A MULTI-LEVEL MODEL OF EMPLOYMENT INEQUALITY FOR WORKERS WITH MULTIPLE IDENTITIES

Abstract

Most extant studies on the relationship between workforce diversity and employment inequalities focus on the impact of a single disadvantaged identity on employment outcomes. Thus, the relation between workers' multiple identities and employment inequalities within the broader social context remains unclear. The goal of this paper is to start filling this gap in the literature. I start with developing a multilevel model of employment inequalities for workers with multiple identities by integrating the social identity theory, double jeopardy hypothesis, intergroup contact theory, and theory of minority group threat. The model introduced in this study includes three levels: micro level, meso level, and macro level. The micro level includes individuals whereas meso and macro levels involve organizations, and national context, respectively. Implications for managers, policymakers, and society are discussed.

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Introduction

Employment outcomes have significant impact on individuals. Members of the majority group have advantages before and after they find employment. Employment advantages experienced by the majority groups in the society, resulting from employment experience, salaries, and developing social contacts with higher level managers as a result of promotion, accumulate and eventually are passed along to their offspring and groups (Bourdieu, 1984; Skaggs & DiTomaso, 2004). Thus, employment inequality, which I define as the disparities between among the employment outcomes of social identity based groups, is related to equality of opportunity (Green, Riddell, & St-Hilaire, 2016). The goal of this study is to investigate the complex relationship between individuals with multiple identities and employment inequalities, and examine the role of organizations and society in this relationship.

Through structural and socio-psychological processes, workforce diversity shapes employment inequalities (Skaggs & DiTomaso, 2004). Specifically, workforce diversity is very much related to employment inequalities because decisions shaping workforce diversity determine who gets paid, how much they get paid, and what position they are hired for (DiTomaso, Post, & Parks-Yancy, 2007). In other words, employment outcomes manifest themselves unequally across social groups (Okhuysen et al., 2013) and employment inequalities among social groups need to be studied for a better understanding of inequality and policy development (Sen, 1995). This need is becoming more imminent because there has been a global increase in workforce diversity

based on factors such as rising levels of immigration, increasing labour force participation of women and other minorities, and increased emphasis on workplace inclusion by national policies (Mor Barak & Travis, 2013).

Despite the severe outcomes of employment inequality, the management discipline has not shown much interest in this topic (Beal & Astakhova, 2017). There is a need to understand the relationship between diversity and inequality (DiTomaso, 2010) because it is necessary to understand the mechanisms behind inequality to be able to produce remedies for alleviating its harm (Tilly, 2005). Thus, an essential question in the field of inequality studies within the management literature is whether workers' identities and other characteristics shape their opportunities and inequalities (Ditomaso & Parks-Yancy, 2014). The impact of context on workers and organizations is understudied in management literature (Johns, 2006). The management literature on employment inequalities is not an exception. Organizational diversity research is dominated by social psychology approaches which leads to a narrow understanding of inequality producing processes in and around organizations (Zanoni, Janssens, Benschop, & Nkomo, 2010). Furthermore, the literature on employment inequalities focuses on the impact of identities but not much on the structural and intergroup relations (Reskin, 2003). Thus, another equally important and seldom asked question is the role of context in the relationship between workforce diversity and employment inequalities.

Most management and organizational studies on inequality focus on the role of top executives of corporations or 'supermanagers' as described by Piketty (2014) while examining employment income inequality. While the employment income of top executives admittedly contributes to income inequality, focusing on this group provides only a limited understanding of inequality for three reasons. First, only a small number of people are analyzed yet everyone in society,

positively or negatively, shapes and is affected by employment income inequality. While the top one percent might be the most powerful group, they are not the only ones who shape and are shaped by employment inequalities. Inequality hurts not only the lower income groups but the vast majority of the population (Wilkinson & Pickett, 2011). Furthermore, most of the studies in management and organizational studies focus on employment income disparities within organizations (Tsui, Enderle, & Jiang, 2017). While the distribution of employment income within organizations has important implications for inequality, this kind of research focus does not explain much of the disparities among organizations, occupations, industries, and countries (Cobb, 2016). Furthermore, it is possible that employment inequalities within organizations might not reflect the societal level inequality. Davis and Cobb (2010) show that organizational level inequalities might lower macro-level inequalities.

Second, income inequality is a significant determinant of social inequality (Wilkinson & Pickett, 2006). In order to have income, specifically labour income, individuals must first participate in the labour force, and once they are in the labour force, find employment. The sole examination of employment income narrows the focus down on people who are employed and neglects the rest of the population who are unemployed or not in labour force. It is important to study how different types of inequality (e.g., identity-based inequality and employment inequality) are interrelated to understand how inequalities become structural and how they are maintained in organizations (Bapuji & Mishra, 2015). Thus, it is vital to focus on employment outcomes holistically to understand the true nature of employment inequalities.

Third, the population of interest of most inequality studies in management discipline is defined by their income (e.g., top 1 percent earners). Most of these studies do not attempt to explain how these top earners end up there. Few studies that examine the top executives' identities and how

these identities affect their employment income focus on a single identity such as gender (Nielsen, 2010). Thus, employment inequalities are rarely studied below the top management level, and when it is examined, only a single identity is included in the study. The lack of examination of multiple identities is problematic since factors such as globalization, diversity, communication technology, and increasing rates of immigration make multiple identities more salient for all workers (Ramarajan, 2014).

Addressing these shortcomings summarized above, the main purpose of this study is to develop a better understanding of the complicated relationships between identity, employment, and inequality. To achieve this purpose, I develop a multilevel model of employment inequalities for workers with multiple identities by integrating social identity theory, double jeopardy hypothesis, intergroup contact theory, and theory of minority group threat. I delve into each level dyad (e.g., micro-macro) separately, and in doing so I examine the key components of each dyad to provide a holistic approach to the employment inequality mechanisms experienced by individuals with multiple identities.

Theoretical background

I integrate social identity theory (SIT), double jeopardy hypothesis, intergroup contact theory, and theory of minority group threat to develop a multi-level model of employment inequality for individuals with multiple identities. I start with summarizing each theory briefly.

