Context, Power and Diversity Perceptions: A Comparison of UK and South African Employees

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Abstract

This quantitative study explored group differences in organisational commitment and fairness perceptions across two national contexts. Integrating the social identity and intergroup theories, we analysed categories in relation to proposed differences in power relations in South Africa in a private organisation with over 30 000 employees and the United Kingdom in a public organisation with 10 000 employees. In both countries, White men perceived the organisation as most fair. Black men in South Africa and Black women in the United Kingdom perceived the organisation as least fair. A positive and significant relationship between commitment and organisational fairness for all ethnic-gender groups in both countries were found except for White men in the United Kingdom. In South Africa, White men were significantly more committed to the organisation than White men in the United Kingdom. We categorised groups on the basis of intersecting identities and power relations that are meaningful in a specific context to understand personal or organisational diversity attitudes and outcomes. Our approach offers a new avenue for meaningful examination of diversity outcomes in organisations. Our findings suggest that organisations should not only employ fair and inclusive organisational policies but may also need to differentially manage diversity perceptions for different ethnic-gender groups.

Keywords: organisational commitment; fairness perceptions; power relations; United Kingdom; South Africa; intersecting identities

Introduction

This article contributes by examining ethnic and gender differences in perceptions of employee commitment and organisational diversity climate in two contrasting national contexts, the United Kingdom (UK) and South Africa (SA). Prevailing diversity

research and theorising have advanced understanding of the way in which diversity shapes organisational outcomes. However, more work is needed that pays attention to meanings and experiences relating to multiple, intersecting identity dimensions at organisational and national levels beyond the North American context.

"Diversity climate" captures employees' shared perceptions of the degree to which an organisation utilises fair employee policies and socially integrates under-represented employees (Mor Barak et al., 1998). Diversity climate comprises an organisational dimension (organisational fairness and inclusion attitudes) and a personal dimension (personal value and comfort with organisational diversity). Diversity climate, including the extent to which organisational members perceive their employee values their social identities, is important as many employees from under-represented groups experience exclusion and discrimination (Chow & Crawford, 2004; Goldman et al., 2006). Such experiences limit employee motivation and contribution to organisational functioning (Roberson & Block, 2001). Research suggests differences in diversity climate perceptions with White men generally perceiving organisations as fairer. In comparison, women and minority ethnic men and women see more value in and are more comfortable with supporting diversity and diversity-related policies (Kossek & Zonia, 1993; Mor Barak et al., 1998; Soni, 2000).

Socio-demographic group differences can be partly explained by the social identity theory (SIT) (Booysen, 2007) and the intergroup theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1985). People naturally classify themselves and others into categories, such as gender, age and organisational membership, seeking meaning and significance from these classifications (Hogg, 2020). The SIT is concerned with the psychology and sociology of group behaviour, group association and intergroup discrimination (Hogg, 2020). The SIT emphasises that individuals put themselves and others in categories (Hogg, 2020). They associate with certain groups (i.e. in-groups) and they compare groups to which they belong favourably against other groups (Booysen, 2007). The intergroup theory emphasises connections between social structures and individual identity, such that the meaning people attach to identity group memberships shapes their interactions with in- and out-group members. Perceptions of organisational actions and policies (such as diversity climate) are therefore explicably affected by identity group membership (Ashford & Mael, 1989). Individuals often support institutions that embody their identities and stereotypical perceptions of self (Ashford & Mael, 1989).

Cox's (1994) interactional model of cultural diversity (IMCD) suggests that organisational diversity climate influences individual career experiences and affective outcomes (for example, organisational commitment) and ultimately, organisational effectiveness. Organisational commitment is the relative strength of an individual's identification with and involvement in a particular organisation (Mowday et al., 1979). It entails a strong belief and acceptance of the organisation's goals, a willingness to exert considerable effort on the organisation's behalf and a strong desire to maintain organisational membership (Hicks-Clark & Iles, 2000). The diversity climate positively

correlates with organisational, job and career attitudes including satisfaction with one's manager and future career (Hicks-Clark & Iles, 2000). The diversity climate moderates the impact of the demographic category on turnover intentions, organisational identification and commitment (Buttner et al., 2012; Gonzalez & Denisi, 2009; McKay et al., 2007).

Overall, the evidence reviewed so far (typical of organisational diversity research) is heavily influenced by North American data and theorisation (Nishii & Ozbilgin, 2007). However, diversity is increasingly becoming a global management concept, partly owing to the expansion of national laws and international policies to eliminate discrimination, and the rise of litigation against global high-profile firms (Nishii & Ozbilgin, 2007). Reliance on North American diversity research has been critiqued by many global diversity scholars. For example, Jonsen et al., (2011) point out that in Europe, unlike the United States (US), many diversity-related challenges relate to minority–majority relations, in contrast to the US' intergroup racial dynamics. In addition, in contrast to the US' immigration and assimilation history, difficulties of obtaining national citizenship suggest that feelings of exclusion are more prevalent across Europe (Jonsen et al., 2011). Although many forms of discrimination considered unlawful are similar across countries, interpretation and implementation across differing national contexts remain complex and unclear ((Nishii & Ozbilgin, 2007; Plaut, 2010). Scholars and practitioners therefore need to interpret and contrast social group interactions within a context of historically shaped cultural and structural difference when conceptualising diversity globally (Nishii & Ozbilgin, 2007; Plaut, 2010).

An emic approach selects salient categories of difference for examination by first considering the diversity and power-related dynamics significant to the specific context under investigation. It is therefore recommended that scholars take an emic approach to diversity research (Tatli & Ozbilgin, 2012). In addition, examining diversity involves intersectionality which is an analytical framework and a mindset that draws attention to simultaneous social category membership and multiple positionality in a system (Atewologun, 2018). Intersectionality draws attention to the fact that social identities carry meaning in relation to each other (Atewologun, 2018). Crenshaw (1991) coined the term to highlight that experiences Black women face are not within the boundaries of race or gender discrimination, but at the intersection of racism and sexism. Multiple marginalisation therefore produces composite forms of inequality across various social domains, including human rights, educational, economic opportunities and political representation (Crenshaw, 2017).

