

Governing through Diversity

Migration Societies in Post-Multiculturalist
Times

Edited by

Tatiana Matejskova

Marco Antonsich



4

Paradoxes of (E)quality and Good Will in Managing Diversity: A Dutch Case in the Philanthropic Sector

Halleh Ghorashi, Christine Carabain and Ewa Szepietowska

Introduction

Management of diversity has become a “global issue”, having various translations in diversity of local contexts and organizational practices (Ostendorp & Steyaert, 2009). These contextual and organizational translations have influenced the conceptualization and focus related to diversity issues. For example, Holvino and Kamp (2009, p. 397) show that the context of the US serves as a more business-driven translation of the concept compared with the Northern European welfare states’ focus on notions of equality as sameness. In spite of these contextual differences, over the past several years many critical diversity studies have been quite sceptical, showing that diversity programmes conceal rather than reveal patterns of exclusion (Prasad Mills, 1997; Zannoni et al., 2010). The critique is mainly based on an inconsistency: that the expressed good intentions of organizations concerning the inclusion of others have not resulted in much more than short-term tolerance leading to long-term exclusion (Essed, 2002).

In this chapter, we situate the organizational narratives on diversity within both the philanthropic sector and the broader Dutch national discourses in order to demonstrate why the best intentions concerning diversity fail in practice. In doing this, we are inspired by critical diversity literature (Dick & Cassell, 2002; Ostendorp & Steyaert, 2009; Zannoni et al., 2010) showing how certain ideas and practices of diversity in organizations are produced through the intersection of various discourses.

Through the presentation of this case, we will show some of the inconsistencies at work along with opportunities to improve diversity-related practices. The main question we raise in this chapter is how best to deal with the paradoxes that are interwoven with attempts at inclusion of ethnic others in organizations. The analyses presented are based on a combination of surveys and in-depth interviews in organizations within the philanthropic sector in the Netherlands. Certain paradoxes become visible: some of these are specific to this sector (the paradox of good will), but others are also applicable to other organizations (the paradox of quality and equality). Using these paradoxes as the core aspects of our arguments, we show how organizations with good intentions become exclusive towards cultural difference in practice. By doing this, we hope to advance the discussions surrounding inclusive organizations and to help rethink some of the predefined notions of diversity. Before introducing the case study, we examine various definitions of and approaches to diversity.

Dominant approaches to diversity management

Until recently, most of the studies on diversity issues in organizations have been “instrumental in the sense that they aim to provide evidence for the ‘business case’ of diversity or, from a more ethically informed view, for sources of inequality in the workplace” (Janssens & Zanoni, 2005, p. 313). This focus has mainly been embedded within major arguments (business case or social justice) in order to engage with the notion of managing diversity in the first place. While the business case uses economic arguments of a diverse workforce, social justice or moral arguments are mainly focused on sources of exclusion. The tension between these two major arguments has been decisive in framing the debates on diversity in various fields (Tomlinson & Schwabenland, 2010, p. 102). In the Netherlands, we see the translation of these debates into four approaches to diversity in organizations (Essed, 2002; Glastra, 1999):

- 1) deficit or deficiency (referring to the lack of qualifications of minorities);
- 2) difference (cultural diversity seen as a source of conflict as well as enrichment);
- 3) discrimination (focus on structural exclusion of the minorities – based on social justice arguments);
- 4) diversity (diversity as business strategy).

In spite of the variation of arguments in these approaches, we observe the dominance of a particular translation of diversity ideas in the (Dutch) welfare context, which Holvino and Kamp (2009) refer to as the focus on moral obligation to take care of vulnerable groups. In their study of the Danish context, they show how diversity management becomes weaker in its business rationale and gains moral arguments as it travels to Scandinavian welfare states (Holvino & Kamp, 2009, p. 397).

Because of the importance of moral arguments in welfare state countries in Northern Europe, such as the Netherlands, it is the deficit approach to diversity in organizations that is most prominent. Zannoni and Janssens (2003) refer to this as “difference as lack”. Within this approach, lack of qualifications among (ethnic) minorities is seen as the primary reason for their exclusion from the workforce. The main argument is that when members of ethnic minorities improve their skills, they will be able to participate in the labour market on an equal basis (Glastra, 1999). In this way, the notion of a “norm employee” has often been related to quality and availability. The norm employee is an assumedly “disembodied worker”: a worker without gender or ethnicity. This point of view has met with much criticism from scholars of gender and race studies. Acker (1992), for example, shows that this seemingly neutral notion of the “disembodied worker” is anything but neutral: it is gendered. Various other scholars have shown that the norm employee has a specific ethnicity or race: the dominant one (Essed, 2002; Prasad & Prasad, 2002). Gowricharn (1999) argues that the construction of the norm is influenced by culturally and somatically desired images existing within organizations, which contribute to certain processes of inclusion or exclusion leading to differing access to (power) positions. This construction of images of otherness has both a horizontal division of difference and a normative aspect, presenting the other as inferior (Prasad & Prasad, 2002). For this reason, it is not accidental that top positions are filled primarily by men of dominant ethnicities, while women and ethnic minorities face a “glass ceiling”.