Social identity theory

The SIT studies how social categories are translated into social groups via psychological processes (Hogg & Abrams, 1988). Individuals who share the belief that they are in the same category form a social group (Burke & Stets, 2009). Individuals can share and act on similar beliefs based on their groups even if they do not interact with other group members; identification with a group is enough to develop and act like a group (Burke & Stets, 2009).

Individuals interact with each other and shape their identities based on the feedback they get from others (Baldridge, Beatty, Konrad, & Moore, 2017). Individuals define themselves with their social group (Ramarajan, 2014) to fulfill their core needs such as predictability, simplification, structure (Hogg & Abrams, 1988), self-enhancement (Burke & Stets, 2009; Ferguson & Porter, 2013) and belonging (Brewer, 2001; Stets & Burke, 2000).

A core mechanism of the SIT is self-categorization (Chandler, 2017). Individuals categorize themselves and other individuals with regards to the social groups they belong to (Trepte, 2006). Categorization is the necessary first step to prejudice (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). Categorization is a process that involves grouping similar individuals together for sensemaking and is shaped by the context and relational status of the groups (Ferguson & Porter, 2013). Once individuals categorize others, they tend to accentuate differences between themselves and individuals outside their group but underestimate the differences between themselves and others who share the same group (Trepte, 2006). Outgroups help to maintain ingroup identity and once outgroups are perceived to threaten the access to sources, intergroup competition and discrimination start (Brewer, 2001). This implies that there is a constant conflict between groups in and around organizations (Ashforth & Mael, 1989; Bidwell, Briscoe, Fernandez-Mateo, & Sterling, 2013).

According to the SIT, society consists of different groups with different power and status whose dynamics are historically shaped (Brewer, 2001; Hogg & Abrams, 1988). Thus, the SIT can provide valuable insights for understanding intergroup relations including intergroup cooperation and conflict (Tajfel, 1982; Tajfel & Turner, 1979) and intergroup discrimination (Brewer, 2001). Indeed, the majority group's ingroup favouritism can result in substantial outcome differences among the minority and majority group (Brewer, 2001).

Identification with a group occurs independently of outgroup attitudes (Brewer, 2001). Behaviours in groups are outlined by group norms and sanctions that emphasize cooperation and trust (Brewer, 2001). The ingroup norms lead to a differentiation of behaviour towards ingroup and outgroup individuals, and such differentiation creates distrust and negative stereotypes (Brewer, 2001). Therefore, even when there is no real or perceived competition among groups, individuals are likely to have positive feelings (e.g., trustworthy, moral) towards ingroup individuals and negative emotions (e.g., not dependable, unreliable) towards outgroup individuals (Brewer, 2001). This differentiation might be deeply rooted in individuals. While ingroup favouritism and outgroup discrimination are different mechanisms (DiTomaso, 2015), they have similar outcomes (Greenwald & Pettigrew, 2014). Thus, ingroup favouritism and perception of outgroups as a threat are two mechanisms that create intergroup inequalities in the long run as predicted by the SIT.

Social identities and inequalities are related to each other in a robust and sophisticated way. Social identities can shape inequalities by affecting the life chances of individuals (Bradley, 1996; Lin, 2000) and the social allocation of rewards (Blalock, 1991). Furthermore, social identities can also evolve from the dynamics of inequality (Bradley, 1996). Indeed, behaviours that lead to employment inequalities might be deeply embedded and implicit in individuals.

While inequality perpetuating behaviours can be socially learned, experiments conducted on young children showed that such actions might be deeply wired in individuals (Olson et al., 2011).

Double jeopardy hypothesis

Individuals can have multiple identities and be grouped into multiple categories simultaneously. Since identities can be advantageous or disadvantageous, it is crucial to theorize how multiple identities coexist and shape outcomes. One of the theories that address this issue is the double jeopardy hypothesis.

The core idea of the double jeopardy hypothesis is that disadvantages accumulate as the number of disadvantaged identities of individuals increases. Thus, individuals with multiple underprivileged identities will face worse outcomes compared to individuals with only a single disadvantaged identity (Barnum, Liden, & DiTomaso, 1995; King, 1988). Many studies confirm the double jeopardy hypothesis. For example, visible minority women receive lower employment income than white women in the U.S. (Greenman & Xie, 2008). Two U.K. studies found that workers with multiple disadvantaged identities suffer from pay discrimination more than workers with a single disadvantaged identity (Woodhams, Lupton, & Cowling, 2015a; Woodhams, Lupton, Perkins, & Cowling, 2015b). Another study found that workers who were both from a minority group and women experienced the most harassment in the workplace compared to white women or minority men (Berdahl & Moore, 2006). A longitudinal research demonstrates that the intersection of disability and ethnicity had a negative impact on men by sorting them into low-income and part-time jobs (Woodhams, Lupton, & Cowling, 2015c).

Individuals who have multiple identities that might be disadvantaged face additional issues when responding to workplace discrimination. The current legal system does not consider the possibility of discrimination based on multiple disadvantaged identities (Baldridge et al., 2017). Furthermore, social identity-based movements have formed independently, and this has led to the development of public policies are complex and inconsistent across groups (Bagilhole, 2010). These issues might reinforce multiple disadvantages individuals might have.

Intergroup contact theory

Intergroup behaviour can be described as "the way in which people behave towards one another as members of different social groups." (Hogg & Abrams, 1988, p.32). Intergroup contact theory posits that contact between the members of different groups diminishes prejudice (Allport, 1954; Tropp & Pettigrew, 2005) and boosts trust (Pettigrew, Tropp, Wagner, & Christ, 2011) by enhancing knowledge about the outgroup, reducing anxiety, and increasing empathy (Pettigrew & Tropp, 2008), and making group identities less salient (DiTomaso et al., 2007). Intergroup contact theory is tested and confirmed universally. A recent meta-analysis demonstrates that the positive impact of intergroup contact has been observed in various countries and cultures (Pettigrew et al., 2011). Furthermore, while the intergroup contact theory was initially developed for interracial relationships, the theory also holds for the members of other groups such as people with disabilities, gays (Pettigrew et al., 2011), and immigrants (Schlueter & Scheepers, 2010).

