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**"BEING EMPLOYER OF CHOICE: THE IMPACT OF CULTURAL
DIVERSITY ON EMPLOYER ATTRACTIVENESS"**

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	3
CHAPTER 1 – Workplace diversity: relevant data and trends	5
1.1 Trends shaping organizational reality	5
1.2 Definition of diversity and diversity management	9
1.3 Why diversity matters	12
1.3.1 Reputation	14
1.3.2 Employee attraction and retention	15
1.3.3 Better decision making	17
1.3.4 Innovation	18
1.3.5 Enhanced Customer Focus	20
1.4 Companies that promote diversity	22
1.5 Is the working environment diverse?	25
CHAPTER 2 – Theoretical foundations	29
2.1 Employer branding and multiculturalism	29
2.2 What attracts potential employees	32
2.3 Hofstede’s cultural dimensions and openness to cultural diversity	37
2.3.1 Power distance	38
2.3.2 Individualism vs Collectivism	39
2.3.3 Masculinity vs Femininity	40
2.3.4 Uncertainty avoidance	42
2.3.5 Short term vs Long term orientation	44
2.3.6 Indulgence vs Restraint	45
2.4 Trompenaars’ cultural dimensions and cultural diversity perceptions	46
2.4.1 Universalist vs Particularist	47
2.4.2 Individualism vs Communitarianism	48
2.4.3 Neutral vs Affective	49
2.4.4 Specificity vs Diffuseness	50
2.4.5 Achievement-oriented vs Ascription-oriented	51
2.4.6 Sequential Time vs Synchronic Time	52
2.4.7 Internal control vs External control	53
CHAPTER 3 – Dimensions that affect cultural diversity perceptions	54
3.1 A European overview	54
3.2 Cultural differences: Hofstede’s dimensions in the European contest	56
3.3 Generational approaches to diversity	64

3.3.1 Boomers	66
3.3.2 Generation X	68
3.3.3 Generation Y (Millennials)	70
3.3.4 Generation Z	72
3.3.5 Conclusions	73
3.4 The influence of education on cultural diversity acceptance	74
CHAPTER 4 – Qualitative analysis	77
4.1 Research Methodology	77
4.2 Cultural dimensions’ analysis	80
4.3 Generations analysis	87
4.4 Educational level analysis	90
4.5 Additional investigations: gender analysis	92
4.6 Additional investigations: international experience analysis	95
4.7 Conclusions	96
CONCLUSIONS	97
REFERENCES	100

INTRODUCTION

Nowadays, the world is more interconnected and borderless than ever. The reasons of that are some major trends like globalization and information technology, which strongly affects the social context in which individuals live and companies operate.

Indeed, global markets have brought new challenges to the companies. Which nowadays, compete not only in terms of sales but also in terms of the human resources that could help them to reach their goal of growth. This is why, employer branding is more important than ever.

Differently from the past, talent is now represented by a wide set of candidates, coming from any part of the world. Because of the crescent multicultural environment, companies are using diversity and inclusion topics as a mean of employer branding strategy. But is that really a good focus point? The importance of attracting the most talented candidates, implies the need for companies to start thinking about how their communication strategies affect candidate's attraction. Therefore, the aim of this study is to understand the impact that a culturally diverse composition of the workforce has on employer attractiveness.

In the first chapter, the focus would be on understanding the business context and the importance of diversity for companies' performance. The various conceptions of the term "diversity" in the workplace would be explained and the main benefits analysed.

The last part of the chapter would be dedicated to understanding whether companies are effectively adopting diversity and inclusions strategies and what is the response of the society.

In the second chapter, the theoretical foundations about employer branding would be explained. Assumptions based on the Attraction-Selection-Attrition model and the Person-Organization fit theory would be made.

Later, the Hofstede's cultural dimensions would be presented in order to try to make assumption on how they affect individuals' openness to cultural diversity. Finally, the Trompenaars' cultural dimensions model would be analysed in order to see how different perceptions between cultures are formed.

In the third chapter, assumptions would be made about the elements that could influence the perceptions of potential candidate towards a multicultural employer. For that purpose, the Hofstede's cultural dimensions would be analysed in the European Contest and a theoretical analysis of different generations and educational levels would also be performed.

In the fourth chapter, the aim would be to verify the assumptions made in chapter three and further investigate if it is possible to identify other relevant dimensions that affect individuals' openness to cultural diversity. For that reason, a qualitative research has been conducted.

Finally, in the conclusion a general overview would be made, and the final findings presented.

CHAPTER 1 – Workplace diversity: relevant data and trends

1.1 Trends shaping organizational reality

The global business environment in which organizations are operating is becoming increasingly volatile and complex. This complexity is enhanced by major trends like globalization and information technologies which fosters the interconnection of people, organizations and communities creating more connections and, therefore, more interdependencies.

Globalization and information technologies introduced many advantages for companies, among the others the enhanced opportunity to access new markets and resources, as well human as material, that previously were difficult or too costly to reach.

These trends could also have back sides for companies, which are mostly related to the rise of the competition in the world, nowadays more taugth then traditionally. Today’s competitors can emerge from the same market as well as from different markets, from the same industry as well as from other industries.

As the final goal of all the companies is to increase their influence and presence on the market, companies compete not only in terms of sales but also in terms of the resources that could help them to reach their goal of growth. As Hartmut Ostrowski, Chairman & CEO of Bertelsmann AG, one of the world’s largest mass media companies, stated, “our success is absolutely dependent on our employees, their ideas and intellectual resources” (PwC, 2010).

Achieving growth goals while remaining competitive in a rapidly changing environment requires the company structure and strategies to be more agile and flexible. Consequently, the adaptability of capital and human resources is the pillar in order to develop a competitive business model. According to the PwC’s annual global CEO survey, 97% of CEOs in the financial sector said that having the right talent is the most critical factor for their business growth (PwC, 2010).

Nowadays, more and more employers attach great importance to talent management, based on the assumption that it is a prerequisite for building a competitive organization in the long term (Matuska & Sałek-Imińska, 2014) and that open access to the diverse skill sets, backgrounds, and experiences held by the organizations’ own people is essential for success (Deloitte, 2019).

For individuals, globalization and information technologies shortened the distance between countries, allowing the people to have access to more educational, working and other opportunities abroad and to move freely between borders. These trends are then reflected in the composition of the population and of the workforce of each country.

Finally, global career opportunities are leading to the evolution of companies that are increasingly characterized by wide diversity of its resources, in terms of gender, abilities, skills, experiences and cultural background and as a consequence of that, companies have to deal with thematic and strategies that consider diversity and inclusion issues.