Overall, despite advances in understanding the way in which diversity shapes organisational outcomes, three key areas remain important: sensitivity to contextual influences on meanings and experiences of diversity at organisational and national levels, the role of power relationships in ascertaining relevant dimensions, and the interplay of numerous, intersecting identity dimensions in creating meaning and significance (Crenshaw, 2017; Plaut, 2010; Tatli & Ozbilgin, 2012). Next, we introduce

the socio-demographic, historical and legal contexts in the UK and SA for examining ethnic and gender relations and diversity studies.

Contextualising Diversity in the UK and SA

According to the most recent data, the UK population is 63.2 million, of which 32.2 million are women (Office of National Statistics, 2012). People of White ethnicity account for 86 per cent of the population. The rest of the population comprises 8 per cent Asian people, 3 per cent Black people, 2 per cent people of mixed ethnicity, and 1 per cent "Other" minority ethnic group. There is consistent evidence of labour market disadvantages for women and non-White minority ethnic individuals in the UK (Cornelius & Skinner, 2008; Kahanec & Zimmerman, 2011). Minority ethnic individuals have significantly higher unemployment rates (double that of the White population). In addition, minority ethnic individuals who work have lower income, face greater barriers to finding work, and, once they find it, are less likely to keep it (Kahanec & Zimmerman, 2011). According to Grimshaw (2007), British women constitute half the working population. However, of the 15 European Union countries, they face the highest pay gap (paid less) compared to their male counterparts. Female managers are under-represented in the most senior positions (Cornelius & Skinner, 2008) and gender segregation is prevalent in some sectors, with 80 per cent of British women working in health and social care and 25 per cent in manufacturing (Ogden et al., 2006).

Over the last 40 years, the UK policy towards redressing these inequities has been within the framework of race relations and equal opportunities legislation (Wrench, 2004). The imperative has been to adopt procedural impartiality to ensure equal opportunities for women, people with disabilities and minority groups facing workplace discrimination (Wrench, 2004). Equal opportunity policies are often perceived as voluntary, "best practice" tactics and promoted as a business strategy to improve performance (Kahanec & Zimmerman, 2011). Affirmative action or positive discrimination has never been part of this framework (Kahanec & Zimmerman, 2011). However, public authorities have a "positive duty" to promote race equality (Kahanec & Zimmerman, 2011). From a perspective of power relations and intersecting identities, in the UK context, White men, comprising the largest ethnic group and higher status gender are therefore theorised to wield the greatest amount of social capital, with associated power and privilege in organisations, in relation to White women and male and female minority ethnic colleagues (Kahanec & Zimmerman, 2011).

According to the 2011 census, the SA population is 51.7 million, with 51 per cent of the total population female. Black people comprise 79 per cent of the population while the rest of the population comprises 9 per cent Coloured people, 9 per cent White people, 2.5 per cent Asian people and 0.5 per cent "Others". However, the workforce is unrepresentative of the country's demographic profile (Daya, 2014). The former apartheid regime restricted non-White access to education, skills and professional or managerial positions (Jain et al., 2012). Job discrimination in SA was institutionalised

through legislation that included job reservation clauses and restricted access to skilled jobs, preserved for White employees (Jain et al., 2012).

However, in the 1990s and 2000s, post-apartheid South Africa enacted considerably progressive legislative measures to provide previously disadvantaged South Africans with access to all aspects of the economy and to ensure fair access to resources, opportunities and skills (Selby, 2005). The Employment Equity Act (RSA, 1998) requires employers to implement preferential treatment to designated groups (Black people, Coloured people, Indian people, White women and people who are physically disadvantaged) to redistribute jobs, income and occupations to all groups (Wocke & Sutherland, 2008). The Broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment Act (RSA, 2003) aims to provide Black people with economic opportunities to control, manage and own the South African economy. Despite this legislation, Black employees remain at relatively lower, unskilled occupational levels, with White men significantly over-represented in top and middle management (Jain et al., 2012). Although 74 per cent of SA's economically active population is Black, individuals from this group only account for 18.5 per cent of top management, 21.8 per cent of senior management and 36.3 per cent of professionally skilled employees in the private sector (Commission for Employment Equity, 2012). Indian and Coloured employees remain positioned somewhat between the Black and White groups (Jain et al., 2012).

Compared to Western contexts (such as the UK and the US) as sources of knowledge on racial diversity management, South Africa offers a unique and significant context for understanding racial relations as the numerical majority group is not represented in status or numbers in organisational positions (Commission for Employment Equity, 2012). This cultural context can therefore be expected to produce unique tensions and behaviours in the workplace (Booysen & Nkomo, 2010). In comparison to the unique racial history and subsequent context of South African organisations, gender inequality is similar to many other countries (Cornelius & Skinner, 2008). Although in the slight majority, women account for one-third of the labour force and are mainly concentrated in service, retail, and manufacturing sectors (Jain et al., 2012). Across all sectors, women mainly occupy jobs associated with stereotyped domestic roles (Jain et al., 2012). In addition, White women have seen the most benefit from the Employment Equity Act (Commission for Employment Equity, 2012).