Paradox of (e)quality

The most intriguing aspect of dominant approaches to diversity, particularly the deficit approach, is the unwillingness or inability to rethink the assumptions related to the notions of equality and quality embedded within organizational dynamics. In this way, the self (be it organizational processes or the dominant group) remains untouched, while the other is required to adapt. While equality and quality are presented as

categories of inclusion, in practice it is precisely the uncritical approach to these categories that leads to various forms of exclusion. Van den Broek (2009), for example, shows how the ideology of equality in organizations actually contributes to the unequal treatment of ethnic minorities. In one of her case studies, Van den Broek shows that the equal working performance of Peter (a native Dutch employee) and Najib (a non-native Dutch employee) is evaluated differently in favour of Peter. In the case of Najib, mistakes made serve to reinforce a notion that non-native employees are incompetent. When Peter makes a mistake, it is often attributed to the situation rather than to his competence. Van den Broek (2009) argues that ethnic inequality happens more often in organizations that have an ideology of equality as their point of departure, because this ideology does not provide the necessary reflective base to address inherent bias embedded within intergroup dynamics.

In addition, quality seems to serve as a source of exclusion of minority groups rather than inclusion. The construction of these groups as weak categories, and the focus on their shortcomings, makes it almost impossible to see their qualities or to broaden the scope of quality criteria beyond what is taken for granted. In a study on the experiences of highly educated refugee women in the Netherlands, Ghorashi and van Tilburg (2006) showed that the assumed deficit approach (lack of facility with the Dutch language and/or a good education) was still used as a basis for the exclusion of these women, even though they had completed their higher education in the Netherlands. It seemed that being from a minority group overshadowed the achievements and qualities of these first-generation refugee women, who came to the Netherlands when they were over 25 years old and achieved a degree from a Dutch university: an education completely presented in Dutch. This study showed that the dominance of the deficit approach is so powerful that even in cases that prove otherwise, immigrants face a wall of exclusion. No attention whatsoever has been paid to the qualities these women have shown during their short stay in their new country, but only to their imperfection in Dutch or other observed imperfections.

The aforementioned arguments, which we refer to here as the (e)quality paradox, show that popular slogans such as “We treat everybody as equal” or “It is about quality and not diversity” veil, rather than reveal, processes of exclusion. In addition, statements such as “If you have the quality, you will get there” seem to actually limit the inclusion of diversity rather than enhance it. This critique is situated within the tradition of critical studies, which has been quite effective in

unravelling the hegemonic and discursive sources of inequalities within organizations. However, critical studies have not been that successful in providing alternatives for organizations to deal with the paradoxes of diversity in organizations. In this chapter, we take up the plea of Zanoni et al. (2010, p. 19) for providing alternative ways to open new lines of interpretation in terms of diversity thought and practice within organizations. Through a critical analysis of concepts such as quality, equality and “good will” in organizations, we show the paradoxes at work, concluding with an alternative way of addressing this situation.

Policies and definitions of diversity

Various approaches and models of diversity inform the policies used by organizations to tackle diversity issues in practice. Organizations in which the deficit approach seems to dominate tend to choose short-term policies with the main objective of helping the other fit into the organization (Essed, 2002; Foldy, 2002). This limited policy on managing diversity focuses primarily on personnel management. By doing so, it fails to tackle the processes of exclusion in a comprehensive manner, because the power of exclusion embedded in organizational processes is not questioned (Siebers et al., 2002). As a result, when (ethnic) minorities enter the organization, they are often faced with what Kanter (1977) has referred to as tokenism. Tokens are presented as a showcase to create an image of inclusion of certain minority groups within organizations. Tokenism involves limited inclusion of members of (ethnic) minorities and often creates a false appearance of inclusiveness. First of all, tokens become highly visible and are often seen as representative of their groups rather than as individuals. Following this line of reasoning, Benschop and Doorewaard (1998) argue that tokens carry a heavy burden. Because of their visibility, they are not allowed to make mistakes. In cases where they represent a group with negative connotations, they have to work hard to reverse this image by presenting a good example. This means that tokens often have to work twice as hard, yet remain vulnerable. The second problem with tokenism is that the focus is on the level of image and representation of the organization and not so much on the durable effects of including diverse groups, which would require a change of mindset and practices within organizations. Finally, these kinds of short-term, superficial policies have short-term effects, with the result that (ethnic) minorities who enter an organization through target group policies encounter negative signals from the organization, are often not taken seriously, and are merely

used as a showcase for the organization. Therefore, even if certain target group policies lead to a higher number of (ethnic) minorities, their integration into the organization often remains unrealized. In addition, they are not prevented from leaving the organization. Cox (1993) claims that affirmative action (which often results in having tokens in organizations) is necessary to change certain taken-for-granted biases in organizations and to give different groups equal opportunities within organizations. However, it can only be successful if it is placed within a long-term perspective that includes an integral policy of diversity (Cox, 1993). An integral, comprehensive policy enables a long-term analysis of the processes of inclusion and exclusion within organizations in order to observe them at all levels: organizational culture (mission, vision, norm and values, symbols/rituals), organizational structure (rules and regulations/promotion plans), informal networks, intergroup relations, individual performances and others (Cox, 1993). Such long-term integral policy reveals an understanding of how the cultural, structural and informal processes produce and reinforce certain forms of exclusion within organizations.