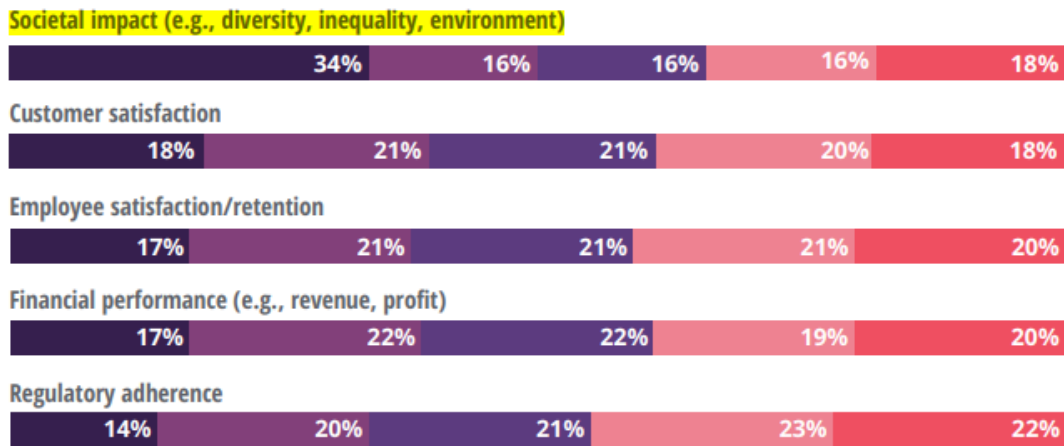
Broadly, 75 percent of respondents to a survey conducted by Boston Consulting Group said that diversity is gaining momentum in their organizations (Rocío, Voigt, Tsusaka, Krentz, & Abouzahr, 2018). The data is consistent with the findings of Talent Lyft and Natural HR, HR support software companies, which commonly pointed out that diversity and inclusion was one of the Key Workplace trends in 2019 (Engman, 2018; Natural HR, 2019).

Diversity is gaining momentum also as a topic in the European Union environment. Various are the European Union policies that focus on eliminating discrimination and promoting diversity in the workplace. One of the main initiatives is the Diversity Charter, which aims at encouraging organisations (NGOs, public bodies, private companies...) to develop and implement diversity and inclusion policies (European Commission, s.d.). By signing a charter, the organisation voluntarily commits to promote diversity and equal opportunities in the workplace, regardless of, for example, age, disability, gender, race or ethnic origin, religion or sexual orientation (European Commission, s.d.).

Diversity is becoming increasingly relevant in the business environment not only because of the changing composition of societies but also because of the major attention of stakeholders at the societal impact of companies and therefore, the major awareness of the organizations that their policies and practices could have positive as well as negative effects on their brand image and consequently on their success. In 2019, the number-one element cited by CEOs to evaluate the success of their companies was “impact on society, including income inequality, diversity, and the environment” (Deloitte, 2019) as showed in Figure 1.

Respondents cited societal impact most often as the top factor used to measure success when evaluating annual performance

■ Ranked first ■ Ranked second ■ Ranked third ■ Ranked fourth ■ Ranked fifth



Note: Percentages may not total 100 percent due to rounding.

Source: Deloitte and Forbes Insights, *Success personified in the Fourth Industrial Revolution: Four leadership personas for an era of change and uncertainty*, Deloitte Insights, January 20, 2019.

Figure 1 - Global Human Capital Trends 2019 (Deloitte, 2019).

Societal impact is recognized as important through CEOs, because it is one of the elements that contributes to define the image and reputation of a company towards external and internal stakeholders. The perceptions that stakeholders have about the company may strongly impact its reputation, the ability to attract business partners and recruit and retain talented, highly skilled individuals that are needed for the company to be competitive in the marketplace.

The business card of a company towards potential employees is employer branding, which could be defined as the sum of strategies that aims to influence the individual's awareness and perception of the company to make it stand out from the competitors as the best place where to work. Indeed, employer branding strategies are relevant to communicate to the external world the company's value and practices, in addition they contribute to engage actual employees and build loyalty. Having a strong reputation as employer can enhance the profitability of the company thanks to the increased ability to attract and retain the best talents.

There are many elements that characterize and together build employer branding, one of these is diversity and data confirms the relevance of this element: a full two-thirds (67 percent) of active and passive job seekers think that a diverse workforce is an important factor when evaluating companies and job offers (Glassdoor, 2014).

Companies who are dedicated to building and promoting diversity in the workplace are more attractive compared to the competitors that do not have these strategies because they are seen as good, more human and socially responsible organizations (Martic, 2018) and they communicate to the stakeholders that the company is committed to understanding and utilizing the unique characteristics of each individual (Magoshi & Chang, 2009). These perceptions influence also current employees, which will be more satisfied and engaged with the company.

Although, attracting highly skilled individuals is the starting point for a company to build a successful human resource base, should not be the only focus point. An equally important factor is the ability to retain the best talents and diversity management practices contribute significantly to increase loyalty and engagement of current employees.

In conclusion, creating a company where employees feel meaningful and valued despite their differences will bring advantage to the business. If an organization is characterized by a diverse workforce, will be easier for many different people to relate to the company and brand, opening doors to new markets, customers and business partners (Martic, 2018).

1.2 Definition of diversity and diversity management

Individuals are increasingly developing a global mindset due to their curiosity and/or the need for better opportunities. They search for working, educational and other experiences abroad, leading to the creation of a working environment characterized by wide diversity of its human resources.

A diverse company may be defined based on many aspects that characterize the individual. The literature itself does not provide a common definition of diversity, in fact, authors range from broad concepts to very specific ones.

Tereza Leme Fleury (1999), professor of International Strategy at Sao Paulo school of Business Administration, define diversity as the mixture of people with different group identities within the same social system. This is a broad definition, which classifies the individuals based on their affinity to a specific group of people, without giving details about how to classify these groups.

Other authors include the elements that characterize diversity. Ankita Saxena (2014), Lecturer at Anand Engineering College, defined workforce diversity as the similarities and differences among employees in terms of age, cultural background, physical abilities and disabilities, race, religion, gender, and sexual orientation.

Going even more into details, some of the authors classify diversity into inherent diversity (or primary diversity) and acquired diversity (or secondary diversity).

Inherent diversity (or primary diversity) involves traits individuals are born with and thus are hard to change. They have an ongoing impact throughout individuals lives as they shape their basic self-image and the way in which they see and perceive the world (Matuska & Sałek-Imińska, 2014). The traits that characterize inherent diversity are age, ethnicity, gender, physical abilities/qualities, race and sexual orientation (Hewlett, Marshall, & Sherbin, 2013; Matuska & Sałek-Imińska, 2014).

Acquired diversity (or secondary diversity) involves traits individuals gain from experience and that can change on an ongoing basis. The traits that characterize acquired diversity are educational background, geographic location, income, marital status, military experience, religious beliefs, and work experience (Matuska & Sałek-Imińska, 2014).

Some of these dimensions, like gender and race, are highly visible and immediately recognizable, others, like religion and educational background, are less visible but they also contribute to the creation of a diverse environment.

Finally, it is possible to state that every working environment is characterized by diversity of its human resources, because no individual is alike, and everyone differ in at least one dimension. Thus, we can define diversity as the variety of relevant human characteristics in an organization (Tsusaka, Reeves, Hurder, & Harnoss, 2017).

As stated before, diversity could bring many benefits to the company, therefore, diverse working environment require adequate policies and strategies to manage and get out the most from the different relevant human characteristics.