As comparative contexts for understanding diversity, the UK and SA therefore offer significant points of interest for exploration and knowledge advancement. Both countries have a history of discrimination against women and ethnic minorities, resulting in the current inequalities in the workplace (Commission for Employment Equity, 2012). Gender equality in both countries is underpinned by job segregation and stereotypically feminine roles (Cornelius & Skinner, 2008; Jain et al., 2012). South African Black people were institutionally disadvantaged by the apartheid regime (Jain et al., 2012). Today, SA utilises employment equity (EE) legislation to redress past injustices (Jain et al., 2012). However, in the UK, such positive discrimination has

historically been illegal (Wrench, 2004). The recent UK Equality Act (2010) allows provision for voluntary positive action to redress disadvantage, in contrast to SA where EE legislation enforces redressing inequalities (Jain et al., 2012). In addition, Black people represent the majority in SA in comparison to the White majority in the UK (Cornelius & Skinner, 2008; Daya, 2014).

From a power relations perspective (Tatli & Ozbilgin, 2012), the UK context represents a "typical" diversity scenario. Socio-economic power and social capital is predominantly held by the ethnic majority and dominant gender – White men. In contrast, in SA, where historically, cultural capital (skills, qualification, education and work experience) has been held by the White male minority, there is now a legal imperative to distribute wealth and capital to Black people and women (Jain et al., 2012). As both countries have a history of discrimination against social identity groups (Black people and women) who are still under-represented in the workplace (Jain et al., 2012; Wrench, 2004), it is our expectation that ethnic-gender groups would differ in their diversity climate perceptions, with consequent impact on organisational commitment.

Using power or capital and intersecting identities as a meaningful basis for categorising social groups, we apply Booysen's (2005) categorisation of three dominant social identities in the South African workplace – Black people, White men and a "Middle group" of Indian people, Coloured people and White women. Sensitive to intersecting gender and ethnic disadvantage (in line with intersectionality theorising), we propose four social identity groups ("ethnic-gender groups") for comparison – White men, Black men, Black women and the Middle group (White women and non-Black minority ethnic individuals in the UK, and non-White minority ethnic individuals in SA). However, we acknowledge that race or ethnicity is socially constructed and not all individuals categorised can be assumed to have the same culture and perceptions (Waters, 2002). To our knowledge, this is the first study to explore and contrast diversity climate perceptions between the UK and SA samples. In addition to this empirical contribution, we integrate contextual understanding of social identities with theoretical perspectives of intergroup differences. We categorise and compare groups based on their significance and meaning in their national contexts, rather than simply socio-demographic membership. We consider the role of power inherent in intersecting ethnic-gender categories and pertinent legal or structural or socio-cultural factors on employee attitudes and outcomes, as recommended by authors such as Plaut (2010) and Tatli and Ozbilgin (2012). Based on our findings, we make a number of assertions to be tested in further research.

As earlier discussed, socio-demographic groups differ in their organisational perceptions regarding diversity practices. In SA, group identities and differences are highly salient as they have long been socially constructed and manipulated because of rigidly applied apartheid laws (Ocholla, 2002). In addition, current labour legislation has disrupted the White minority advantage in the labour market by seeking to empower

the Black majority (Thomas & Jain, 2004). Black people may feel frustrated by continued power disparities, whereas White men may feel undervalued and threatened by a perceived lack of future opportunities (Booysen, 2005). White women, Coloured and Indian people find themselves in the "middle" being the "wrong gender" or "not Black enough" in the context of benefitting from current legislative imperatives (Booysen, 2005). However, White women have gained power in recent times, historically being the greatest beneficiaries of the Employment Equity Act (Commission for Employment Equity, 2012). High person–organisation value congruence is associated with increased organisational commitment (O'Reilley et al., 1991). Employees who value diversity and perceive a pro-diversity climate are expected to be more committed to the organisation. However, the contrasting contexts of the UK and SA suggest that diversity climate perceptions may have different implications for ethnic-gender groups. By adapting contextual sensitivities to the intergroup theory and the SIT, we propose the following hypotheses:

- Hypothesis 1a: In the UK, White men, the Middle group, Black men and Black women will differ on organisational fairness perceptions.

- Hypothesis 1b: In the UK, White men, the Middle group, Black men and Black women will differ on personal diversity value.

- Hypothesis 2a: In SA, White men, the Middle group, Black men and Black women will differ on organisational fairness perceptions.

- Hypothesis 2b: In SA, White men, the Middle group, Black men and Black women will differ on personal diversity value.

The SIT and the intergroup theory also indicate that ethnic-gender group membership affects diversity climate perceptions, which in turn affect individual outcomes such as organisational commitment. This is particularly pertinent to those employees on whom diversity personally impacts (those with lowest social and economic capital), rather than White men in the most powerful positions. The following hypothesis is therefore proposed:

- Hypothesis 3a: In the UK, there will be a positive relationship between commitment and perceived organisational fairness. This relationship will significantly differ for White men in comparison to the Middle group, Black men and Black women.

The SA legal context further complicates the hypothesised relationship between diversity climate perceptions and commitment for ethnic-gender groups. Wocke and Sutherland (2008) suggest that the post-apartheid labour legislation has changed the power distances between social identity groups and reinforced these identities. There is increased demand for Black workers in a market in which there is a shortage of skilled Black employees owing to the apartheid legacy. This labour market imbalance and increased organisational investment through training make it easier for such employees to develop skills valuable not only to their employers but also to the wider labour

market, therefore making it possible to exit (Gardner, 2005). Therefore, despite their employer's investment, Black employees are more likely to find a new job in the short term owing to the favourable labour market (Reddy, 2004). In contrast, the legal or historic context means that White men and the Middle group have a different relationship with their employing organisation and the wider market (Booysen, 2005). White men feel threatened by a perceived lack of future opportunities and feeling undervalued (Booysen, 2004). Greater organisational loyalty and commitment is therefore expected of White men considering their low employment market mobility (Wocke & Sutherland, 2008). Most turnover models view organisational commitment as an intervening variable in the turnover process (Gaertner, 1999). It is therefore suggested that differences in commitment levels are partly owing to turnover intentions sensitive to labour market trends. The following hypotheses are therefore proposed:

- Hypothesis 3b: In SA there will be a positive relationship between commitment and perceived organisational fairness. This relationship will significantly differ for White men and the Middle group, in comparison to Black men and Black women.