Theory of minority group threat

Individuals naturally identify with groups and develop positive feelings and preference for ingroup members compared to outgroup members (Brewer, 2001). Yet, ingroup preferences do not provide a firm basis to explain why groups actively are hostile to each other. Brewer (2001)

claims that there must be a real or perceived competition that leads to perceived threat between groups before groups start to discriminate each other.

One of the theories that confirm the assertion of Brewer (2001) is the theory of minority group threat. First coined by Blalock (1967), the theory states that power relations between groups in a society are shaped by the size, political power, and economic power of groups (Blalock, 1967) where group size is a significant determinant of group power. Groups gain access to more economic and political power as their size increases (Chattopadhyay, Tluchowska, & George, 2004). As the size of a minority group increases, there will be a higher level of perceived competition and the majority group will start feeling threatened and try to reduce the threat through discrimination, oppression, and prejudice against the minority group (Blalock, 1967; Sidanius & Pratto, 2011). These mechanisms can take place in uncoordinated individual acts of the majority group members (Blalock, 1967). In other words, the majority group does not need to be coordinated to discriminate against minority groups. This is one of the mechanisms that render discrimination invisible. Thus, the theory of minority group threat provides a tool to associate a contextual-level variable, group size, with an individual-level variable, anti-outgroup attitudes (Schlueter & Scheepers, 2010).

A multi-level model of employment inequality for workers with multiple identities

A multi-level modelling approach can be useful when examining inequalities in and around work (Reskin, 2003). Multilevel models can especially useful when examining the relationship between workers' multiple identities and employment inequalities within the broader social context. A difficulty with developing multilevel modelling using current theories is that each

subdiscipline in the management field has different theories, conceptualization, and measurement levels (Molloy, Ployhart, & Wright, 2010). For example, psychology-oriented management sub-disciplines (e.g., organizational behaviour) might focus on individuals and groups using micro-level theories whereas economics-oriented management sub-disciplines (e.g., strategy) might be focusing on organizations using meso-level theories.

Developing multi-level management modelling can be done by focusing on real-world phenomena, including organizations as a level of analysis, and using theories from other disciplines (Molloy et al., 2010). First, this study focuses on employment inequality which is a phenomenon arguably experienced by most groups in the society. Second, Baron and Bielby (1980) suggest that organizations link micro and macro dimensions of inequality. Specifically, Scott and Davis (2007) propose three levels of analysis: (1) social psychological level focusing on individuals' behaviours, (2) organizational level focusing on organizational structures and characteristics, and (3) ecological level examining organizations' relationships with each other and their external environment. Thus, the multi-level model of employment inequality for workers with multiple identities includes individuals at the micro level, organizations at the meso level, and socioeconomic environment and social structure at the macro level. Third, this paper borrows theories from different disciplines such as social psychology, sociology, economics, political science, inequality studies, and women's studies to develop a multi-level model enhancing the theoretical understanding of this phenomenon. The multi-level model of employment inequalities for workers with multiple identities developed for this study can be seen in Figure 1.

<INSERT FIGURE 1 ABOUT HERE>

Micro-meso relationships

Micro-meso relationships refer to the green arrows in Figure 1. Employment outcomes are formed at the micro (i.e., individual) level as a result of daily interactions between workers and organizations. Organizations can be defined as the "social structures created by individuals to support the collaborative pursuit of specified goals" (Scott & Davis, 2007; p. 11). Although organizations have their goals, they also consist of organizational actors who pursue individual interests (Emirbayer & Johnson, 2008) and form coalitions which often have conflicting goals (Cyert & March, 1963). Thus, organizations can be taken as arenas of struggle (Swartz, 1997) where groups compete for jobs because jobs are the primary status determinants in our society (Ditomaso & Parks-Yancy, 2014). At the micro-meso level, factors factors deserve particular attention: organizational and institutional arrangements, coworkers and managers with multiple identities, diversity management policies in organizations, and workers with multiple identities.

Organizational and institutional arrangements. Referring to organizations, in Figure 1, organizational and institutional arrangements are important determinants of employment inequalities. Employment outcomes are formed by organizational processes such as allocation of workers to jobs and distribution of pay and benefits to jobs (Bidwell et al., 2013) that can determine the level of social mobility and income inequality (Berry & Bell, 2012; Scott & Davis, 2007). Thus, organizational processes can produce employment inequalities (Stainback, Tomaskovic-Devey, & Skaggs, 2010) which are formed by the aggregation of employment outcomes at the micro level. High performance work systems (HPWS), flexible work, and

internal labour markets (ILM) are examples of organizational and institutional arrangements that can shape employment inequalities.

The HPWS are bundles of complementary human resources practices that employers apply to increase the overall organizational performance (Frost, 2008). These bundles may be formed with many different practices such as job expansion, skill enhancement, and worker participation in workplace decision-making. The HPWS practices may result in employee pay levels that equate to the union-wage level (Godard, 2009). If widely practiced, setting union-wage level pay levels at non-unionized workplaces may lower the overall employment income inequality in a society. On the other hand, it is also shown that HPWS might lead to decreased job security, work intensification, and wage inequality within and between firms (Osterman, 2013). Cobb (2016) states that layoffs could lead to a hike in income inequality. Therefore, it is possible that HPWS might be causing income inequality.

Another example of an institutional arrangement that may shape employment inequalities is ILM. The ILM is the internal stock of labour of an organization (Wilton, 2010). In this system, workers are usually hired at the entrance level based on their general human capital. Since the type of human capital that organizations need the most is firm-specific human capital (Becker, 1962), these workers are trained and developed with firm-specific skills and made valuable for the firm. Because the organizations do not want to lose their workers who have a high level of firm-specific human capital, the level of availability of career development opportunities and the extent of job security is high in the organizations who have ILM arrangement (Scott & Davis, 2007). Cobb (2016) asserts that income inequality will be higher in countries where external labour market mechanisms are more prevalent than ILM.

Managers and coworkers. At the micro-meso level, referring to organizations and employment inequality relationship in Figure 1, managers and coworkers play a crucial role in shaping employment inequalities while interacting with workers with multiple identities through mechanisms such as discrimination and ingroup favouritism as predicted by the SIT and double jeopardy hypothesis.