Often diversity management is associated with policies designed to recruit, retain, and develop employees from diverse social groups (European Commission, 2003) but more in general diversity management initiatives are specific activities, programs, policies, and any other formal processes or efforts designed to promote organizational culture change related to diversity (Wentling, 2000). The objective of diversity management is to increase awareness of cultural differences; develop the ability to recognize, accept, and value diversity through organizational intervention to minimize patterns of inequality experienced by those not in the mainstream; and modify organizational culture and leadership practices, so that members of all socio-cultural backgrounds can contribute and achieve their full potential (Jauhari & Singh, 2013).

Diversity will bring benefits to the company only when the organization is able to recognize and value it. Unfortunately, managing diversity could be very challenging and many companies struggle to materially increase representation levels of diverse talent, gain an understanding of where in their organizations diversity matters most, and create truly inclusive organizational cultures to recap the benefits of diversity (Hunt, Prince, Dixon-Fyle, & Yee, 2018). When the organizations employ human resources having different age, gender, perception, attitude, religion, then it will be very difficult for the management as well as for the employees to manage and adjust with that environment (Saxena, 2014).

It is important to underline that an inclusive working environment could not be created only through diversity and inclusion policies and practices but must engage all the organizational members which should contribute by responding effectively to the challenges posed by diversity in workgroups (Kim, 2006).

According to a Glassdoor survey, 23 percent of respondents agreed that employees themselves were responsible for increasing diversity (Glassdoor, 2014). The way in which employees could contribute in achieving this goal is through accepting diversity and allowing different individuals to freely express their diversity without judgement.

Leadership commitment plays also a big role in creating an inclusive working environment. Leading by example is a way to commit the people to follow company strategies and practices. This is confirmed by a study of McKinsey & Company which shows that ethnic/cultural diversity at the highest levels of company leadership could serve as a signal to employees and other stakeholders that the organization truly understands and values the community and customers that they serve (Hunt, Prince, Dixon-Fyle, & Yee, 2018).

Managing diversity is more than simply acknowledging differences in people, it involves recognizing the value of differences, combating discrimination, and promoting inclusiveness (Kim, 2006). It is evident that the mechanisms and logics behind diversity management are very complex and require a company to put a great effort in order to set in place the right policies and practices. Diversity programmes are in essence a form of change programme: they seek to alter the composition of leadership teams or staff and to disrupt old habits and routines (Hunt, Layton, & Prince, 2015). In conclusion, in order to implement effective diversity management some major changes in the company culture are needed.

Managing diversity involve some risks related to its inefficient management and to employee different human beings. Problems that could emerge include differences in terms of language and therefore in communication, attitude clashes and difference in perceptions (Saxena, 2014). Companies should be very careful in identifying the emerging problems, because if diversity is mismanaged, dissatisfaction may set in, conflict can become a norm, and high turnover rates may deplete the organization's talent (Kim, 2006).

Finally, once an effective diversity management strategy is in place, the company will be able to enjoy the benefits that a diverse workforce will bring in terms of business performance.

1.3 Why diversity matters

Many researches showed that investing in diversity could positively affect the overall business performance, leading the companies to the increase of their market share.

One of the most relevant and consistent in time researches has been conducted by McKinsey & Company. In 2015 in the first report called “Diversity Matters” the authors found out a positive correlation between a more diverse leadership team and financial outperformance (Hunt, Layton, & Prince, 2015). In 2018 in the report “Delivering through Diversity” McKinsey & Company demonstrated that the positive correlation demonstrated three years before continues to hold true on an updated, enlarged, and global data set (Hunt, Prince, Dixon-Fyle, & Yee, 2018).

Overall, the studies highlight that diversity should be a topic of increasing interest and attention for organizations because it strongly affects business performance. The last report “Delivering through Diversity” shows how companies in the top-quartile for ethnic/cultural diversity on executive teams were 33 percent more likely to have industry-leading profitability. Instead, companies in the bottom quartile for both gender and ethnic/cultural diversity were 29 percent less likely to achieve above-average profitability than were all other companies in the data set (Hunt, Prince, Dixon-Fyle, & Yee, 2018).

Results confirming these trends were also presented by the European Commission, revealing that 83 percent of companies that have adopted diversity policies were seeing benefits in terms of ability to recruit from a wider selection of people, being able to keep better workers for longer, improved community relations and an enhanced company image (European Commission, 2005) all elements resulting in a better business performance.

The spread of diversity is important through the whole hierarchy of the organization, but as stated previously, in order to be effective, the change should more likely start from the top. In fact, research shows that companies with the most ethnically/culturally diverse boards worldwide were 43 percent more likely to experience higher profits (Hunt, Prince, Dixon-Fyle, & Yee, 2018).

The positive impact of diversity on business performance is perceived and noticed by employees too. In a survey conducted by Business Harvard Review, employees of companies characterized by diversity were 45 percent likelier to report that their firm’s market share grew over the previous year and 70 percent likelier to report that the firm captured a new market (Hewlett, Marshall, & Sherbin, 2013).

Top management also seems starting to see the benefits of diversity among its human resources. In the financial sector, data shows that globally, 80 percent of CEOs are looking for a broader set of skills when recruiting than in the past and more than 75 percent of the CEOs in this sector who have adopted a strategy to promote diversity believe it is helping them to enhance innovation, customer satisfaction and overall business performance (PwC, 2015).

Increased financial performance is the outcome of many other advantages that diversity and inclusions policies could bring to the company. Among the main benefits, it is possible to highlight a better reputation, employee attraction and retention, better decision making, increased innovative thinking and an enhanced customer focus. All these elements influence each other strengthening the overall power of a diversity program in place.

1.3.1 Reputation

In 2005, 38 percent of respondents to a European commission survey valued reputation as one of the most important business benefit of diversity (European Commission, 2005).

Reputation could be defined as the general image that the people have about the company; therefore, it represents the business card of the organization towards its stakeholders. Companies that are diverse in terms of human resources are positively recognized in the market because of paying increasingly attention to the individuals and valuing their diversity instead of creating chances for conflicts. Diverse companies communicate to the external world a feeling of inclusiveness and respect towards the individuals and consequently they have a positive impact on attracting stakeholders like potential employees, customers and business partners as well as they will stimulate current employees' satisfaction and retention.

Employees who perceive their organization is committed to, and supportive of, diversity and who feel included, are 80 percent more likely to believe they work in a high performing organization (Deloitte, 2017). Engaging current employees is very important because if they will become loyal advocates of the company, their positive word of mouth would strongly affect the company's reputation.

Overall, the values and perceptions communicated to stakeholders contributes to building the basis for the reputation of a company. Even before the current climate raised the stakes on inclusion and diversity, companies who were leaders in diversity benefitted from an enhanced reputation extending beyond their employees to their customers, supply chain, local communities, and wider society (Hunt, Prince, Dixon-Fyle, & Yee, 2018).

As mentioned above, a company reputation will also affect employee attraction and retention. If the reputation will make the company stand out of the competitors, then it will bring an enormous benefit to the company because it will enhance the chances to attract those talents that are most suited for the company.

