-traumatised many beneficiaries who had to move multiple times. Ultimately, beneficiaries' fundamental need for shelter and security was often left unfulfilled, reflecting the disempowering nature of their experiences and raising concerns about the efficacy of the TPD implementation against its intended goals.

The lack of housing stability and constant movement throughout the country contributed to economic exclusion of TPD beneficiaries as it made it quite hard for BoTPs to secure and maintain employment. Nevertheless, granting TPD beneficiaries the immediate right to work legally in Ireland was a great improvement in refugee integration policy. However, TPD beneficiaries faced a number of challenges that hindered their chances of finding employment in Ireland apart from the issues with accommodation provision. Such challenges included language barriers, lack of recognition of qualifications obtained abroad, lack of public transport and unaffordable high costs of purchasing private transport, as well as lack of understanding of the Irish labour market (Fóti et al., 2023). While there are public services designed to address these challenges in Ireland, the historic staff shortages in many areas of social work and adult education provision were worsened by the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic (O'Leary, 2022). Moreover, rural areas in Ireland even prior to the influx of TPD beneficiaries encountered various difficulties, such as an ageing population, increased part-time employment, lower median incomes, greater distance from essential services, and elevated poverty rates surpassing the national average (McCabe, 2019; Social Justice Ireland, 2021a,b). Hence, yet again the preexisting socio-economic grievances and political market imperfections posed challenges to TPD implementation in Ireland and contributed to TPD beneficiaries' social and economic exclusion.

Because, economic and socio-cultural exclusion of TPD beneficiaries were interconnected, at times, TPD beneficiaries moved out of the pledged accommodation on their own back to hotels or emergency accommodation centres as they were unable or unwilling to contribute to the growing utility bills while also covering their transportation costs and food expenses. This partially resulted from Irish pledgers' unsatisfied financial need amidst the Irish cost of living crisis and systemic delays in rolling out governmental payments for housing refugees from Ukraine. Additionally, some TPD beneficiaries moved back to state-provided accommodation due to interpersonal and intercultural misunderstandings and conflicts with pledgers since pledgers originally did not receive any trainings or briefings on how to host a refugee. The lack of intercultural competence and trauma sensitivity amongst pledgers combined with the lack of support from service providers contributed to TPD beneficiaries social and cultural exclusion.

Similarly, for BoTPs staying in state-provided accommodation centres the lack of intercultural competence and trauma sensitivity amongst service providers contributed to socio-cultural exclusion through instances of misunderstandings, miscommunication, and in certain cases even retraumatisation. For many BoTPs the original displacement trauma was retriggered by the issues with accommodation provision in Ireland. Service providers' lack of intercultural competence and knowledge about diversity within BoTPs group further resulted in social and cultural exclusion of beneficiaries who deviated from the stereotype propagated by political narratives of "Ukrainian tokenism." There were several reports of systemic discrimination against Ukrainian Roma in Ireland. There were at least 11 cases of Roma community members who were initially denied temporary protection status (Irish Human Rights Equality Commission, 2022). Those decisions

were later successfully appealed with the help of Pavee Point, a government-funded non-governmental organisation supporting Irish Traveller and Roma communities.

The first author witnessed how with their needs unmet by IPAS accommodation provision, TPD beneficiaries originally tried to seek out and join alternative networks of IRC and IOM seeking either pledged accommodation or inquiring about rental options. However, subsequently disappointed in IRC and IOM service provision, and disillusioned with the Irish political messages, some TPD beneficiaries started thinking about alternative narratives and networks and talked with the first author about moving to other EU or foreign countries.

5 Discussion

We proposed to understand the TPD implementation in Ireland and its exclusionary consequences using the 3N model: narratives, networks, and needs. This allowed us to identify that exclusion manifested at different levels—from national, to intergroup, to the individual level—as a consequence of policies and their implementation. Despite aiming for improved social inclusion, the directive's practical implementation resulted in a paradoxical outcome. The Irish response to the increasing numbers of refugees from Ukraine has been to reduce the limited supports provided, citing limited resources as the reason. This failure of the government policy is evident in various aspects, including not adequately meeting the basic needs of the general public and Irish residents, lack of proper planning for incoming migrants, and insufficient ongoing support upon their arrival. One of the major limitations of this research is that we have not included the direct perspectives of TPD beneficiaries. And while the focus of this paper is on the detailed third-party examination of TPD implementation, we plan to centre beneficiaries' voices through mixed methods and participatory research in our next set of studies.