Linked to these short-term and long-term policies of diversity in organizations, there is an ongoing discussion about the definitions of diversity that are used in relation to these policies. Nkomo and Cox (1996, p. 339) define diversity “as a mixture of people with different group identities within the same social system”. They make a distinction between a narrow and a broad definition of diversity in organizations. The narrow definition departs from specific identity components such as ethnicity and gender to investigate the process of exclusion in organizations. The main criticism of this approach is that it reifies diversity to its most prominent identity components and, by doing so, reinforces the processes of the dichotomization of otherness in organizations. They argue for a broad definition of diversity in which all identity components are included in the analysis. The broad definition of diversity “extends to age, personal and corporate background, education, function, and personality” (Thomas, 1991, p. 88). The problem with this approach, as identified by Prasad et al. (2006, p. 2), is that “it treats all differences as meriting equal attention, and fails to recognize that some differences [...] are likely to present more severe disadvantage in the workplace than others [...]”.

When choosing a certain category as a focus of policy, there is a danger of reproducing discourses of dichotomization, while treating all differences in the same manner has the downside of not being able to address the major sources of exclusion in organizations. In the following

sections, we show how our case study illuminates exactly this point. Before introducing the results of our research, we start with a description of the national (Dutch) and sectoral (philanthropic) context in which our case is located. With this choice, we show how certain discourses of exclusion narrated in organizations are informed by the dominant national as well as sector-specific discourses.

Dutch society and its new immigrants

For decades, the Netherlands has been seen as “tolerant” and “liberal”; nowadays it is viewed as “a country in crisis” (Buruma, 2006). This new image is mainly due to the growth of anti-Islamic sentiments and the increasing number of seats for the anti-Islamic political party (Party of Freedom) in the parliament. The dominant discourse in the Netherlands – as expressed in policies, political debate and public discussion – has shifted several times in recent decades. In the 1970s, it focused on the preservation of immigrants’ own cultures. Later, it shifted to the integration of immigrants while preserving their own cultures. At present, the focus has shifted to assimilation (Vasta, 2007). However, despite all the shifts within the dominant discourse relating to migrant issues, its content has barely changed. This is because the categorical discourse, with its powerful socio-cultural and socio-economic components, has remained a crucial feature of thinking on migrant issues in the Netherlands (Ghorashi, 2006). The socio-cultural component of this discourse positions immigrants as having cultural and religious backgrounds deviant from the dominant Dutch norm. This has contributed to the image of migrant others as absolute others, resulting in a situation in which it is almost unimaginable to consider immigrants as belonging to the nation. In spite of a diverse history of immigration to the Netherlands, it seems that the Dutch image of immigration is mainly dominated by the arrival of the so-called guest workers in the late 1950s. Post-war economic growth and the need for unskilled labour forced the Dutch government to look beyond its borders, fostering labour contracts first with Italy and Spain and later with Turkey and Morocco (Wilterdink, 1998). This background contributed to the persistent Dutch image of immigrants as being low-educated and low-skilled, according to which immigrants are considered as lacking the basic competencies to become full participants in society. This image informs the socio-economic component of the categorical discourse. The general notion is that immigrants lack proper education and have “social and cultural deficits” and a paucity of networks to enable

equal participation within organizations (Ghorashi & van Tilburg, 2006; Glastra, 1999).

The particular contextual stepping stone for the deficit approach of diversity in Dutch organizations has been the impact of the welfare state. The basis of the development of the welfare state was an increasing movement towards the principle of equality, resulting in discontent about existing inequality. As a result, all citizens were entitled to equal opportunities, but in some cases, it was more important first to liberate them from their socially disadvantaged position. Concern with disadvantaged groups and freeing them from their detrimental position was at the heart of the welfare state. This caused an increase in the number of welfare organizations in the Netherlands. Simultaneously, these developments contributed to the creation of a government-dependent class of people in need of help. The result of striving for equality has been a growing uneasiness about those who are considered “social deficits” or as a kind of lower class, as well as a fixation on reshaping this disadvantaged category (Lucassen, 2006). Despite the positive effect of the welfare state on increasing individual autonomy and the struggle against the social divide, it has also been an important breeding ground for categorical thinking about immigrants as weak groups that are in a socially disadvantaged position. It may be supposed that this societal discourse of helping disadvantaged groups is particularly strong within charitable organizations, which brings us to the description of the sector of our study.

Methods

In this study, we combined a quantitative (survey) and a qualitative (in-depth interviews) approach with desktop research. All studies were conducted in 2009. We aimed to combine narratives and numbers to gain a better understanding of diversity issues. The two main questions the survey addressed were:

- 1) How is diversity and diversity policy formulated and implemented in Dutch charitable organizations?
- 2) What strategies do charitable organizations use to realize goals with regard to diversity?