1.3.2 Employee attraction and retention

Nowadays, the topic of employee attraction and retention is especially important for those firms that are experiencing labour shortages and difficulties to recruit the right profile for a specific position. 42 percent of respondents to a survey of European commission agreed that diversity policies' most important business benefit is resolving labour shortages and recruiting and retaining high quality staff (European Commission, 2005). Having the right talents in terms of human resources is fundamental to gain a competitive advantage.

The major benefits of diversity are that more diverse companies are better able to attract top talent (Hunt, Prince, Dixon-Fyle, & Yee, 2018), have the ability to recruit from a wider selection of people because of a deeper interest towards the organization among competent applicants and retain better workers for longer (Jauhari & Singh, 2013).

One of the top challenges for CEOs globally is to strengthen human capital in their organizations as it continues to be seen as a key source of competitive advantage (Hunt, Prince, Dixon-Fyle, & Yee, 2018). In fact, McKinsey's 1997 research paper "The war for talent" demonstrated that better talent translates into better financial performance (Hunt, Layton, & Prince, 2015). A diverse and inclusive workplace is central to reach this goal as its affect a company's ability to attract, develop, and retain the talent it needs to compete.

The relevance of diversity in attracting talents is confirmed by a research from Glassdoor which reveals that for 67 percent of job seekers a diverse workforce is important when considering job offers (Glassdoor, 2014). The reason of that could be that in a diverse environment none is feeling excluded or different, consequently this could allow to reduce conflicts based on elements of diversity and on the other hand could stimulate curiosity and positive behaviours towards it.

Moreover, more diverse organizations have broader talent pools from which to source capability to compete in this changing world (Hunt, Prince, Dixon-Fyle, & Yee, 2018). Being seen as a company with diverse workplace will attract those talents coming up from minority groups which usually feels excluded because of gender, race or other aspects, but which could represent highly qualified employees.

Finally, inclusion and diversity management improve employee engagement fostering collaboration and loyalty. A research conducted by Deloitte showed that engagement is an outcome of diversity and inclusion based on the views and experiences of 1,550 employees (Martic, 2018).

When devoted to diversity management, a company will be able to give the impression that it establishes systems which fairly evaluate, promote, and compensates its employees based upon performance and ability rather than criteria such as gender, nationality, or age (Magoshi & Chang, 2009). When employees are satisfied by their working environment and strongly engaged, they will rather stay in the company then persecute other working opportunities. Overall, diversity climate perceptions are negatively related to turnover intentions across all racial groups (McKay, et al., 2007).

Therefore, workplace diversity is beneficial for employee retention. Companies with diverse workforce are generally more inclusive of different individual characteristics and perspectives affecting the employees' perception about feeling accepted and valued. As a result, companies with greater diversity in the workplace have lower turnover rates (Martic, 2018). In one case reported by European Commission, diversity policies helped a company to reduce its employee turnover rate from 25 percent to under 7.5 percent in less than four years, thereby making significant savings in costs (European Commission, 2005).

Reduced turnover translates into less costs for the companies in term of money and time spent to recruit and train the new employed individuals. In addition, a low turnover will signal to the external stakeholders a healthy company.

1.3.3 Better decision making

Most diverse teams make better decisions 87 percent of the time (Larson, 2017). This significantly high data highlights the importance of diversity in the daily life of the business.

Many other researches demonstrate how diverse teams are better performing than homogeneous ones. A study in the US took a set of traders and compared how accurately they priced stocks in comparison to the fundamentals of the business. The more diverse set of traders in this experiment were more than 50 percent more likely to set accurate prices than a homogenous group. Overpricing was also higher and traders' errors more correlated among the homogenous set of traders than their more diverse counterparts (PwC, 2015).

It is possible to state that diverse team contributes to improving the quality of decision making and consequently the efficiency of the business processes. Studies showed that decisions made and executed by diverse teams delivered 60 percent better results (Larson, 2017) and that more diverse top teams were also top financial performers (Martic, 2018). In fact, decision effectiveness and financial results correlate at 95 percent (Blenko, Mankins, & Rogers, 2010).

Diversity influences positively decision making also regarding the timing. Teams that follow an inclusive process make decisions two times faster with half of the meetings (Larson, 2017). Fast decision making gives the company the opportunity to respond to the market and stakeholders needs and requests before the competitors resulting in success for the business in terms of competitive advantage and higher market share.

Harvard Business Review found that diverse teams are able to solve problems faster than cognitively similar people (Reynolds, 2017) because they possess better ability to extract expanded meanings, and are more likely to display multiple perspectives and interpretations in dealing with complex issues (Mazur 2010). People with different backgrounds and experiences often see the same problem in different ways and come up with different solutions, increasing the odds that one of those solutions will be a hit (Rocío, Voigt, Tsusaka, Krentz, & Abouzahr, 2018). Having a team composed by diverse individuals in terms of culture or experience, for example, allows to explore broader points of view sometimes even contrasting, but which helps to discover bias and provide more consistent solutions. A diversity of informed views enables solutions to emerge more readily and be adopted with greater confidence (Hunt, Layton, & Prince, 2015).

1.3.4 Innovation

A company success does not only depend on introducing new products and services; dealing with customers and business partners in a way that distinguish the firm from the competitors is also an important factor. Being different, changing the game, is the new challenge of companies that want to have a strong competitive advantage.

In order to be game changers, companies have to develop innovative and creative ways to introduce products and services and to deal with the stakeholders. Creativity and innovation could only rise from the people, therefore, having a strong team able to explore the unexplored, to take risks and think out of the box should be the focus point.

In order to build a strong team, diversity is the solution. In fact, studies show that homogeneity restrains innovation because a homogeneous workforce is not likely to come up with creative solutions to the problems faced in a national and global market that consists of individuals of many races, nationalities, and religions (Kim, 2006). Therefore, diverse companies are more likely to be successful firms because they include people with different experiences and backgrounds and if they are able to value openness in their work environments and explicitly encourage different perspectives (Rocío, et al., 2017) they will be more likely successful. Indeed, according to Josh Bersin research, inclusive companies are 1.7 times more likely to be innovation leaders in their market (Bersin, 2015).

A study by the Boston Consulting Group shows that companies above the median on diversity have achieved 38 percent more revenues, on average, from innovative products and services in the last three years, than companies below the median (Rocío, et al., 2017). The outcome of diversity and inclusion is highly visible, also on an European level, 26 percent of companies saw improvements in their capacity to create and innovate thanks to promoting diversity (European Commission, 2005).

Coming back to the concept of starting the change from the top management through leading by example, a recent Boston Consulting Group study confirms that increasing the diversity of leadership teams leads to more and better innovation and improved financial performance. In both developing and developed economies, companies with above average diversity on their leadership teams report a greater payoff from innovation (Rocío, Voigt, Tsusaka, Krentz, & Abouzahr, 2018).