- Hypothesis 3c: In SA there will be a positive relationship between commitment and perceived organisational fairness. This relationship will significantly differ for the Middle group in comparison to Black men and Black women.

As previously described, diversity scholars strongly implicate the role of context in influencing attitudes, practices and perceptions. We therefore propose the following contrasting hypotheses between the two countries:

- Hypothesis 4a: White men in SA will differ significantly on organisational commitment levels in comparison to White men in the UK.

- Hypothesis 4b: There will be a positive relationship between commitment and organisational fairness for both countries. This relationship will differ significantly for the combined Middle group, Black men and Black women in SA in comparison to the combined Middle group, Black men and Black women in the UK.

Method

Measures

In this quantitative research study, the questionnaire (available from the first author) comprised demographics (gender and ethnic classifications), the nine-item Organisational Commitment Questionnaire (OCQ) (Mowday et al., 1979) (cited by McKay et al., 2007), and the Diversity Perceptions Scale (DPS) (Mor Barak et al., 1998). The OCQ demonstrates strong internal consistency (median $r = 0.90$) and good test–retest reliability ($r = 0.53$ to 0.75). It also has acceptable levels of convergent, discriminant and predictive validity (Mowday et al., 1979). Sample items are: "I am

proud to tell others that I am part of this organisation" and "I am willing to put a great deal of effort beyond that normally expected in order to help this organisation be successful". The DPS has been demonstrated as reliable and psychometrically valid. Cronbach's alpha for the overall scale was .83, indicating excellent internal consistency (Mor Barak et al., 1998). It conceptualises organisations' diversity environment across organisational and personal dimensions. "Organisational dimension (fairness and inclusion)" concerns perceptions of management policies and procedures specifically affecting women and mixed gender-ethnic minority individuals. Sample items include: "Managers here give feedback and evaluate employees objectively, regardless of the employees' ethnicity, gender, age or social background." The "personal dimension (diversity value and comfort)" incorporates individual views and prejudices towards people who are different. These views and prejudices can affect attitudes and behaviours towards one's colleagues. Sample items included: "Knowing more about cultural norms of diverse groups would help me be more effective in my job." Both questionnaires employed a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

Participants and Procedures

This study was conducted in two organisations, one in the UK and the other in SA. The UK organisation is a local government council in the Greater London area with over 10 000 employees. The South African organisation is a private security company with over 30 000 employees. Both organisations are located in urban, "diverse" areas with comparable employee profiles ranging from semi-skilled to professional. Both organisations demonstrated a comparable overt commitment to equality. This was demonstrated in their policies and business or HR strategies. Identical surveys (apart from ethnic-gender classifications) were distributed across both organisations. Before distributing the survey, communication was sent to all employees assuring confidentiality and emphasising the organisations' commitment to EE (in SA). The survey link was available on the UK organisation's intranet and elicited 113 responses over two weeks. The South African organisation's IT department distributed the survey to 300 randomly selected employees of which 130 were returned, yielding a 43 per cent response rate. The Black male and Black female categories in the UK constituted the smallest sample sizes (see Table 1). Semi-skilled to professional South African employees were targeted. To maximise anonymity, no additional identifying socio-demographic data were sought.

Table 1: SA and UK demographic groups

Demographics	SA number	SA percentage of total survey population	UK number	UK percentage of total survey population
White men	16	12	24	21
Black men	41	32	6	5
Middle group	50	38	70	62
Black women	23	18	13	12
Total	130		113	

Results

The data were first checked for missing values and normality, with negatively worded items reverse-coded. For SA, the Kolmogorov-Smirnov (KS) test was non-significant for all variables, except for personal diversity value. The KS test was significant for all UK data, indicating non-normality. As recommended by Field (2009), the shape of the distribution was also consulted. This indicated mild skewness and kurtosis for both country data sets on all variables except personal diversity value in the UK (see Table 2). As noted by Field (2009), for small samples (< 200), z-scores should be compared for normal distribution at a value greater than 1.96 for significance at $p < .05$. In addition, logarithmic transformation was conducted on these variables, which yielded no difference in the results, therefore the original data were subsequently utilised.

Table 2: Z-scores – Skewness and kurtosis

Variable	SA skewness	SA kurtosis	UK skewness	UK kurtosis
Commitment	1.38	0.60	1.70	0.28
Diversity value	0.98	0.24	3.93	4.05
Organisational fairness	0.65	1.69	1.05	0.07

Table 3 presents means, standard deviations and alpha coefficients for the dependent variables (DVs) – commitment, organisational fairness and personal diversity value for both countries.

Table 3: Means, standard deviations and alpha coefficients for all scales

Variable	Min.	Max.	Mean	SD	Alpha (α)
UK commitment	2.75	4.03	3.31	.45	.86
UK organisational fairness	2.42	3.55	3.15	.34	.85
UK diversity value	3.03	4.42	3.70	.52	.65
SA commitment	2.84	4.33	3.67	.46	.83
SA organisational fairness	2.50	3.25	3.00	.23	.87
SA diversity value	2.61	4.03	3.62	.51	.35

Note: N UK = 113, N SA = 130

The data demonstrated good internal reliability with Cronbach's alpha (α) values, ranging from .65 to .87 (with the exception of SA personal value of organisational diversity of .35, considered further in the discussion). The multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) was used to test hypotheses 1a, 1b, 2a and 2b. The independent variable (IV) was employee demographics, i.e. ethnic-gender groups. The DVs comprised organisational fairness, personal diversity value and commitment. Spearman's correlation coefficient was used to gauge the relationship between commitment and organisational fairness for hypotheses 3a, 3b, 3c and 4b. An independent t-test was used to contrast differences in commitment levels between South African White men and UK White men to test hypothesis 4a.