The survey included charitable organizations of all sizes ($N = 109$), while for the interviews we chose to focus on those employing more than 20 people (ten in-depth interviews). The qualitative study aimed to illuminate four different layers in organizations:

- 1) the mindset;
- 2) the diversity mix;
- 3) potential tensions;
- 4) existing approaches related to diversity issues.

From the websites of the organizations, we obtained information concerning the ethnic diversity of goodwill ambassadors – celebrity advocates of charitable organizations who use their talent or fame to draw attention to important issues – in Dutch charitable organizations. The converging results of these three studies gave us a better understanding of the approach to organizational diversity within the philanthropic sector, in terms of both general trends and the convictions of individuals presented through the narratives.

Ethnic diversity in the Dutch philanthropic sector

The philanthropic sector is growing in the Netherlands. It has substantially increased in size and popularity in recent years. In 1995, approximately €2.3 billion were given to charitable organizations. By 2009, this amount had more than doubled to €4.7 billion (Schuyt et al., 2011). The main areas of focus for charitable organizations in the Netherlands have been international aid, health, welfare and nature/environment. These organizations might have moral (doing good) and/or economic reasons, for example gaining trust, for being inclusive. Diversity could be important for charitable organizations that have the concept of “doing good” as their core business, resulting in the expectation that they will implicitly and explicitly behave in a socially responsible way. An economic reason for embracing diversity would be to gain the trust essential for the philanthropic sector to work effectively and to raise funds (Bekkers, 2003; Hansmann, 1996). One way to gain trust is to act in a socially responsible manner by embracing diversity. Another is to have as broad an image as possible in order to attract diverse groups as donors. The philanthropic sector has an image of being exclusive, elitist and “white”. Thus, charitable organizations could gain trust among a broader segment of Dutch society by embracing diversity.

One of the aims of our research was to identify the extent of ethnic diversity among the staff of Dutch charitable organizations. The percentages presented in Table 4.1 are based solely on the results of the survey. This is representative of the Dutch philanthropic sector.

Table 4.1 shows that 40% of organizations have at least one member of an ethnic minority among their total staff. In general, 80% of medium-sized Dutch organizations have at least one member of an

Table 4.1 Dutch charitable organizations with at least one member of an ethnic minority ($N = 109$)

	Diversity (%)
Board of directors	16
Advisory board	24
Volunteers	17
Goodwill ambassadors	17
Total staff	40

ethnic minority on their staff (Forum, 2009). Medium-sized Dutch charitable organizations are less diverse; only 64% of these organizations employ at least one member of an ethnic minority. The table also shows that the percentage of Dutch charitable organizations that have at least one member of an ethnic minority on their board of directors or advisory board is even smaller: 16% and 24%, respectively. Also, only a very small percentage of Dutch charitable organizations (17%) have at least one member of an ethnic minority among their volunteers. Additionally, a similarly small percentage of charitable organizations (17%) count members of minority groups among their goodwill ambassadors. Finally, among charitable organizations that have at least one member of an ethnic minority among their staff, approximately 6% of their total staff are members of these minorities. This percentage is lower than that among Dutch companies and organizations in general (CBS, 2010), which is 9% (König et al., 2010).

“Doing good” in society but not in diversity

“Doing good” as a cornerstone of the image of charitable organizations seems to contradict the practice of “not doing good” in including ethnic diversity. In the survey, about one-fifth of the organizations reported that their own organization is the main reason for the lack of members of ethnic minorities on their staff. The main organizational reason for the lack of a diverse staff concerns the size of the organization. This is illustrated by the following response:

Because this is a small organization, [...] Nevertheless, everybody who agrees with our objectives is welcome, regardless of race, gender and so on.

(Respondent 10-survey)

However, the majority of the organizations in both surveys and interviews blame the members of ethnic minorities themselves for the lack of ethnic diversity within their organization. They mentioned reasons such as lack of job applications from members of ethnic minorities, lack of interest in the field of work of their organization, lack of qualifications among members of ethnic minorities and so on.

We are active in a small town and not many members of ethnic minorities live over there [...] Members of ethnic minorities do not apply for working with heavily handicapped. Generally, they do not have the necessary education for doing so.

(Respondent 16-survey)

I think we should focus more on how to attract people with a migrant background. I think though that when you really choose to do this you need to make some assets available just for this purpose. Then it should be possible to reach that goal. But then you need to stay critical of the knowledge and skills of the people you hire. We have been working on our diversity policy for some time already and we want to recruit more members of ethnic minorities for our organization. That's why we look actively for opportunities to diversify our staff: we work with various migrant- and refugee organizations. We send out job openings with an emphasis in the text for women and members of ethnic minorities to apply. We invite people to interviews, and... nothing; it's so difficult to find the qualified person for the job, and members of ethnic minorities often do not speak and write Dutch and English perfectly and this is really important in communicating with our clients! Also, most of the time, unfortunately, they do not have enough experience on the job....