The authors' ethnographic work facilitated bridging sociocultural divides among different refugee groups, Irish general public members, service providers, and politicians and policy-makers. It provided models for addressing injustices and insights into overcoming them. Leveraging the authors' migrant background and linguistic and cultural expertise acquired through lived experience and in-depth research of various Eastern European contexts helped mitigate the power differentials between researchers and the refugee population that the authors worked with Akesson et al. (2018); Carling et al. (2014); Jacobsen and Landau (2003). Both authors actively supported TPD beneficiaries arriving in Ireland in 2022 and continue working on projects promoting refugees' social inclusion. Ethnographic observations revealed discrepancies between intended TPD outcomes and actual implementation practises. Directly supporting refugees furthered the authors' understanding of how diverse refugee communities were marginalised in political, media, and social discourse, homogenising TPD beneficiaries into a "racialized-white, ethnically Ukrainian, and Christian" narrative and reinforcing racialised hierarchies of which refugee groups were more "deserving" of help and resources in Ireland. Through ethnographic insights, the study expressed the authors' and refugees' knowledge, emotions, and concerns about structures influencing refugee inclusion in Ireland. This "engaged" approach, rooted in empathy rather than detached objectivity, is pivotal when working with vulnerable or marginalised groups like migrants or refugees (Hugman et al., 2011; Morawska, 2018; Müller-Funk, 2021; Volcic, 2022).

The application of the 3N model to the analysis of the TPD policy, political discourse around it and its implementation as well as its effects on different stakeholders provides a comprehensive understanding of the interactions between the needs, narratives, and networks dimensions, allowing us to also compare between different groups within the Irish society. While the TPD intended goal was to facilitate social integration of refugees from Ukraine, it led instead to narratives and experiences of social exclusion among both TPD beneficiaries and other vulnerable groups in Ireland (e.g., the Irish homeless and International Protection beneficiaries). In the same national context, contrasting provisions of services and resources resulted in very different experiences between TPD beneficiaries and those under international protection system and reverberated to the exclusion of other groups in Ireland. Our findings underscore how preexisting social, economic, political, and cultural narratives and grievances led to many shortcomings in the TPD implementation, resulting in sentimental inclusion but systematic exclusion of Ukrainian war refugees seeking refuge in Ireland.

Our findings showed a 2-fold paradox of TPD intended integration that in reality resulted in furthering social exclusion in Ireland. Firstly, it created a double standard of refugee service provision and further marginalised asylum seekers and beneficiaries of international protection. Irish politicians also antagonised those groups in comparison to TPD beneficiaries which contributed to racialised narratives within public and media discourse. Irish TPD implementation also discriminated against racialised-Black/Brown as well as Roma individuals who fled Russian war in Ukraine and sought refuge in Ireland. While the EU mandates shaped Irish policy towards TPD beneficiaries with a focus on immediate entitlements, national factors drove policies, such as emphasising refugee housing in private accommodation (Daly and O'Riordan, 2023). The latter was not previously used in relation to accommodating people with granted refugee status staying in DP centres. There are certainly racialised and Islamophobic elements underlying both the wider EU TPD response and the Irish national policies and practises of service provision to TPD beneficiaries (Daly and O'Riordan, 2023; Genç and Sirin Öner, 2019; Ineli Ciger, 2022).

Subsequently, we can see that the opposition TDs' calls for more transparency on housing provision for refugees from Ukraine amidst the Irish housing crisis to prevent or mitigate the far-right groups' desire to manipulate vulnerable Irish groups to become xenophobic were predictive of the Irish reality. The rising far-right and anti-immigration sentiments and the escalations of violence against refugees and immigrants in Ireland (Humphries and Kilcoyne, 2023; McDaid and McAuley, 2023; Tynan, 2023) are frequently motivated by the narratives that blame the housing crisis and poverty on large numbers of refugees in the state rather than on the real cause which is the inadequate governmental policies over the last 30 years (Hearne, 2022; Kitchin et al., 2015). This study utilised the 3N approach to show how the political and public discourse around the TPD and its implementation in Ireland resulted in social exclusion of various refugee groups and further

contributed to reinforcement of racialised group hierarchies within the Irish context (Daly and O'Riordan, 2023).