To examine UK group differences on valuing organisational diversity and organisational fairness, assumption tests were conducted before the MANOVAs and results supported continued analysis. Roy's root statistic was used following Field's (2009) recommendation for its additional power when differences are focused on one variate. This statistic indicated a significant effect of employee demographics on commitment, organisational fairness and valuing organisational diversity, $\theta = 0.15$, $F(3,109) = 5.47$, $p < .05$ (Table 3). Follow-on univariate analysis of variance (ANOVA) tests indicated no significant group differences on commitment levels, $F(3,109) = .079$, $p > .05$ and valuing organisational diversity, $F(3,109) = .449$, $p > .05$. However, there was a significant effect of demographics on organisational fairness perceptions, $F(3,109) = 3.76$, $p < .05$. The hypothesis (1b) that there would be ethnic-gender differences in personal diversity value in the UK was therefore not supported. However, the hypothesis (1a) that there would be group differences in organisational fairness perceptions was supported. Post-hoc tests were used to determine where these differences lie. The Games-Howell test was selected to enable comparisons across countries despite differing sample sizes. This revealed that White men and Black women in the UK reported significantly different organisational fairness perceptions (see Table 4).

Table 4: Results of MANOVA: Mean differences of main effect

	IV	Organisational fairness
Demographics	White men Black women	34.58 26.84

To examine SA group differences on valuing organisational diversity and organisational fairness (H2a and H2b), assumption tests were conducted before the MANOVAs. The results supported continued analysis (Table 5). Levene's test indicated significant results for organisational fairness, $F(3,126) = 4.91$, $p < .05$. Following Tabachnick and Fidell (2007), a more conservative alpha level of .01 for detecting significance differences in organisational fairness was set and the more robust Pillai's trace used for all three DVs. This indicated a significant effect of SA employee demographics on commitment, organisational fairness and personal value of organisational diversity, $V = 0.19$, $F(9,378) = 2.82$, $p < .05$. Separate follow-on univariate ANOVAs on the outcome variables indicated non-significant demographic differences on commitment, $F(3,126) = .220$, $p > .05$, and personal value of organisational diversity, $F(3,126) = .299$, $p > .05$. However, there was a significant effect of demographics on organisational fairness perceptions, $F(3,126) = 7.20$, $p < .01$. The hypothesis (2b) that there would be ethnic-gender differences in personal diversity value for South African employees was therefore not supported. However, the hypothesis (2a) of demographic differences in organisational fairness perceptions was supported. Post-hoc analyses revealed significant differences in the mean scores on perceived organisational fairness between White men and Black men, White men and Black women, and Black men and the Middle group.

Table 5: Results of MANOVA: Mean differences of main effect

	IV	Organisational fairness
Demographics	White men Black men Black women Middle group	35.75 26.14 28.17 32.06

Spearman's rank order correlations were conducted as a non-parametric statistic suitable for non-normally distributed data (Field, 2009) (Table 2). Hypothesis 3a proposed a positive relationship between commitment and perceived organisational fairness that would significantly differ for British White men compared to other UK ethnic-gender groups. This hypothesis was partially supported. There was a non-

significant positive relationship between commitment and organisational fairness for White men, $rs = .27$, $p > .01$. As hypothesised, there was a significant positive relationship between commitment and perceived organisational fairness for the combined group of UK Black men, Black women and the Middle group, $rs = .45$, $p < .01$.

Hypothesis 3b proposed a positive relationship between commitment and perceived organisational fairness that would significantly differ between SA White men plus the Middle group, in comparison to Black men and Black women. The results supported the hypothesis that there would be a significant positive relationship between commitment and perceived organisational fairness for White men and the Middle group, $rs = .57$, $p < .01$. There was also a significant positive relationship between commitment and organisational fairness for Black men and Black women, $rs = .55$, $p < .01$. The difference test between independent correlation coefficients revealed, however, that the correlation between commitment and organisational fairness was not significantly different for White men and the Middle group in comparison to Black men and Black women in SA, $z = .16$, $p = .87$ ($p > .05$). Hypothesis 3b was therefore only partially supported.

It was further hypothesised (H3c) that the positive relationship between commitment and organisational fairness will be significantly different for the Middle group in comparison to Black men and Black women. As reported earlier, there was a significant positive relationship between commitment and organisational fairness for Black South Africans. There was also a significant positive relationship between commitment and organisational fairness for the Middle group, $rs = .55$, $p < .01$. However, there was equal correlation between commitment and organisational fairness for both groups. Hypothesis 3c was therefore only partially supported.

Cross-Cultural Comparison of High Power Groups

It was hypothesised (H4a) that White SA men would report different organisational commitment levels compared to White UK men (Tables 4 and 5). On average, White SA men demonstrated greater organisational commitment ($M = 33.56$, $SE = 1.68$) than their UK counterparts ($M = 29.42$, $SE = 1.23$). An independent t-test indicated that difference was significant $t(38) = 2.04$, $p < .05$, $r = .31$, representing a medium-sized effect (Field, 2009). Hypothesis 4a was therefore fully supported.

Hypothesis 4b proposed a positive relationship between commitment and organisational fairness for both countries. We anticipated, however, that the relationship would differ significantly for the combined Middle group, Black men and Black women in SA, compared to the combined Middle group, Black men and Black women in the UK. The results supported the hypothesis of a significant relationship between commitment and organisational fairness for the Middle group, Blacks men and Black women in the UK, $rs = .45$, $p < .01$. This was also the case in SA, $rs = .55$, $p < .01$. The difference test between independent correlation coefficients indicated that these correlations were not

significantly different for the lower power groups in SA compared to their UK counterparts, $z = 1.00$, $p = .32$ ($p > .05$). Hypothesis 4b was therefore partly supported.