(Respondent 1-interview)

The responses above show that there are good intentions to include ethnic minorities, but there seems to be a lack of reflective basis to broaden the scope of organizations in terms of the quality and diversity-sensitive search capacities needed to include non-dominant groups in the organization. For example, in one of the interviews, the respondent described a job profile that included 7 to 9 years' experience and ABN Dutch (*Algemeen Beschaafd Nederlands* – the official or standard form of Dutch, “general civilized Dutch”, which in reality means a “perfect level of Dutch” or Dutch that equals that of a Dutch native). Even though this profile with its quality-related assumptions seems fair and neutral at first glance, a closer look reveals how the restricted way in which it

is adopted is actually exclusive of members of certain ethnic minorities, that is, first-generation high-potential immigrants and refugees. These findings are in line with earlier research presented by Ghorashi and van Tilburg (2006) on refugee women that shows the impact of the deficit approach on qualifying ethnic minorities. In terms of vertical mobility within organizations, the majority in both studies mentioned that there are equal chances to apply for high positions. Yet, the results in Table 4.1 show that diversity is lower among high positions, such as the board of directors, in Dutch charitable organizations than among staff in general in these organizations: 16% and 40%, respectively.

These findings illustrate that those organizations with a core business of “doing good” in society have trouble breaking away from their taken-for-granted notions of neutrality in relation to quality and equality. Also, the majority of respondents do not consider organizational processes as a possible source of exclusion of minority groups. These results support the paradox of equality and quality, which we discussed earlier.

Moral versus economic motives

Earlier we argued that charitable organizations could have economic or moral motives for including diversity in their organization. The results of our survey show that approximately two-thirds of the Dutch charitable organizations report having moral motives for embracing diversity. Approximately one-third of the organizations mentioned economic motives. Economic motives mentioned by the charitable organizations included benefits of diversity for their public image; stimulation of creativity and innovation within the organization; and other reasons such as economic survival. Additionally, we found differences in the motives mentioned between the types of charitable organizations. Organizations focusing on international aid were more likely to have economic motives than organizations that focused on health, welfare and nature.

For the majority of the organizations, pursuing ethnic diversity is considered especially important for changing the old elitist image into a more inclusive one. One of the interviewees, who worked for a large international aid organization, provided an example:

we had, for example, a temp worker, a receptionist, a woman with a headscarf who was working at the reception; all of us thought that she was really great, a very clever lady. We did not like the fact that she only had a temporary position. She was smarter than that, and we thought that it was good for a positive image of our organization.

This was greatly appreciated by everyone here. It was very nice that you could make diversity visible in that way. It was an excellent example of something that really works [regarding diversity].

(Respondent 1-interview)

According to this respondent, having women with Islamic clothing at the gates of the organization improves its overall image. This enables the organization to meet the expectations of different kinds of target groups, broadening the appeal of the organization to these groups, who could, as a result, better identify with the values of the organization. The organization also gained a large amount of positive feedback on this point from clients, donors and their partners. This kind of image building is in line with what was earlier referred to as tokenism. The token position of the woman mentioned in the quotation represents the changing ambitions of organizations and could help to make a start towards a more inclusive image/atmosphere. In spite of the positive approach of the respondent, these findings do not go beyond a limited and short-term policy of diversity, as we explored earlier. When minorities are merely viewed as “tokens” to either shape the image of the organization or achieve target numbers, this strengthens the processes of “othering” within organizations and does not help to establish long-term policies for transforming the mindset as required for organizational change. One of the respondents illustrated this point:

Diversity requires permanent maintenance. In times of stress, hustle and bustle and so on, you’re looking for your own “clone.” Someone who is very much like you. It [diversity] requires permanent discussion, things to talk about with each other, dialogue. Equality is not something evident. The Netherlands seems to be divided into well-meaning people: “refugees are pitiable” or “traumatized,” or “we make a trajectory about Muslims meeting non-Muslims,” “enjoying a cup of tea with your migrant neighbors” and, on the other hand, light xenophobia or discrimination. Our organization is also infected. To handle each other pragmatically, equally, to use each other’s strengths, for example, and thus to find in a reciprocal search is difficult in such a strongly politicized society.

(Respondent 7-interview)

This quote demonstrates two major hindrances (the image of migrants as a weak group and the negative discourse of migrants) to working on a long-term inclusion of ethnic minorities. We argue that this is even

more difficult for the philanthropic sector, because the organizations within this sector are accustomed to helping the other and viewing them as “receivers of help”. In this sector, the notion of good is directly connected to the notion of aid, which creates a sector-specific paradox we call “the paradox of good will”.

The paradox of good will

The paradox of good will refers to the situation in which the inclusion of immigrants in organizations is primarily seen as an act of good will on the part of the organization (with moral arguments), while the ideal of diversity is seen as a source of profit. In the mindset of organizations there is no imaginable connection between (possible) profitability of diversity and the inclusion of members of ethnic minorities. This creates the paradox that, even when members of ethnic minorities are included, they are neither treated as equals nor taken seriously for their capabilities.