Discrimination can be defined as "treating people unequally because of personal characteristics that are not related to their performance" (Padavic & Reskin, 2002; p. 47). Differentiation is an important mechanism used by the majority group members that provide a basis for discrimination with the goal of maintaining their status (Skaggs & DiTomaso, 2004). Taste-based discrimination and statistical discrimination are among the types of discrimination that can be a result of informal organizational processes (Blau, Ferber, & Winkler, 2010).

Becker (1971) claims that some decision makers might have a 'taste' for discrimination. This will cause them to treat workers differentially despite the potential adverse impact of differential treatment of workers on organizational outcomes. Kanter (1977) claims that minorities' entrance to an organization might lead to social disharmony by threatening homophily of majority workers. Kanter's (1977) claim is in line with the predictions of the SIT. Statistical discrimination occurs when employment decisions such as hiring and promotion are based on the expected performance based on their social identity (Phelps, 1972).

As organizations become less hierarchical and more boundaryless, identity-based differences might become more critical in organizations (DiTomaso et al., 2007). While social identities might seem irrelevant in the workplace context, they inevitably shape workplace interactions and employment outcomes by affecting the rationality of organizational decision making (Scott &

Davis, 2007). According to the social identity theory, managers prefer to be around workers who are like themselves. Individuals prefer those whom they perceive as similar over others whom they view as different to satisfy their need for self-enhancement, reduce uncertainty, and differentiate themselves against others (Burke & Stets, 2009; Ferguson & Porter, 2013). Furthermore, identification with a group creates a sense of belongingness (Stets & Burke, 2000). This need is deeply wired in human beings. Indeed, ingroup biases can have a substantial impact on employment decisions (Ditomaso & Parks-Yancy, 2014; Stainback et al., 2010). For example, it is possible that managers are more likely to hire ingroup workers. Kanter (1977) refers to this process as homosocial reproduction. Employers might shape their hiring decision based on social identity of applicants after hiring as well. For example, social closure happens when minorities are denied formal and informal information that can help their careers by being excluded from organizational social networks (Ibarra, 1992; Tilly, 1998). Besides such conscious processes, unconscious processes might play a role, too. For example, the strength of the implicit race bias of individuals is associated with how much individuals trust others with different racial backgrounds (Stanley, Sokol-Hessner, Banaji, & Phelps, 2011). Thus, it is possible that workers might prefer to work and share information with their coworkers who are racially similar to themselves. Besides the advantages of ingroup bias, individuals from the majority groups (i.e., groups that set the norms in a society) might be benefiting from allocation decisions in organizations regardless of the decision makers being ingroup or outgroup. DiTomaso et al. (2007) found that white U.S.-born males, who are the normative ingroup, are favoured by all organizational decisionmakers including non-white female immigrants (Ditomaso, Post, Smith, Farris, & Cordero, 2007). This could be because implicitly associate larger groups with high

status and power (Cao & Banaji, 2017). Thus, social identities of organizational members can be critical determinants of employment outcomes.

Interaction of organizational and institutional arrangements, managers, and coworkers: diversity management. Organizational and institutional arrangements, and workers' discrimination and ingroup bias are not independent of each other. This should not come as a surprise since organizational and institutional arrangements are developed and maintained by managers and workers in an organization. One formal human resource practice that demonstrates how organizational and institutional arrangements and organizational members interact is diversity management practices.

Organizations might adopt diversity management practices to comply with the legal requirement, to be more attractive to prospective workers and consumers, and to improve organizational outcomes as an outcome of a more diverse workforce (Armstrong, 2011). Inequality and diversity have different philosophical roots. The idea of inequality is based on deontology which implies lowering inequalities is a moral requirement (van Dijk, van Engen, & Paauwe, 2012). In contrast, the idea of diversity is rooted in utilitarianism, which emphasizes the value of diversity for business, in other words, 'the business case' (Cornelius et al., 2010; van Dijk et al., 2012). Thus, diversity management practices can shape employment inequalities (Dobbin, Schrage, & Kalev, 2015).

Diversity management policies and practices are enacted and enforced by individual managers. While the laws and regulations pertaining employment equity and diversity (e.g., affirmative action) are the same for all organizations, managers do not necessarily manage employee diversity in the same way (Konrad & Linnehan, 1995; Cunningham, 2009; Armstrong et al.,

2010; Richard & Johnson, 2001). Understanding why and how managers interpret and manage diversity is important because it has the potential to shape organizational outcomes. How organizations manage their diversity might also affect job applicants' perceptions of organizational attractiveness (Olsen & Martins, 2016). Therefore, how diversity is managed has implications not only for present employees but also for future employees and organizational outcomes.

First, managers' frame might shape how they perceive diversity. For example, managers' inequality frames might shape whether they perceive diversity as variety, where employees' different experiences and knowledge are emphasized or as disparity, where differences among employment outcomes are their focus (Harrison & Klein, 2007). Thus, the diversity ideology of managers has the potential to shape diversity management practices which in turn frames employment outcomes. Diversity ideology can be referred to the beliefs and attitudes about minority groups and how such groups such be assimilated by the society (Nkomo & Hoobler, 2014). Two major ideologies that drive diversity management practices and diversity climate in organizations are colourblindness and multiculturalism (Ferguson & Porter, 2013). Colourblindness is based on the idea that if organizations do not notice demographic differences, there will be no identity-based discrimination (Apfelbaum, Norton, & Sommers, 2012). Multiculturalism takes the opposite approach, and it encourages the recognition of group differences (Ferguson & Porter, 2013; Plaut, 2010). It was found that organizations in which white workers endorsed colourblindness, ethnic minority workers had lower psychological engagement and they believed that the organizational climate was racially biased (Plaut, Thomas, & Goren, 2009). Plaut et al. (2009) found opposite results for organizations in which multiculturalism was embraced.

Second, managers' inequality frames might determine whether they are more equity- or equality-oriented. Managers who focus on equity will be results-oriented and will not consider whether employees had equal opportunity for professional and personal growth. On the other hand, managers focusing on equality will take into consideration the identities and past life trajectories of employees, and they will use organizational resources for enhancing employee growth.