Discussion

We explored demographic differences in diversity perceptions and organisational commitment across two contrasting national contexts. We categorised groups based on their significance and meaning (i.e. power inherent in intersecting ethnic-gender categories) in their national contexts, rather than simply socio-demographic membership. To our knowledge, this is the first exploration of contrasting diversity perceptions between SA and the UK. We have therefore made a number of assertions that are to be tested in further research.

Ethnic-Gender Differences on Organisational Fairness Perceptions in the UK

Hypothesis 1a predicted that organisational fairness perceptions would significantly differ across ethnic-gender groups in the UK. This was partially supported. White British men reported significantly higher scores on organisational fairness compared to the least powerful intersecting group of Black women. There were, however, non-significant differences between White men and the Middle group, and White men and Black men. This fits with previous findings. Compared to the more privileged White men in most diversity research, women and ethnic minorities are considered more attuned to inequality issues, and more likely to support diversity and view the organisation as less fair (Chow & Crawford, 2004; Kossek & Zonia, 1993; Mor Barak et al., 1998; Soni, 2000). In addition, our assertion is that the intersection of gender with ethnicity indicates a difference in climate perceptions between the most and least powerful social groups.

Black women are considered less privileged or powerful than White women and Black men because they are subject to intersectional inequality (Crenshaw, 1991); the "double jeopardy" of racism and sexism (Sesko & Biernat, 2010; Settles, 2006). This is in contrast to White men, who are favoured by power structures and resources, who are assumed to prefer the status quo and perceive the organisation as fairer (Chow & Crawford, 2004), and who occupied most senior positions in our sample UK organisation. Furthermore, compared to White women, minority ethnic members may be more positively inclined towards equal opportunity initiatives (Parker et al., 1997; Soni, 2000).

In addition, no differences were found between Black and White men on perceived organisational fairness. This finding is in contrast to the literature (Mor Barak et al., 1998). There was a non-significant difference between the Middle group and White men on organisational fairness outcomes. Our assertion is that the large proportion of White women (comprising 76% of the Middle group) may have contributed to this.

Ethnic-Gender Differences on Personal Diversity Value in the UK

White women and mixed gender-ethnic minority employees see more value in, and appear more comfortable with, diversity than White men (Mor Barak et al., 1998). Furthermore, this may be because they are likely to be the beneficiaries of policies and procedures that promote diversity (Kossek & Zonia, 1993). We posit that White men may see themselves at the losing end of "diversity" as attention shifts to other groups, potentially altering organisational power structures and resource allocation. Hypothesis 1b predicted that diversity value scores would significantly differ across ethnic-gender groups. This was not observed as noted in Mor Barak et al. (1998). The non-significant difference between groups suggests that everybody in the organisation valued diversity equally. This may be owing to organisational factors. The UK organisation actively sought to retain staff and manage diversity through values communication and training interventions. This may have had a positive impact on employees' value of workplace diversity. Enthusiastic responses regarding diversity value may also reflect political correctness social norms (as noted by Paluck, 2006).

Ethnic-Gender Differences on Organisational Fairness Perceptions in SA

Similar to hypothesis 1a for the UK, hypothesis 2a posited that ethnic-gender groups in SA would differ significantly on fairness perceptions. This was partially supported. Although there was a non-significant difference between the Middle group and Black women, Black men and Black women were significantly lower than White men, with Black men perceiving the organisation as least fair. Black men were also significantly lower than the Middle group. White men (similar to their powerful UK counterparts) perceived the organisation as being most fair followed by the Middle group. As discussed previously, Booysen (2005) posited that Black individuals were frustrated by the wait for transformation, the Middle group saw themselves as the "wrong gender" or "not Black enough" and White men felt threatened by the lack of opportunities. Black men and Black women are most likely to benefit from policies that promote diversity (Kossek & Zonia, 1993) or, in South Africa, pursue EE objectives more rigorously as they are the primary beneficiaries (Wocke & Sutherland, 2008). Based on the findings, it is our assertion that perhaps by considering the historical and political context, Black men and women are keenly aware of their disadvantaged status, resulting in their viewing the organisation as least fair. The Middle group perceives themselves as not benefitting as much from EE, therefore viewing the organisation as fairer but not as fair as White men, who are threatened and see themselves at the losing end of EE (Booysen, 2005).

The non-significant difference in perceptions between the Middle group and Black women is notable in the light of Black women being the most prioritised EE beneficiaries (Hofmeyr & Mzobe, 2011) and who may be expected to view the organisation as less fair than the Middle group. Hofmeyr and Mzobe (2011) note that, in theory, Black women are doubly advantaged (high status) by the Broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment Act (RSA, 2003) and EE. However, additional contextual

factors are worth considering. South African women find it difficult to rise to senior and executive positions and are not benefitting from government policies and legislation to advance their careers (Mathur-Helm, 2005). This is attributed to entrenched individual and social barriers including low skill levels, sexism and patriarchy such that in practice EE has predominantly benefited Black men (Mathur-Helm, 2005). Perhaps, Black women, not expecting to benefit as much from EE as Black men, see the organisation as more fair than Black men, placing them on a par with the Middle group. In contrast, UK Black women reported the lowest organisational fairness levels, and were the only group significantly different from White men. The voluntary context of equality policies in the UK (Tatli & Ozbilgin, 2012) in contrast to the legislated equality policies in SA may contribute to Black women in the UK perceiving greater disadvantage than their South African counterparts. Based on the findings, it is our assertion that this study offers initial indications that intersecting gender-ethnic differences in diversity climate perceptions may be influenced by the manifestation of inherent power relations in the differing legislative and socio-historic contexts.