The results of our study show that the most prominent reasons for the inclusion of diversity in Dutch charitable organizations are moral arguments. Yet, there was also a “business case” argument made by a number of respondents. The majority of the organizations in the qualitative study considered diversity in the philanthropic sector as an added value. Arguments made included the need for creativity and innovation to challenge routine and blind support for outdated and ineffective working strategies. In addition, a few of the respondents mentioned a better understanding of the changing world that could lead to a better “fit with the work surroundings”, which include constant waves of migration and new trends, developments and frameworks. Thus, many respondents mentioned arguments directly related to economic reasons and the added value of diversity. However, we also observed that, in spite of this attention to economic reasons, these respondents were not able to make an explicit link between the inclusion of ethnic minorities and (economic) profit for the organization. This contradiction became especially visible in answers to two different questions. When we asked the respondents about the impact of diversity in general terms using economic arguments as our frame – for example, about the importance of diversity for increasing creativity and stimulating innovation – the majority of respondents firmly said “yes”. But when asked about the possible effect of including ethnic minorities as a valuable asset for their organizations, most respondents answered with a “no”. The contrast between these two lines of response was quite surprising to us. It showed

a mismatch between the inclusion of members of ethnic minorities in organizations, which is primarily seen as an act of good will (moral argument), and the general ideal of diversity, which is considered to be a source of profit (business case argument). This disparity informs the paradox of good will, which is partly shaped by the condition of the welfare state, as mentioned before, and strengthened within this particular sector. Thinking of those in need of help as those capable of providing it means taking a big leap. Making this connection seems to be very challenging.

Toothless critique leads to business as usual

Most organizations participating in the qualitative study were quite interested in diversity issues – they aspire to be(come) a reflection of the Dutch population – but their interest was not really focused on long-term policies that require a different mindset and a broad/integral approach to managing diversity. There was, however, awareness on the part of a number of the respondents concerning the notion of othering and the downside of categorical thinking.

Diversity is really about more than just people with an immigrant background! In the moment when you make that distinction, you have ruined it already. Then, it's about "us" and the "other." "Us" are then the white people, and the people with a migrant background are usually "Muslims" right? Instead it should be fundamental that you want to make your organization diversity-sensitive.

[Respondent 7-interview]

Most of the people who were interviewed found the focus on ethnic or cultural diversity stigmatizing, strengthening the existing process of othering. Some explicitly mentioned that they do not support policies such as affirmative action, or any legal obligations related to (implementing) diversity. "You must do it simply because you want to, and not because you have to!" said Respondent 7-interview. They oppose these policies because they believe that they would lead to hiring unqualified candidates. They think that everybody needs to be treated equally. A majority of the respondents favoured what we earlier termed the broad definition of diversity.

The [charitable organizations] want to be a good reflection of the Dutch population, they want to include in their workforce women,

different ethnic backgrounds, and all kinds of people. They want to inform as wide an audience as possible about the subject, and because of that, they want via the diversity of their employees, to reach as well a variety of target groups.

[Respondent 5-interview]

Consequently, these individuals perceive diversity management as a tool of recognition and a way to exploit the full range of talents of their staff. This preference for a broad definition of diversity, which refers to all individuals, is believed to encourage the development of the talents and strengths of each employee. However, as we showed earlier, various studies have illustrated that, when all differences are treated as equally important, there is no recognition of the fact that some differences lead to more severe forms of exclusion than others (Ghorashi & Sabelis, 2013; Prasad et al., 2006). This broad definition of diversity and emphasis on equality of individuals works to exclude – in spite of its inclusive intention – because it masks the historically embedded and taken-for-granted processes of exclusion that exclude some more than others. This (which we earlier referred to as the paradox of equality) makes the critique of the Dutch discourse of othering (explicitly mentioned by some respondents) toothless, because it remains on an abstract level and does not lead to creation of the necessary means to combat the consequences of the power of that discourse in the processes within organizations.

A clear manifestation of the ineffectual critique of othering is that the organizational diversity policies, if any, are limited to personnel management. Most organizations focus their efforts on recruitment and selection procedures. There is no comprehensive diversity programme in any of the organizations. Some show a little interest in diversity training, but there is no investment in learning/education programmes that challenge the mindset. Policies regarding the upward mobility of ethnic minority workers were also quite limited. While the majority ponder how to recruit more qualified minorities into their organization, too few (around 10%) focus on how to keep them there for a longer period of time by creating special procedures, working/internship processes, and a support system. This short-term approach, with its limited focus on career development and the lack of consideration of the organization's internal context, often leads to the so-called revolving door effect, meaning that there is a high level of turnover of recruited personnel among members of ethnic minorities. It also leads to persistence of certain stereotypes, such as “there are not enough minorities to be found” and increasing tokenism without a durable plan for inclusion.

Discussion

The significance of this study is that it shows how assumedly neutral choices for equality and quality, in relation to certain notions of otherness relating to the concept of good will, provide persistent sources of exclusion and prevent organizations from reflecting on taken-for-granted assumptions. By including context (of both the Dutch philanthropic sector and society), we showed the impact on the sector of the categorical discourse in/through which ethnic minorities are primarily blamed for their lack of presence within organizations. Analysing the interviews, we infer that the combination of a broad focus on diversity (meaning a lack of necessary focus on the inclusion of certain groups) and the choice of a short-term approach to diversity does not equip organizations to deal with the deeply rooted taken-for-granted notions of exclusion – seeing the ethnic other as a weak group and solely the receivers of help – that are persistent in organizational processes informed by the type of categorical thinking dominant within Dutch society.