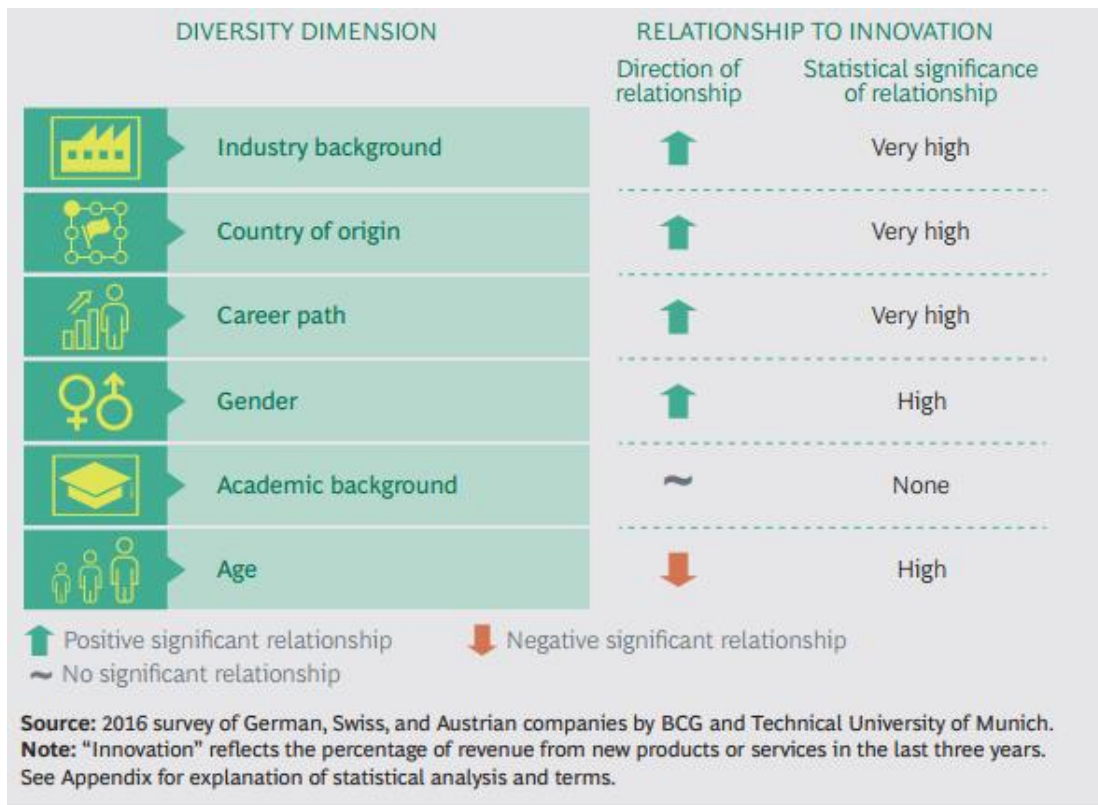


Figure 2 -The Mix That Matters: Innovation through Diversity BCG, 2017

Ideally, the diversity of the management team should be based on differences in terms of business background, career path, country of origin and gender. In fact those elements of diversity are the ones that mostly correlates with innovation, as showed in figure 2 (Rocío, Voigt, Tsusaka, Krentz, & Abouzahr, 2018).

In conclusion, the executives of a company are the most suitable for starting and leading the change. They should be compliant to the changing business environment, accept and support diversity, but above all be open to different views and opinions brought by different individuals. Only with the commitment of the top management, a company could implement successfully diversity programmes and take out the most from its benefits.

Companies that focus on promoting diversity as a mean to boost innovation and creativity will be the market game changers.

1.3.5 Enhanced Customer Focus

The world is not homogenous, different markets are characterized by different people with different habits, perceptions and needs. For that reason, the products and services offered on a specific market are the best suited for that market but could not be successful in another one. A multinational company has to deal with all those differences.

Successful companies will focus on meeting customer expectations and more likely on exceeding those expectations. In order to achieve this goal, companies have to be able to understand the needs of the customers or even to predict and anticipate or create the need for a specific product or service. As for innovation, also in that case, the input has to come from the employees, which will give the insights and the ideas on what the company should propose to the market.

A benefit of diversity is the enhanced customer focus. When at least one member of a team has traits in common with the end user, the entire team better understands that user, therefore, a team with a member who shares a client's ethnicity is 152 percent likelier than another team to understand that client (Hewlett, Marshall, & Sherbin, 2013). Teams that reflect the composition of a company's customer base in terms of gender, ethnicity, culture, sexual orientation, and age are better positioned to understand its changing needs and develop winning innovations (Hunt, Layton, & Prince, 2015).

For a company to expand its power in more than one market is fundamental to employ individuals that are similar to the goals markets in terms of language and cultural perceptions, while also having individuals with different cultural understanding in order to challenge the colleague thinking and finally come up with innovative proposals. With successful products and service, the company will be able to overcome competitors in terms of market share.

Diverse teams are also better able to target and distinctively serve diverse customer markets, such as women, ethnic minority, and LGBTQ+ communities which command an increasing share of consumer wealth and which could represent untapped markets for some companies (Hunt, Prince, Dixon-Fyle, & Yee, 2018). Employing a mix of individuals which are similar to the composition of the target market, will allow the company to attract all the different people present on that market and will enhance company reputation as a socially responsible organization.

Moreover, diversity helps companies react more effectively to market shifts and new customer needs (Hunt, Layton, & Prince, 2015) because employees from diverse backgrounds bring individual talents and experiences in suggesting ideas that are flexible in adapting to fluctuating markets and customer demands (Saxena, 2014).

In conclusion, diversity of human resources will bring the company closer to its customer as there will be more similarities with the employees and the markets. The better understanding of customers will lead the company to develop more successful product and more impacting campaigns, while will also foster innovation and creativity because of different points of views of the individuals that will work on a specific product or service.

1.4 Companies that promote diversity

Overall, the benefits that diversity could bring to the companies are multiple and particularly important is the impact on reputation.

Diversity is gaining momentum because people are increasingly paying attention to more human responsible companies. Indeed, many are the multinationals that advertise and undertake diversity initiatives. Coca-Cola, for example, has ensured that 38 percent of new US hires are people of colour and instituted mentoring programs to support the progression and retention of individuals from minority backgrounds (Hunt, Layton, & Prince, 2015).

Many are the companies that decided to implement strategies to put into practice the theoretical findings and to capture the benefits of diversity.

An example of diversity applied to enhance customer focus is the case of Coors brewery. The company began with a homogeneous white workforce brewing one brand for mostly white male college students, while today brews over 20 brands for many different customers and its workforce composition mirrors its diverse customer base (Knouse, Smith, & Smith, 2009).

Another example is the case of Walmart, which conducted benchmarking to understand the demographics of every country it operates in and encouraged each country to create its own diversity and inclusion plan to reflect local needs (Hunt, Layton, & Prince, Diversity Matters, 2015). In the 2018 Global Responsibility Report, Walmart confirms that they envision a workforce that reflects society in its diversity, and they pointed out that the company values the talents and differences its associates bring to the company (Walmart Inc., 2018).

Walmart understand also the importance of diverse and inclusive leaders. The company now is promoting training to develop inclusive leaders as they believe that they are able to embrace individual differences and use them to strengthen their teams (Walmart Inc., 2018).