Ethnic-Gender Differences on Personal Diversity Value in SA

Similar to the UK, there was a non-significant difference between ethnic-gender groups' personal value of organisational diversity in SA. With the implementation of EE to meet legalised targets and with apartheid's legacy still resonant, it is our assertion that the workforce may be particularly sensitised to diversity dynamics based on the findings. In the more immediate context, the study organisation has engaged in diversity training and has an EE committee (as mandated by legislation). The tests' low internal consistency across groups may reflect SA's particular racial history and the differential impact of workplace legislation on social groups, resulting in a disparity of group perspectives and responses on survey items regarding personal value of organisational diversity.

Organisational Fairness Perceptions and Commitment in the UK and SA

Hypothesis 3a predicted a positive but significantly different relationship between commitment and organisational fairness for White men in comparison to the Middle group, Black men and Black women. This hypothesis was partially supported. There was a non-significant relationship for White men and a significant positive relationship for all other ethnic-gender groups. Minority employees are more likely to commit to an organisation if they perceive a supportive diversity climate (Gonzalez & Denisi, 2009; McKay et al., 2007). The relationship between lower status demographic members' organisational fairness perceptions and their organisational commitment supports the theory that diversity climate perceptions influence affective outcomes (Cox, 1994). No similar relationship was found for White men in the UK. Perhaps, owing to the seniority and numerical over-representation of White men in the UK, organisational policies may be perceived as serving their best interests. This group's commitment is not dependent on fairness perceptions with regard to diversity issues.

In contrast, in SA, owing to the change in power distances between social identities, a demand for Black workers has been created and EE prioritises such individuals over the Middle group (Wocke & Sutherland, 2008). Black male and Black female workers are therefore highly transferable in the labour market compared to White men and the Middle group (Booysen, 2005). Hypothesis 3b proposed that the positive relationship between commitment and perceived organisational fairness would significantly differ between SA White men and the Middle group on one hand, in comparison to Black men and Black women on the other hand. This was partially supported. The relationship between commitment and organisational fairness was positive but no significant difference between the ethnic-gender groups was observed.

Job satisfaction often co-exists with organisational commitment as intervening variables in turnover models (Gaertner, 1999). However, Wocke and Sutherland (1998) found no significant difference in job satisfaction between demographic groups. They noted that Black men and Black women showed a significantly higher propensity to find a job in the short-term than the Middle group and White men. They proposed that the inverse link between job satisfaction and the intention to leave was weakened owing to favourable opportunities being provided by the labour market to Black men and Black women. This may explain why there were no significant differences in the positive correlation between commitment and perceived fairness between the ethnic-gender groups.

Perhaps Black men and women may view the organisation as fair and are committed, but the EE context creates favourable employment opportunities that increase their turnover rates. Perhaps, owing to EE, White South African men experience a status threat and that they may adopt a "minority status" identity (Booysen, 2005). Based on the findings, it is therefore our assertion that perceptions of fair treatment by employers may be important in a labour market deemed to be unfair owing to depressed mobility; this may also affect organisational commitment. To a lesser extent, this is true for the Middle group who also experience limited mobility, but remain EE beneficiaries. This is in contrast to the UK sample's non-significant correlation between commitment and organisational fairness for White men. As hypothesised, South African White men had significantly higher organisational commitment scores than White men in the UK. Unlike SA, the UK labour market is not differentiated by EE legislation (Selby, 2005; Wrench, 2004). It is therefore our assertion based on the findings that in markets directly influenced by equality legislation, assumptions cannot be made that turnover intentions signify low organisational commitment and job satisfaction.

It was also hypothesised (H3c) that the positive relationship between commitment and organisational fairness would significantly differ for the Middle group compared to Black men and Black women. That this hypothesis was not supported suggests that these low power groups have similar relationships between commitment and organisational fairness. This is congruent with our earlier suggestion that EE legislation can have a direct effect on turnover separate to commitment. However, this hypothesis needs to be

directly tested. Although EE legislates that the labour market favour Black people, this is not yet reflected in SA's professional or middle management labour market statistics (Klarsfeld, 2010). The numbers of Black and Middle group (non-White) professional and middle managers decreased from 2003 to 2007 (Klarsfeld, 2010). Specifically, Black employees decreased by 14.9 per cent whereas White female employees increased by 3.6 per cent (Klarsfeld, 2010). There is a current demand for the Middle group, possibly driven by White women (constituting the majority of this group) (Klarsfeld, 2010). Our assertion based on the findings is that this might make them as mobile and opportunistic in the labour market as Black employees. In spite of the legislative preference to Black men and Black women, both groups appear to exhibit a similar level of relationship between organisational fairness and commitment.

Another cross-cultural or contextual factor to note concerns expectations about different types of relationship between commitment and organisational fairness. Hypotheses 4a proposed significantly different organisational commitment scores for White men in SA and White men in the UK. The results indicated that White men in SA had significantly higher commitment scores than their UK counterparts. White men in SA may therefore display higher organisational commitment levels to retain and maintain their "power" status in a shifting labour market, in response to feeling threatened by EE (Booysen, 2005). Hypothesis 4b proposed a positive relationship for both countries, anticipating that the relationship would differ significantly for the combined Middle group, Black men and Black women in SA, in comparison to these groups in the UK. There was a significant relationship between employees' commitment and organisational fairness for both groups. However, this correlation did not differ significantly across countries. It was our assertion that the historical context of apartheid would prompt a significantly stronger relationship between employees' commitment and organisational fairness in SA. These findings potentially suggest that the impact of apartheid on perceptions in SA, 24 years on, has "normalised" for the Middle group and Black South Africans, and are now comparable to the UK. It may also be that EE implementation is positively impacting perceptions. On the other hand, historically disadvantaged groups in the UK do not have the benefit of EE for redressing inequalities and have numerical minority status (Wrench, 2004); it is our assertion that this context may affect perceptions of their current environment.