Third, managers' inequality frames might determine whether they prioritize procedural justice or distributive justice. Managers with a procedural justice orientation will assume that all employees are treated fairly; thus, employee performance should be the only determinant of rewards. Managers with a distributive justice orientation will consider other factors besides performance when distributing rewards. Finally, inequality frames might shape managers' propensity to follow legal requirements regarding diversity management (Blalock, 1991).

It is possible that these factors, which are shaped by managers' inequality frames, affect managers' choice of which diversity management practices to apply. The implementation of diversity management practices results in employment outcomes (e.g., hiring, employment, income) at the individual level. These employment outcomes aggregate to objective employment inequalities at the societal level (Bidwell, Briscoe, Fernandez-Mateo, & Sterling, 2013).

Workers with multiple identities. While organizations actively select their workers, job applicants have some control over their identities as well because individuals can construct their identities to a certain degree (Bradley, 1996). Corresponding to 'individuals with intersecting identities' in Figure 1, workers with multiple identities especially have more control over their identities (Scott & Davis, 2007) because workers with multiple identities have a repertoire of identities they can activate and manage (Hogg & Abrams, 1988). Organizational environment

and context affect whether workers try to include or exclude their social identities from their professional identities (Ramarajan & Reid, 2013). For example, job applicants with a non-English name who perceive an organization as valuing diversity are less likely to 'whiten' their resume by replacing their name with an English name (Kang, DeCelles, Tilcsik, & Jun, 2016).

As shown in Figure 1, within organizations, organizational and institutional arrangements interact with organizational members (e.g., managers and workers) and shape the demographic composition of their organizations through employment decisions such as hiring and promotion. For example, it is shown that the number of minorities in the organization has a positive effect on the likelihood of other minorities getting employee referrals and employment (Fernandez & Fernandez-Mateo, 2006). Santuzzi and Waltz (2016) assert that the number of coworkers with disabilities in an organization is an essential factor determining whether a worker develops a disability identity. Kanter (1977) demonstrates that a woman's employment outcomes in an organization are influenced by the proportion of women in that organization. For example, the proportion of women managers in an organization and the wages of women workers are positively related (Hultin & Szulkin, 1999). Minorities acquire the token status if they are few in numbers in an organization (Kanter, 1977). This token status provides high visibility to these workers and might have positive or negative results based on the performance of the worker and how coworkers treat the worker (Kanter, 1977). A recent study showed that both white and visible minority workers had lower job satisfaction if their group was the numerical minority group in the workplace (Choi, 2017). Overall, research demonstrates that the demographic composition of organizations affects employment outcomes such as hiring and promotion decisions (Reskin et al., 1999; Shin, 2009), organizations' performance (Richard, Murthi, & Ismail, 2007), human resource practices (Reskin, McBrier, & Kmec, 1999), and performance

evaluations (Castilla, 2011). These organizational outcomes affect employment outcomes directly. Thus, the demographic structure of organizations might affect employment inequalities indirectly.

Micro-macro relationships

As shown in Figure 1, referring to the relationships shown with red arrows, social structure is an important determinant of long-term inequality (DiTomaso, 2010). Social structure can be defined as "population distributions among social positions along various lines – positions that reflect and affect people's role relations and social associations." (Blau, 1977b, p. 3). Thus, social structure is formed by individuals who are members of social groups. Some groups have more access to power and resources than others; they are simply more powerful. Dominant groups are socially privileged because they are legitimized as normal and weaker groups are legitimized as inferior, and it is more compatible for them to affiliate with their group than the members of the subordinate groups (Pratto & Stewart, 2012). Societal consensus is determined and enjoyed by the majority group because it gives control of material and psychological resources to the majority group (Crano & Hemovich, 2014). Status beliefs become accepted by all groups and reproduced through daily social interactions (Skaggs & DiTomaso, 2004). Thus, inequalities become durable when they are taken for granted and considered normal (Tilly, 1998).

Ideologies in social structure. Referring to the interaction between social structure and individuals with intersecting identities (red arrow) and social structure and employment inequality interaction (purple arrow) in Figure 1, ideologies have an essential role in legitimizing inequalities because they shape assumptions about inequality and these assumptions reinforce the existing structural employment inequalities (Padavic & Reskin, 2002). Structural employment

inequality is reproduced by processes that take place at the micro level and link to macro level (Skaggs & DiTomaso, 2004). Dominant groups in society use their material and psychological resources to create a value system and ideology to maintain their dominant status (Hogg & Abrams, 1988). Legitimization of their privilege through ideology is a commonly used tool (Ensminger Vanfossen, 1979; Pratto, Sidanius, & Levin, 2006).

The legitimization of inequality might be based on social identities (Sidanius & Pratto, 1999). The categorization process of the SIT asserts that minority individuals are motivated to join the majority group (Crano & Hemovich, 2014). While categorization almost instantly happens among individuals and their groups, intergroup dynamics are more prevalent when there are already existing inequality patterns among groups (Ditomaso & Parks-Yancy, 2014; Tomaskovic-Devey, Avent-Holt, Zimmer, & Harding, 2010). While individuals have some control over their identities, their identities are not entirely fluid (Bradley, 1996). For example, while it might be possible to move to another class by social mobility, it is hard to change skin colour. Furthermore, individuals' past experiences put a limitation on the range of social categories they can categorize with (Bradley, 1996). Individuals' experience might also change what they perceive as changeable or taken-for-granted (Hogg & Abrams, 1988). Thus, individuals have only limited control over their identities.

Individuals' identities interact with the dominant ideology and let them acquire identities which shape how they evaluate themselves and others (Hogg & Abrams, 1988). For example, subordinate groups may evaluate themselves and their groups negatively. Low-status groups such as immigrants and people with disabilities are likely to justify the existing inequalities and conclude that they get what they deserve (Ditomaso & Parks-Yancy, 2014). Ideology has important implication for perceiving discrimination. Low-status groups that accept the ideology

of meritocracy are less likely to perceive adverse outcomes from high-status groups as discrimination (Major et al., 2002).

Two major explanations of inequality are based on meritocratic and structural ideologies (Cech & Blair-Loy, 2010). Meritocracy, a highly prevalent ideology in North America, emphasizes the role of individual agency in individuals' outcomes: how their human capital (e.g., education, training, work experience) and work efforts combine to shape their employment outcomes. In contrast, structural ideology emphasizes how structural factors that are beyond individuals' control (e.g., unemployment rate, unequal opportunities, discrimination) explain employment inequalities (Cech & Blair-Loy, 2010).