Better decision making is another benefit of diversity and Ford Motor Company was able to experience and confirm the relevance of this element. Specifically the company experienced that heterogeneous teams with women and minority members produce better solutions to complex problems than traditional white male teams (Knouse, Smith, & Smith, 2009).

Furthermore, diversity and inclusion initiatives most of the time match with the company mission and strategy. For example, Amazon's mission is to be the earth's most customer centric company and commitment to diversity and inclusion matches well with their goal.

In fact, the company thinks that diverse and inclusive teams help them better serve customers, selling partners, content creators, employees, and community stakeholders from every background (Amazon, s.d.).

Amazon's diversity strategy is particularly interesting because it is not only focused on creating a diverse workforce, but the company is committed to improve the conditions of minorities. Therefore, Amazon created ten affinity groups, that employees can join, which are focused on different goals, among the others: to provide support for employees and customers who have mental and/or physical disabilities, recruit, retain, and empower black employees, build a community for Hispanic/Latinos employees (Amazon, s.d.).

Another example of a company that clearly matches diversity with its own business strategy is Accenture. The company declares on his websites that diversity is needed for improving innovation, creativity and problem solving (Accenture, s.d.). According to Ellyn Shook, Accenture's chief leadership and human resources officer "When people feel a sense of belonging and are valued for their unique contributions, perspectives and circumstances, they are more likely to advance and feel empowered to innovate" (Accenture, 2019). The need for innovation perfectly reflects the company spirit, in fact, Accenture is well known for being a technologically innovative company.

Accenture is also embracing the change at the board level, the company's board of directors is diverse in terms of its geographic and gender representation, with people coming from six countries across four continents and five (42 percent) women, including its lead director (Accenture, 2019).

Mastercard as well is putting in place the concept that the change has to start and be led from the top promoting leading by example. Therefore, the company has implemented a Global Inclusion Council (GIC), with members representing all business regions – North America, Latin America/Caribbean, Europe, Asia/Pacific, and Middle East and Africa, which helps guide the cultivation of a culture of inclusion and belonging throughout Mastercard (Mastercard, s.d.). In fact, in the description of diversity and inclusion goals, the company enunciate that they strive to create meaningful connections, inspire acceptance and cultivate a culture where we all belong (Mastercard, s.d.).

It is possible to conclude that the trend is clear; attention to diversity from the multinationals companies is highly visible.

The examples provided are just few of the ways in which organizations promote diversity and inclusion in their workforce, but almost all the multinationals companies in their websites have a page dedicated to diversity and inclusion, explaining how that specific company is approaching diversity. Below there are some examples.

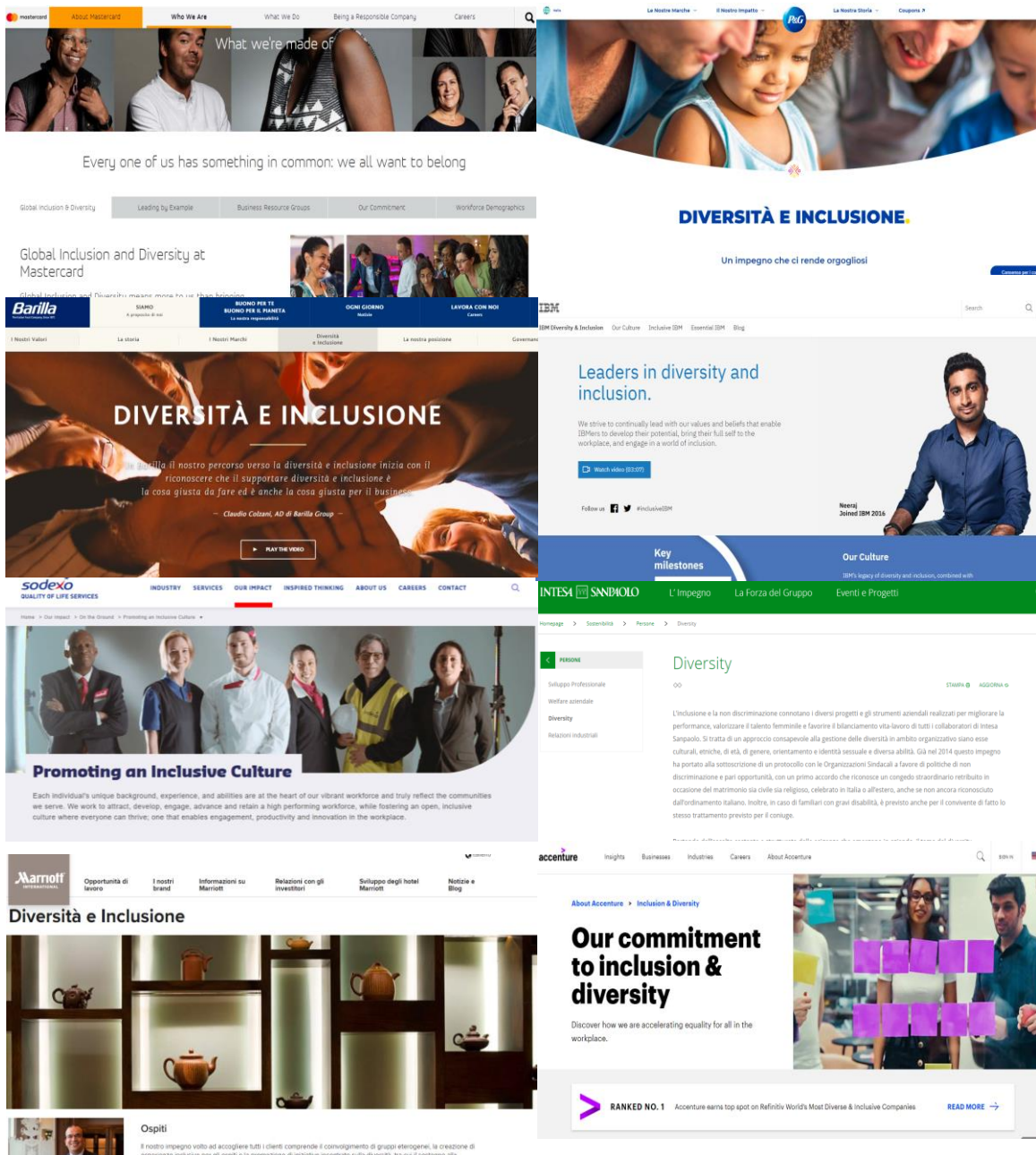


Figure 3 - Companies' websites promoting diversity and inclusion

1.5 Is the working environment diverse?

Based on the analysis of benefits of diversity and the important multinational companies cited that are adopting diversity policies, it is logical to assume that the workplace is becoming increasingly diverse, but is that true?

The reality is that the progress in promoting diversity is slow. Many companies struggle to materially increase representation levels of diverse talent, gain an understanding of where in their organizations diversity matters most, and create truly inclusive organizational cultures to reap the benefits of diversity (Hunt, Prince, Dixon-Fyle, & Yee, 2018).