Conclusions

The study aimed to fill the gap in the literature by exploring socio-demographic differences in diversity perceptions and commitment with sensitivity to intersecting identities and power differentials across contexts. We integrated traditional social identity and diversity theories (SIT, intergroup theory and IMCD) and compared more and less powerful demographic groups across the contrasting socio-historical-legal context of SA and the UK, as suggested by Tatli and Ozbilgin (2012). Ethnic-gender group differences were found in two pro-diversity organisations. The most powerful groups (White men in SA and the UK) perceived the organisations as most fair with

regard to its implementation of diversity policy. The powerful group with the most to lose (White men in SA under "threat" of EE) were most committed to their organisation. We offer initial support for a contextual approach to understanding intergroup outcomes in diversity management. We encourage global diversity scholars and practitioners to consider historical, legal and social differences across countries in examining group differences and implementing diversity policies. Our findings also suggest that organisations should not only employ fair and inclusive organisational policies but may also need to differentially manage diversity perceptions.

Study Limitations

There are some limitations to our exploratory study. First, variables were gathered through self-report which are subject to primacy and recency order effects in Likert questionnaires (Yannakakis & Hallam, 2011). Other measures such as productivity, absenteeism and turnover, which are more objective measures than self-report, should be gathered to reduce common-method bias. In addition, social desirability or "political correctness" may have influenced scores. In SA, where race and gender issues are highly politicised, this is a particular concern. However, we expect that assurances of confidentiality and anonymity in both countries somewhat mitigated dishonest responding. In addition, sending out information about EE in SA may have primed existing stereotypes and exaggerated group differences. We recommend that future researchers frame diversity research in this regard, to minimise invoking highly sensitised group reactions. In addition, future research should recruit participants uniformly for comparison consistency.

As far as we are aware, this is the first exploration of contrasting diversity perceptions between SA and the UK. The results could merely be representative of two divergent organisational, rather than national, contexts (for example, size differences, values, government versus private sector, EE legislation). We attempted to mitigate this by examining two organisations similar in their commitment to equality, their location (urban population) and the employee profile (semi-skilled to professional). The findings would, however, need to be replicated, perhaps with a global firm in multiple locations or samples from the public sector. The low internal reliability for the SA personal value of organisational diversity (Cronbach's alpha of .35) may be owing to contextual differences in diversity value. Cronbach's alpha measures the internal consistency of a test, i.e. items that propose to measure the same construct produce similar scores (Tavakol & Dennick, 2011). In addition, a larger proportion of non-Black minority ethnic individuals in the Middle Group (to counter the large numbers of White women in this study) would more closely reflect the notion of "middle" power.

Finally, the small number of UK Black men and Black women reflected the small overall population in the UK. Future research should oversample across smaller populations to obtained similar-sized samples across all identity groups. This would

minimise the probability of errors, maximise the accuracy of population estimates and increase generalisability (Osborne & Costello, 2004).

Practical Implications

Low organisational fairness perceptions of Black men (despite EE) in South Africa and Black women in the UK could be of particular interest to policymakers in the respective countries. How people feel about their organisations impacts on work quality, turnover and ultimately, profitability (Cox, 1994). Although EE is legislated in SA and Black men are the beneficiaries, relatively low organisational fairness perceptions may reflect their frustration at the wait for transformation (Booysen, 2005). South African employers may need to go beyond meeting EE legislation to engaging more fully with the perceptions and experiences of previously disadvantaged groups. In the UK, Black women's experiences and perceptions should be sought and relevant interventions administered. However, replication would be needed to substantiate these findings.

The results also indicated a significant relationship between organisational fairness perceptions and commitment for all groups, except for White men in the UK. In addition, our findings suggest that organisations should not necessarily equate turnover intentions to lower commitment and job satisfaction. South African employers may need to work harder to improve minority employee retention perhaps by promoting and practicing inclusive diversity policies. In addition, employers may need to maintain a delicate balance between adequately implementing EE and being perceived as fair by White men to maintain commitment from advantaged and historically disadvantaged groups. Furthermore, South African organisations could transform White men's higher organisational commitment into a competitive advantage, for example by incentivising White men to mentor EE employees on challenging projects, while ensuring that they feel secure in the organisation.

Future Research

Our finding regarding White UK men's commitment to fairness perceptions is worth further exploration. Our data were gathered before the UK "Brexit" vote. The rise in overt nationalism and racism (Corbett, 2016) suggests that the shifting perspectives of ethnic-gender groups ought to be explored further in this context. Furthermore, contrary to Booysen (2005), we recommend that future research analyse White female participants separately. White women in SA were privileged as White people under apartheid but disadvantaged as women. Adding them to the Middle group may confound the Middle group's experiences of "middle" power. The lack of difference between Black and White men on perceived organisational fairness may be a result of self-report bias or fear of recrimination influenced these results, especially for Black men who were the numerical minority in the UK organisation. Although measures were taken to assure confidentiality, the study's sensitive topic may have influenced the respondents'

willingness to disclose their perceptions of the organisation's fairness policies. We recommend further research on larger samples to validate the present findings.

Tatli and Ozbilgin (2012) critique diversity studies by using multiple diversity dimensions in an additive fashion. This denies the complex and lived experiences of individuals falling at these intersections (Atewologun et al., 2016; Hancock, 2007). Although exploratory, we believe our ethnic-gender categorisation on the basis of localised or contextual status offers a potential new avenue for meaningful examination of diversity. We recommend five social identity groupings for future research: White men, White women, Black men, Black women and a Middle group. Overall, we attempted to operationalise theoretical concerns regarding examining intersecting identities and power relations for more meaningful diversity research. This provides a basis for categorising additional social identities (for example, religion, ethnicity or "tribe", social class) that may have more relevance for diversity in under-examined countries in Asia and Africa.

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