Ditomaso (2015) argues that it is possible for the dominant groups to create and maintain a system, that is, a social structure that favours them and not others by without actively discriminating or excluding. This mainly happens by individuals helping their friends, families, and others in their networks. For example, if there is a job opening in an organization, workers can let their family members and friends about this opportunity and give insider information that will help them to be hired because workers are more likely to have others who are demographically similar to themselves (McPherson, Smith-Lovin, & Cook, 2001). Thus, members of the majority group end up having better employment outcomes (Ibarra, 1995). This creates inequality in the long run with no explicit discrimination and intergroup conflict (DiTomaso, 2015).

Social structure, social identity, and intergroup relations. The relationship among the social structure, social identity, and intergroup relations are depicted by red arrows in Figure 1. Besides the dominant ideology that makes inequalities less visible, there are psychological reasons for

individuals' poor perception of overall inequality in society (Nielsen, 2017). Nielsen (2017) argues that most individuals are poor at perceiving the overall inequality in a society because for tens of thousands of years humans lived in small communities and they did not develop an ability to view inequality in large societies where the size of the society makes inequalities less anonymous.

The social structure is an essential determinant of the level of intergroup discrimination as well. As an extension of the SIT, social identity complexity can be defined as "the perceived interrelationships among individuals' multiple social group memberships" (Schmid & Hewstone, 2014, p.80). Societies where identity complexity is low, there will be less overlap among groups and individuals will be more likely to perceive themselves having fewer identities (Brewer, 2001). For example, a society where the majority is predominantly white and Catholic, and the minority group predominantly consists of black Muslim is a highly segmented society. In this hypothetical case, society is practically divided into two groups (Brewer, 2001). People are likely to perceive more differences among groups and intergroup discrimination will be more prevalent (Schmid & Hewstone, 2014).

On the other hand, in more complex societies, there will be a higher level of cross-cutting group distinctions where there will be a low correlation between social identities. In such societies, religious, ethnic, and other social identities will be dispersed more evenly across groups. This will result in weaker group boundaries, less exclusive groups (Schmid & Hewstone, 2014) and individuals perceiving each other more like themselves. This will lead to positive intergroup attitudes and lower intergroup discrimination. As the intergroup contact theory states contact between the groups might change ingroup perceptions as well as outgroup perceptions by highlighting how social categories might not overlap (Schmid & Hewstone, 2014).

Intergroup contact enhances social identity complexity of individuals (Schmid & Hewstone, 2014). Furthermore, this impact might also spill over to outgroup members whom individuals might know only indirectly (e.g., friends of friends) (Schmid & Hewstone, 2014). For example, an individual learning about the friendship of an ingroup member with an outgroup member will have less prejudice towards that outgroup despite not meeting that person.

Social structure and labour market structure relationship. Another macro factor that shapes employment inequalities is the labour market structure. This relationship is depicted with the red arrow between 'legal, social, technological, and economic environment' and 'individuals with intersecting identities.' Both supply side of the labour market (e.g., workers' human capital and motivation) and demand side (e.g., macroeconomic environment, number and types of jobs) need to be examined to understand employment outcomes (Scott & Davis, 2007). As the theory of minority group threat states, intergroup competition and discrimination might intensify if there is economic depression or labour surplus (Blalock, 1967). An important theoretical model that explains the relationship between the labour market and macro-level discrimination is the overcrowding model. Developed by Bergmann (1974), overcrowding model claims that the problem is not workers' not getting paid according to their productivity. The problem is that because of their social identities some workers systematically are left less productive than others by having less access to capital that will lower their productivity (Blau et al., 2010).

Macro environment. Besides ideology, intergroup relations, social structure, and labour market structure, changes in the macro environment (see Figure 1) such as technological advancements and political mobilization can shift the power balance and change the societal structure over time (Acemoglu, 2002; Skaggs & DiTomaso, 2004). National culture can also make a difference how intergroup relations are shaped. It is possible that collectivist societies where social

interdependence is more accentuated are more likely to have stronger negative feelings towards outgroup individuals compared to individualistic societies (Brewer, 2001). The political climate in a country is related to employment inequalities by shaping seemingly unrelated micro interactions in the workplace. Soylu and Sheehy-Skeffington (2015) demonstrated that workplace bullying based on the increasing political polarization of Turkish society creates and maintains employment inequalities.

Meso-macro relationships

Meso-macro relationships take place between organizations, macro environment, employment inequalities, and social structure (depicted with the purple arrows in Figure 1). Organizations are not self-sufficient, and they must adapt to their environment, at least to a certain degree, to survive (Scott & Davis, 2007). Especially since the 1970s, external market forces have become more critical in determining how organizations are governed whereas the internal hierarchy of organizational governance has weakened (Bidwell et al., 2013). This market penetration resulted in declining tenure through layoffs, increasing rate of contingent workers and outsourcing, higher rates of performance-based pay, and reduced employment benefits (Bidwell et al., 2013).

Organizations are embedded in their fields (Scott & Davis, 2007). As described in the institutional theory, organizational fields consist of all stakeholders that shape an organization's chance of survival such as suppliers, consumers, regulatory agencies, competitors, and partner organizations (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983). Organizations face pressure from other actors in their fields to have norms, structures, and practices similar to other organizations in their environment (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983; Meyer & Rowan, 1977). External pressures to organizations might shape employment inequalities. DiMaggio and Powell (1983) list three types of pressures

organizations face from their fields: coercive, normative, and mimetic. These pressures have the potential to shape employment inequalities.