One of the major limitations of this study is the absence of direct perspectives from TPD beneficiaries. However, this is the first of the three proposed studies carried out as part of the first author's PhD research that examines facilitators and challenges to TPD beneficiaries' social inclusion in Ireland. The two studies that are now underway will involve direct input from refugees from Ukraine and examine the needs, networks, and internalised narratives dimension in-depth. While this study discusses and introduces different aspects of Narratives, Networks, and Needs in relation to TPD stakeholders in Ireland, this study mostly focused on the Narratives to explore how political discourse and the TPD policy and its implementation impacted the other two dimensions. Future studies could also look at how unfulfilled needs of other stakeholders (service providers, volunteers, accommodation pledgers, members of vulnerable groups, etc.,) impacted their behaviour and whether they embarked on a search for alternative narratives and/or networks in order to satisfied their needs.

6 Conclusion

In a society marked by inequality and the denial of basic human rights to a significant portion of its citizens, the capacity to support an influx of refugees becomes severely compromised. To effectively address this issue, policies must tackle existing inequalities and encompass comprehensive future planning that caters to all segments of society. In the Irish context, this entails looking beyond the TPD and focusing on ending the DP system, as well as transitioning from reactive to proactive policy systems. By adopting a preparatory approach, the government can better anticipate and meet the needs of both its citizens and incoming migrants, fostering a more inclusive and equitable environment for all.

Data availability statement

The original contributions presented in the study are included in the article/supplementary material, further inquiries can be directed to the corresponding author.

Ethics statement

Ethical review and approval was not required for the study on human participants in accordance with the local legislation and institutional requirements. Written informed consent from the patients/participants or patients/participants' legal guardian/next of kin was not required to participate in this study in accordance with the national legislation and the institutional requirements.

Author contributions

AZ: Conceptualisation, Formal analysis, Investigation, Methodology, Writing – original draft, Writing – review & editing. AM: Conceptualisation, Formal analysis, Investigation, Methodology, Supervision, Writing – review & editing.

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Conflict of interest

The authors declare that the research was conducted in the absence of any commercial or financial relationships that could be construed as a potential conflict of interest.

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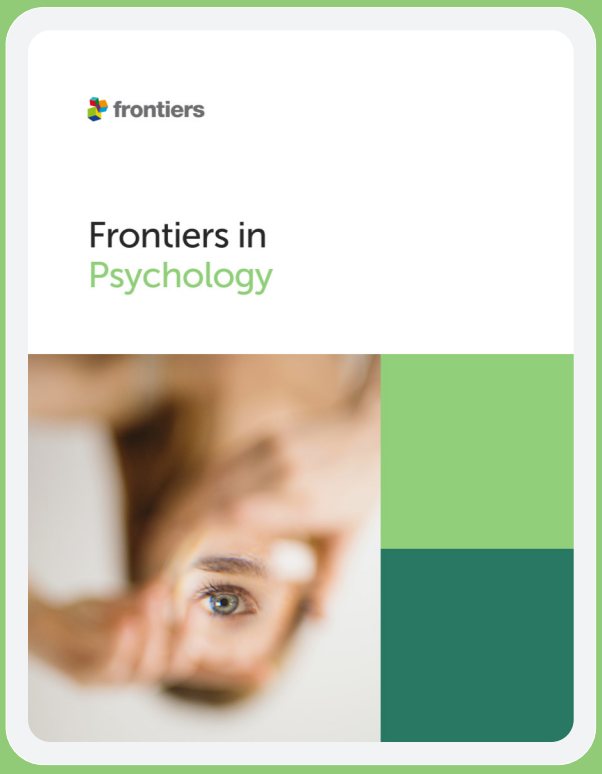

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