In addition, we noted that an unreflective belief in good will provides legitimization for leaving unchallenged the basic assumptions informed by the dominant discourses both in society and within the sector. It seems to be even more difficult for people to take up the challenge of diversity when they believe that they are already doing the right thing with noble intentions. For this reason, it is our conclusion that the specific intersection of the paradoxes of (e)quality and good will diminishes the reflection of members of this sector on their own position in relation to diversity. The result is that any critique of the Dutch discourse remains toothless, and the talk on inclusion remains ineffective.

Furthermore, when there is not enough diversity present in an organization to question basic assumptions, the good intentions remain unchallenged, and organizational practices often support the mainstream, limited manner of qualifying potential employees. For a realistic implementation of the critique of the dominant discourse of othering and the inclusive talk, it is necessary to develop a dual trajectory: including the difference in the organization, and making the organizational context inclusive enough for the included diversity to take root. This means precisely the opposite combination of definition and approach to diversity to what we have observed in our study. Instead of a broad definition of diversity, there is a need for focus, achieved through a narrow definition or choice for diversity, in order to create the necessary

challenge to reflect on the power of discourse in redefining the self and the other in organizations. This narrow choice needs to be combined with a long-term integral approach to diversity, which goes beyond personnel management. We call this combination of choice and approach to diversity, which is the backbone for the dual trajectory, “focus in context”.

Concluding thoughts: Focus in context

New agendas for change – in this context, change in favour of diversity – need challenging, reflection and rethinking of “neutral” concepts, along with unorthodox methods for bringing about change. In our qualitative study, we noticed that some members of organizations were aware of the necessity for a long-term investment in diversity, yet the same individuals were against any kind of focus in diversity. The combination of focused diversity and a broad policy seemed too unnatural to embrace. Yet, what feels unnatural is exactly what unsettles the normalizing power of the discourse. Another point that was mentioned very often was the lack of money and time to invest in durable diversity programmes.

Certainly, we find diversity policy important, but unfortunately – the investment of time therein – not! I’m still wondering how to convince the management that diversity policy first requires support within the organization and the understanding: what we mean by it, why we want it, what we’re willing to give up for it, and so on.

(Respondent 8-interview)

If the philanthropic sector in the Netherlands is to become more inclusive towards diversity, there is need for serious investment, meaning that the resources for achieving this must be created. Dutch charitable organizations need to realize that embracing diversity is not just a matter of “doing good”, but also a matter of creating conditions for open-mindedness. This is only possible when enough reflecting capacities are created to unsettle the normalizing impact of both the Dutch dominant discourse (seeing the ethnic other as weak) and the philanthropic sector (ethnic others are solely the receivers of help). To realize this challenge, it is necessary to take time and make space – realizing that both cost money – to enable the desired conditions for the reflection necessary to move beyond the organization’s comfort zones (see also Ghorashi & Sabelis, 2013). As we argued, in this

process, the combination of long-term investment and short-term challenges – or focus in context – would trigger a more inclusive mindset, enabling organizations to go beyond the taken-for-granted notions of otherness informed by dominant discourses. One of the most necessary achievements of this transformation would be to see members of ethnic minorities as agents of change rather than merely weak categories and receivers of aid and assistance.

References

- Acker, J. (1992). Gendering organizational theory. In A.J. Mills, & P. Tancred (Eds.), *Gendering Organizational Analysis* (pp. 248–260). Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
- Bekkers, R.H.F.P. (2003). Trust, accreditation, and philanthropy in the Netherlands. *Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly*, 32(4), 596–615.
- Benschop, Y., & Doorewaard, H. (1998). Covered by equality: The gender subtext of organizations. *Organization Studies*, 19(5), 787–807.
- Buruma, I. (2006). *Murder in Amsterdam*. New York, NY: Penguin Books.
- CBS (2010). *Kerncijfers van de allochtonenprognose 2008–2050* (Key figures of the migrant forecast 2008–2050). CBS. Retrieved June 7, 2011, from: <http://statline.cbs.nl/StatWeb/publication/?VW=T&DM=SLNL&PA=71877ned>.
- Cox, T. Jr. (1993). *Cultural Diversity in Organizations*. San Francisco, CA: Berrett-Koehler Publishers.
- Dick, P., & Cassell, C. (2002). Barriers to managing diversity in a UK constabulary: The role of discourse. *Journal of Management Studies*, 39(7), 953–976.
- Essed, P. (2002). Cloning cultural homogeneity while talking diversity: Old wines in new bottles in Dutch work organizations? *Transforming Anthropology*, 11(1), 2–12.
- Foldy, E.G. (2002). “Managing” diversity: Identity and power in organisations. In I. Aaltio & A.J. Mills (Eds.), *Gender, Identity and the Culture of Organizations* (pp. 92–112). London: Routledge.
- Forum (2009). *Trendmeter 2009: Werkgevers over Nieuwe Nederlanders als werknemer*. Utrecht: Forum.
- Ghorashi, H. (2006). *Paradoxen van culturele erkenning: Management van diversiteit in nieuw Nederland*. (Paradoxes of Cultural Recognition: Managing Diversity in New Netherlands). Inaugural lecture at the VU University Amsterdam.
- Ghorashi, H., & Sabelis, I. (2013). Juggling difference and sameness: Rethinking strategies for diversity in organizations. *Scandinavian Journal of Management*, 29(1), 78–86.
- Ghorashi, H., & van Tilburg, M. (2006). “When is my Dutch good enough?” Experiences of refugee women with Dutch labour organisations. *Journal of International Migration and Integration*, 7(1), 51–70.
- Glastra, F. (1999). *Organisaties en Diversiteit* (Organizations and Diversity). Utrecht: Lemma.
- Gowricharn, R. (1999). De arbeidsmarkt, over driedeling en sociale cohesie (The Labour Market, about Trisection and Social Cohesion). In F. Glastra (Ed.), *Organisaties en Diversiteit* (pp. 103–123). Utrecht: Lemma.
- Hansmann, H. (1996). *The Ownership of Enterprise*. Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap.