Coercive pressures come from governments, regulatory agencies, and other institutions that have some power over organizations, and determine the legitimacy of an organization (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983). Regarding employment inequality, coercive pressures might reveal themselves as discrimination lawsuits (Stainback et al., 2010). Discrimination lawsuits are difficult to ignore because they might weaken organizational legitimacy and cause financial loss through settlements (Stainback et al., 2010). Another way employment inequality might be shaped by coercive pressures are employment equity/affirmative action laws (Konrad & Linnehan, 1995). The implementation of these laws might be imposed on organizations directly. Furthermore, organizations might voluntarily adopt diversity management policies to face less pressure from the governmental agencies (Nkomo & Hoobler, 2014). While employment equity regulations are aimed at improving social justice, the primary goal of diversity management programs is not decreasing employment inequalities and discrimination but benefiting from a diverse workforce for enhancing organizational outcomes such as profit (Groeneveld, 2017; Knights & Omanovic, 2017). It is also possible that organizations change themselves to adapt to laws and regulations when they want to become contractors for the government (Konrad & Linnehan, 1995). For example, according to the Federal Contractors Program, contractors who work with the Canadian government must agree to implement Employment Equity Act and report their workforce composition on a regular basis (Employment and Social Development Canada, 2016).

Normative pressures come from the routines, operations standards, rules, and customs obtained from organizations' fields (Stainback et al., 2010). Professionalization and workers' movement in different organizations in the field are the primary source of normative pressures (DiMaggio &

Powell, 1983). For example, a normative discourse has emerged which asserts human resource managers are professionals and essential business partners for their organizations (Wright, 2008). Accompanying this discourse will be the best practices and norms that will be diffused among human resource managers. Conventional understandings of practices that shape employment inequalities such as diversity management and application of employment equity laws will eventually emerge among human resource managers.

Mimetic pressures stem from organizational efforts to reduce uncertainty in the field (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983) which is prioritized when making decisions (Cyert & March, 1963). Organizations do so by trying to become more like other organizations that are deemed legitimate (Stainback et al., 2010). For example, McTague, Stainback, and Tomaskovic-Devey (2009) demonstrated that race and sex segregation in organizations follow the segregation levels of the most powerful and influential organizations in the industry (McTague, Stainback, & Tomaskovic-Devey, 2009; Tilly, 1998). Tilly (1998) argues that organizations try to imitate powerful organizations' policies and norms to avoid the costs of developing new ideologies. Thus, one of the mechanisms which aggregate individual-level employment outcomes to macro-level employment inequalities is through organizations developing similar inequality-enhancing or inequality-diminishing policies and norms due to mimetic pressures. For example, recent research shows that the demographic structure of organizations might have a direct impact on employment inequalities. It is found that due to wage compression within large organizations, there is a negative relationship between the number of workers employed by large firms and income inequality but this relationship is weakened as organizations become more racially diverse (Cobb & Stevens, 2016). Therefore, organizational demography shapes income inequality directly and indirectly.

Discussion

This study aims to enhance our understanding of the complex relationship between individuals with multiple identities and employment inequalities. This multi-theoretical approach based on the SIT, double jeopardy hypothesis, intergroup contact theory, and theory of minority group threat offers a holistic perspective to understanding the determinants of employment inequality at the societal, organizational, and individual level. The multilevel model developed in this study provides a comprehensive understanding of employment inequalities as an interaction of individuals, organizations, social structure, and governance spheres.

This study contributes to the theoretical development of inequality and diversity studies within the management literature. First, one reason management discipline has not produced many studies on income inequality is the difficulty of developing a multi-level theory that links organizations to inequalities (Beal & Astakhova, 2017). Furthermore, there is a contrast between inequality studies in management and other social sciences. On the one hand, most management studies consider inequality as an external consideration without examining how organizations shape inequalities and are shaped by them. On the other hand, most studies in economics and sociology do not include organizations in their models (Beal & Astakhova, 2017). By developing a theoretical model that brings together four theories from different disciplines, namely the SIT, double jeopardy hypothesis, intergroup contact theory, and the theory of minority group threat, and framing organizations within the wider social and economic system, this study contributes to both management and social sciences literature by bridging the micro-macro divide (Molloy, Ployhart, & Wright, 2010).

For practitioners, what Walsh, Weber, and Margolis (2003) stated more than a decade ago still holds today: the management scholarship is yet to focus on organizations' role in the public interest. Studying the interrelationship between organizations and inequalities, for example, "[…] will require management scholars to question business orthodoxy regarding both the scope of management scholarship and the purpose and function of management practice." (Beal & Astakhova, 2017, p.5). In line with these perspectives, this study has important contributions to practitioner knowledge.

For organizations, one way of creating collective value, their raison d'etre (Donaldson & Walsh, 2015; Enderle, 2016) is to work towards lowering the inequality at the societal level. Organizations need to put effort on reducing employment inequalities for two reasons. First, lower inequality will help organizations to survive. Lower inequality means more and higher quality employment opportunities, and better employment opportunities allow workers to invest in their human capital by receiving further education, training, and work experience, which in turn, enhances organizational productivity and survival. Furthermore, lower employment inequalities will also decrease the level of social inequality (Tsui et al., 2017) which in turn makes the society more stable and creates a more favourable environment for business (Bapuji & Neville, 2015). Moreover, employment inequality might harm social relationships in organizations (Bapuji, 2015) which hurts organizational effectiveness and chances of organizational survival.

Second, organizations are ethically responsible not only for themselves by ensuring the highest level of profit and survival but also for other stakeholders. The actions organizations take affect not only themselves but also other stakeholders such as their workers, customers, taxpayers, government, and environment. For example, not only the corporate tax rates have been

decreasing in the world (Oxfam, 2017), the largest corporations are already paying a minimal amount of taxes. For example, Apple paid only 0.005 percent of its European profits in 2014 (Browning & Kocieniewski, 2016). If organizations have a role in increasing the level of inequalities, they have an ethical responsibility to address this issue (Bapuji, 2015; Beal et al., 2017). Modern organizations have the power to fight inequalities (Bapuji, 2015; Tsui et al., 2017; Pearce, 2005). Indeed, some organizations have more economic and political power than some countries. For example, the 10 largest corporations in the world had more revenue than the government revenue of 180 nations combined in 2016 (Oxfam, 2017). In short, organizations have the tools and the reasons to add lowering employment inequality as one of their goals.