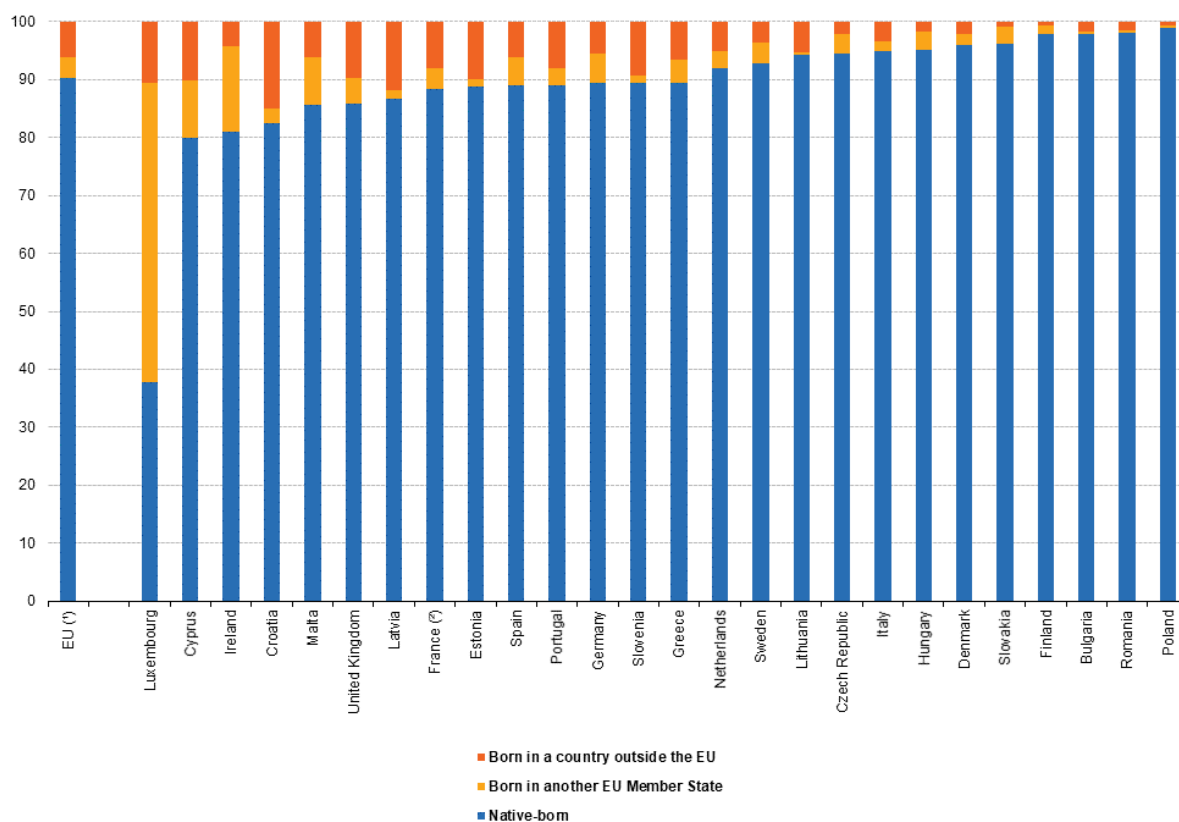
A Glassdoor survey revealed that more than half (57 percent) of people think their company should be doing more to increase diversity among its workforce and two in five (41 percent) surveyed did not think their company had a diverse executive team (Glassdoor, 2014) .

On a European level, based on a survey of European commission, 50 percent of the companies responding have still to implement a diversity policy (European Commission, 2005). The same survey reveals that companies in the north and west of the European Union have wider use of and experience in diversity policies, while those in southern Europe and the new European Union Member States stressed their need for more information on how to develop them (European Commission, 2005).

As stated before, the spread of diversity should more likely start from the top. If we consider diversity in terms of ethnic origins, looking at the Eurostat Census Hub (Figure 4), it is possible to clearly see that there is no diversity among management level in the European Union countries (Eurostat. Statistics Explained, 2017). Figure 4 represents the percentage of foreign-born managers, compared to native-born managers in each European Union state member.

The most diverse country is Luxembourg, with more than 60 percent managers born in a foreign country, which is justified by the presence of many multinationals companies that employees from all over the world and the proximity to countries like France, Germany and Belgium, from where most of the workers come from.

Moving from west and south European countries to north and east European countries, the percentage of foreign-born managers' decreases, becoming less than 5 percent in Bulgaria, Romania and Poland.



Note: Belgium and Austria, not available.
 (*) Excluding Belgium and Austria.
 (†) Low reliability.
 (‡) Low reliability.
 Source: Eurostat (Census hub HC29)

Figure 4 - Managers by place of birth, Eurostat Census Hub HC29

Therefore, it is possible to conclude that at management level in terms of diversity based on ethnic origins, the workforce is almost homogeneous in Europe.

A reason why this is the current situation is the difficulty in changing the culture of a business and a lack of awareness of workforce diversity policies. This “awareness gap” includes lack of knowledge about the content, rationale, costs, benefits, and methods of measurement of workforce diversity policies (European Commission, 2003).

Stereotypes and discrimination based on it are also easily observable. In Europe when looking for a remunerated job, 18 percent of respondents declared that they had experienced discrimination because of ethnic origin (7.2 percent) and language (7.8 percent) (European Youth Forum, 2015). Those are the most rated elements of discrimination, but other factors like, social origin, sexual orientation and religion or belief are as well elements of discrimination when looking for a job. Figure 5 shows further details of the answers.

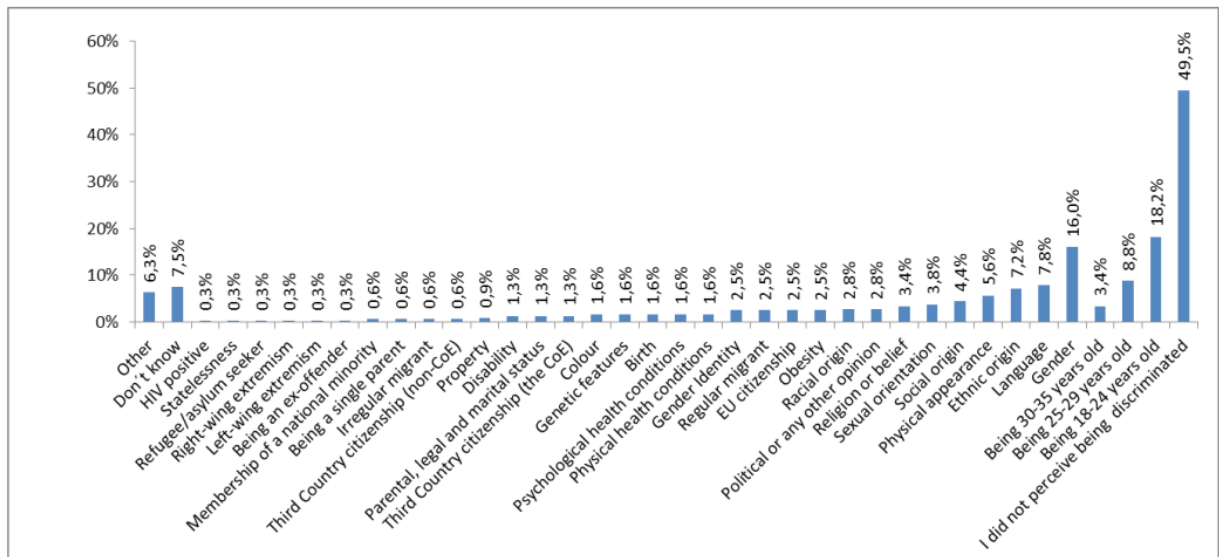


Figure 5- Perception of discrimination when looking for a remunerated job, European Youth Forum 2015