- Holvino, E., & Kamp, A. (2009). Diversity management: Are we moving in the right direction? Reflections from both sides of the North Atlantic. *Scandinavian Journal of Management*, 25(4), 395–403.
- Kanter, R.M. (1997[1977]). *Men and Women of the Corporation*. New York, NY: Basic Books.
- König, T., Vlieveen, E., & van den Tillaart, J. (2010). *Diversiteit in Cijfers (Diversity in Numbers) 2008*. Den Haag: Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek.
- Janssens, M., & Zanoni, P. (2005). Many diversities for many services: Theorizing diversity (management) in service companies. *Human Relations*, 58(3), 311–340.
- Lucassen, L. (2006). Gelijkheid en onbehagen: De wortels van het integratiedebat in West-Europa (Equality and Uneasiness: The Roots of the Integration Debate in Western Europe). In L. Lucassen & W. Willems (Eds.), *Gelijkheid en Onbehagen (Equality and Uneasiness)* (pp. 11–35). Amsterdam: Bert Bakker.
- Nkomo, S.M., & Cox, T. Jr. (1996). Diverse identities in organizations. In S. Clegg, C. Hardy, & W.R. Nord (Eds.), *Handbook of Organization Studies* (pp. 338–356). London: Sage.
- Ostendorp, A., & Steyaert, C. (2009). How different can differences be(come)? Interpretative repertoires of diversity concepts in Swiss-based organizations. *Scandinavian Journal of Management*, 25(4), 374–384.
- Prasad, P., & Mills, A.J. (1997). From showcase to shadow: Understanding the dilemmas of managing workplace diversity. In P. Prasad, A. Mills, M. Elmes, & A. Prasad (Eds.), *Managing the Organizational Melting Pot* (pp. 3–27). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Prasad, A., & Prasad, P. (2002). Otherness at large: Identity and difference in the new globalized organizational landscape. In I. Aaltio & A.J. Mills (Eds.), *Gender, Identity and Culture of Organizations* (pp. 57–71). London: Routledge.
- Prasad, P., Pringle, J.K., & Konrad, A.M. (2006). Examining the contours of workplace diversity: Concepts, contexts and challenges. In A.M. Konrad, P. Prasad, & J.K. Pringle (Eds.), *Handbook of Workplace Diversity* (pp. 1–22). London: Sage Publications.
- Schuyt, T.N.M., Gouwenberg, B.M., & Bekkers, R.H.F.P. (2011). *Geven in Nederland 2011*. Amsterdam: Reed Business.
- Siebers, H., Verweel, P., & de Ruijter, A. (2002). *Management van diversiteit in arbeidsorganisaties (Managing Diversity in Labour Organizations)*. Utrecht: Lemma.
- Thomas, R.R. (1991). *Beyond Race and Gender*. New York: Amacom.
- Tomlinson, F., & Schwabenland, C. (2010). Reconciling competing discourses of diversity? The UK non-profit sector between social justice and the business case. *Organization*, 17(1), 101–121.
- van den Broek, L. (2009). *De ironie van gelijkheid (The Irony of Equality)*. Tilburg: University of Tilburg.
- Vasta, E. (2007). From ethnic minorities to ethnic majority policy: Multiculturalism and the shift to assimilationism in the Netherlands. *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 30(5), 713–740.
- Wilterdink, N. (1998). Mondialisering, migratie en multiculturaliteit. (Globalization, Migration and Multiculturalism) In C.H.M. Geuijen (Ed.), *Multiculturalisme (Multiculturalism)* (pp. 55–67). Utrecht: Lemma.

- Zanoni, P., & Janssens, M. (2003). Deconstructing difference: The rhetoric of human resource managers' diversity discourses. *Organization Studies*, 25(1), 55–74.
- Zanoni, P., Janssens, M., Benschop, Y., & Nkomo, S. (2010). Guest editorial: Unpacking diversity, grasping inequality: Rethinking difference through critical perspectives. *Organization*, 17(1), 9–29.