Organizations can reduce employment inequalities in several ways. First, corporations can voluntarily adopt a living wage policy instead of only abiding by the minimum wage laws. Such policy can lower economic inequality by increasing the income of those with lower income. It can also reduce social inequality indirectly by preventing the reinforcement of economic inequality in the next generation (Neckerman & Torche, 2007). Second, employment decisions such as hiring and promotion are made by managers, and employment inequalities depend on managerial decisions (Padavic & Reskin, 2002). Thus, organizations can actively aim to hire individuals who might be at an intersectional disadvantage. This would be beneficial not only for individuals and society by lowering social and economic inequality but also for corporations. For example, Herring (2009) demonstrated that an organization could increase its revenue and improve its customer base by diversifying its workforce. Third, corporations can support the improvement of employment outcomes of disadvantaged groups by providing them with training and education opportunities. In short, corporations can play a role in lowering inequality at the

societal level and this would be beneficial for all stakeholders including the organizations themselves.

Developing organizational policies and programs can be effective in tackling employment inequalities. For example, diversity management policies can be a useful tool to lower employment inequalities. It is important to underline that rather than applying any diversity management policy, choosing adequate diversity management practices are essential to lower employment inequalities. For example, Kalev et al. (2015) found that diversity training was not as effective as establishing responsibility for diversity in organizations. Furthermore, organizations should consider developing diversity management programs that do not treat their workers having only a single social identity (Hearn & Louvrier, 2017). With the increasing diversity of the workforce, organizations need to have a broader understanding of inclusion (Mor Barak & Travis, 2013). Organizations can actively reduce economic and social inequality by actively aiming to hire individuals who might be at an intersectional disadvantage and providing extra training and education opportunities.

This study has important implications for the policymakers as well. While most organizations are affected by employment inequalities, organizations as individual actors can hardly have an impact, alone, on employment inequalities (Bapuji & Neville, 2015). This is a problem known as 'the tragedy of commons' which occurs when individual agents (individuals or organizations) act in their self-interest yet they deplete a resource that is vital for other agents by excessive use without replenishing (Ostrom, 2008). The resource in this instance is employment equality which is positively related to worker productivity and societal stability. As organizations do not pay enough attention to reducing employment inequality, the level of employment inequality increases, and organizations suffer as a result. Furthermore, while organizations may have the

responsibility and means to minimize employment inequalities, they function in the environment regulated by the government. Moreover, governments redistribute wealth by tax and other benefits systems which directly affect inequalities. Thus, it is the responsibility of policymakers to develop solutions against employment inequalities. Because of the decentralized policy structure and the complex nature of inequality, there is not one single solution for income inequality (Green et al., 2016).

Finally, the model developed in this study has implications for the wider society. Because of the embeddedness of organizations in their communities, diversity and inclusion cannot be managed in organizations only (Humberd et al., 2015). Indeed, intergroup relationships in organizations reflect intergroup relations in society (Joshi et al., 2011). Thus, for societies improving the intergroup relationships will be beneficial not only to the social environment of their communities but also to local economic performance.

Prejudices based on group membership most likely are subtle and pervasive thus more difficult to detect and change (Brewer, 2001). It is neither ethical nor possible to expect individuals to claim or reject their identities for lowering negative feelings among groups. That said, it might be possible to improve intergroup relations by creating opportunities for intergroup contact (Schmid & Hewstone, 2014). Thus, social contact can be precious in that it diminishes this subtle but strong effect without any active intervention. Brewer (2001) claims that it is possible to reduce discrimination by creating a more inclusive environment where outgroup individuals are included by extending group boundaries. Considering employment is an indicator of inclusion (Canadian Human Rights Commission, 2012), encouraging organizations to hire workers with disadvantaged identities such as immigrants and people with disabilities will enhance the overall social and economic wellbeing of communities.

Conclusion

The study aims to enhance our understanding of the complex relationship between individuals with multiple identities and employment inequalities. The multilevel approach to employment inequality is supported by multiple theories, namely, the SIT, double jeopardy hypothesis, intergroup contact theory, and theory of minority group threat. This approach offers a holistic perspective to understanding the determinants of employment inequality at the societal, organizational, and individual level. Specifically, the multilevel model developed in this study provides a comprehensive understanding of employment inequalities as an interaction of individuals, organizations, social structure, and governance spheres.

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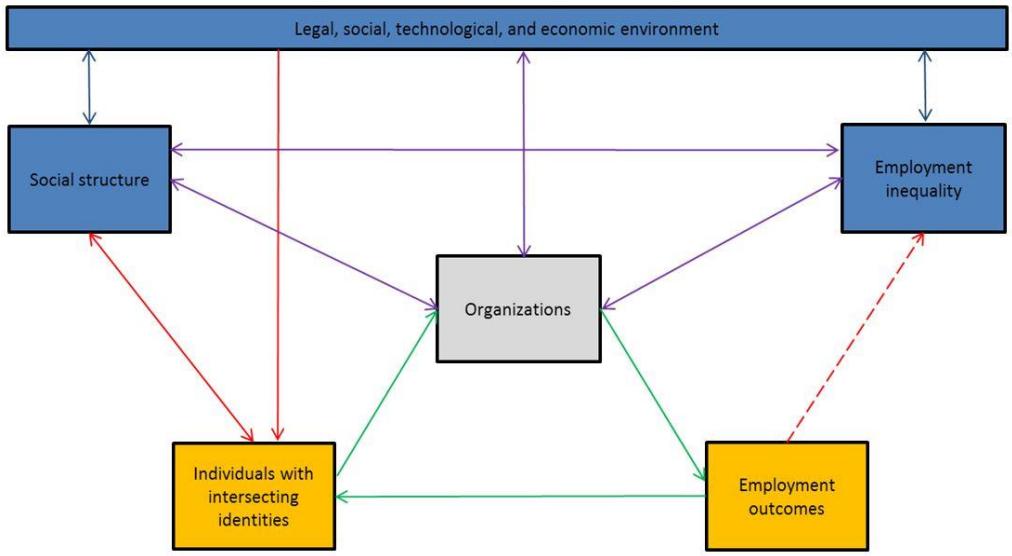
Appendices

Figure 1. A multi-level model of employment inequality for workers with multiple identities



Notes: Blue box: macro level, grey box: meso level, orange box: micro level, blue arrows: macro-level interactions, purple arrows: macro-meso interactions, red arrows: macro-micro interactions, green arrows: micro-meso interactions

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