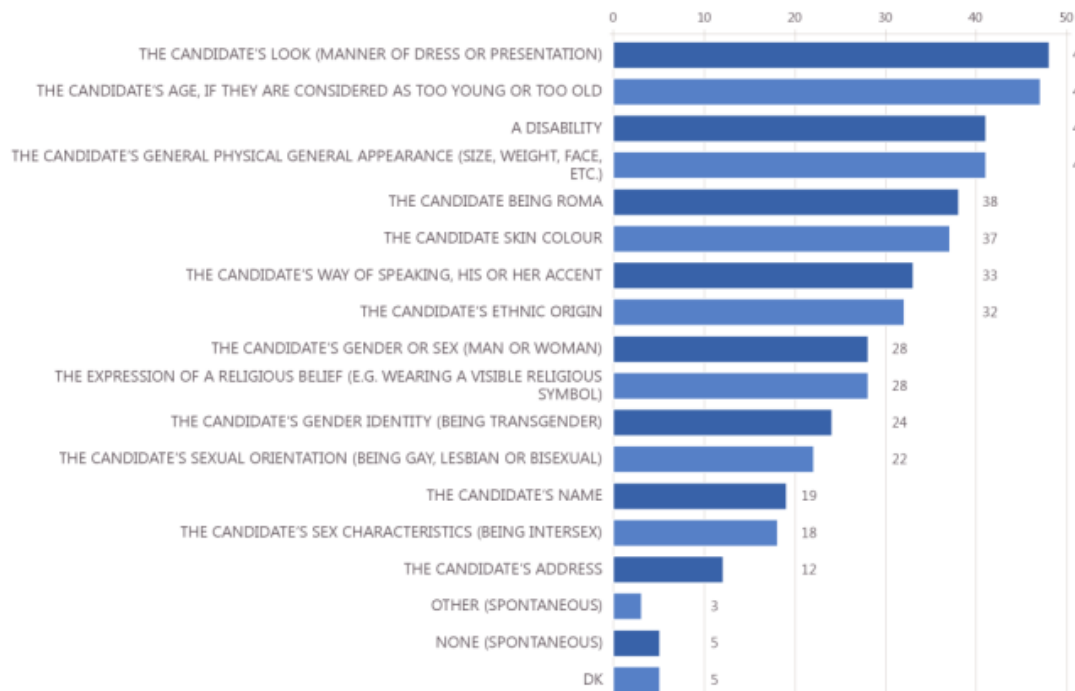
Another study of European Union, aiming at understanding the levels of discrimination in Europe in 2019, has researched if some elements of diversity could position a candidate for a job in a more disadvantaged position. One of the questions of the study was “In (our country) when a company wants to hire someone and has the choice between two candidates with equal skills and qualifications, which of the following criteria may in your opinion, put the candidate in disadvantage?” (Kantar, 2019).

Figure 6 shows the responses to this question. Looking at the most rated answers, individuals think that the elements that put a candidate in disadvantage are age (47 percent), a disability (41 percent), the skin colour (37 percent), the way of speaking or candidate accent (33 percent) and the candidate ethnic origin (32 percent).

The skin colour, the way of speaking and the ethnic origins could be grouped together as representatives of discrimination based on the place of origin. People are identified by external ethnic features and assigned particular characteristics and abilities on the basis of those features (Zick, Küpper, & Hövermann, 2011) rather than on the basis of objective evidence.

Data evidence that discrimination can emerge even in the same country, for example being part of the Hungarian minority in Romania, being from the North of England, not being a Christian in Cyprus, being a South European or even having a relationship with someone from different racial origin (discrimination by association) (European Youth Forum, 2015).

QC4 In (OUR COUNTRY) when a company wants to hire someone and has the choice between two candidates with equal skills and qualifications, which of the following criteria may, in your opinion, put one candidate at a disadvantage? (% - EU)



Base: all respondents (n= 27,438)

Figure 6 – Perception of discrimination when applying for a job, Discrimination in the European Union 2019

Discrimination is mainly visible when applying for a job and when getting a promotion or a permanent position. In these cases, the intersection between age, gender and other grounds (above all disability and nationality) becomes a barrier that is difficult to be overcome (European Youth Forum, 2015).

In conclusion, there has been little discernible increase in workplace diversity over the last few years, despite the trend for companies to publish diversity reports and make promises to change (Natural HR, 2019). It is also important to mention that on one side there is a company responsibility to increase diversity but on the other side there is also each individual responsibility to accept diversity and put aside stereotypes fomenting discrimination.

CHAPTER 2 – Theoretical foundations

2.1 Employer branding and multiculturalism

Diversity, as discussed in chapter one, brings many benefits to organizations which positively affect company success and competitive position on the market. In fact, it is possible to notice the effort that companies address to advertise their diversity and inclusion initiatives.

The marketing strategy companies adopt towards potential and current employees is called employer branding. This term was first conceptualized by Ambler and Barrow, who defined it as the package of functional, economic and psychological benefits provided by employment, and identified with the employing company (Ambler & Barrow, 1996). Similarly, organisational attractiveness has been defined as the envisioned benefits that a potential employee sees in working for a specific organisation (Berthon, Ewing, & Hah, 2005).

This means that every individual uses its limited set of information, based on its own knowledge or others word of mouth, to develop some perceptions about the benefits that working for a potential employer he or she will enjoy. Therefore, regardless of whether they have consciously sought to develop one, all organisations have an employer brand; their brand will be recognized based on the way they are perceived as a ‘great place to work’ (Sokro, 2012).

Nowadays, competition for highly talented employees has become almost as important as the competition for customers because it is generally recognised that intellectual and human capital is the foundation of competitive advantage in the modern economy (Berthon, Ewing, & Hah, 2005). Firms need human resources in order to win in the marketplace and employer branding is a tool to attract highly skilled individuals. Indeed, companies appear to be expending considerable resources on employer branding campaigns, indicating that they are finding value in the practice (Sokro, 2012).

Having a strong employer brand leads to many benefits, like reduction of the cost of employee acquisition, improved employee relations, increased employee retention; employers of choice can even offer lower salaries for comparable staff to firms with weaker employer brands (Ritson, 2002).

To become employer of choice the company needs to communicate to the potential employees that its value proposition supersedes the competitors (Sokro, 2012). Therefore, the company needs to do develop an advertising strategy for promoting itself as a great place to work.

Assuming that individuals will be influenced by employer branding campaigns, it is important that companies make every effort to ensure that this influence is positive (Berthon, Ewing, & Hah, 2005). Consequently, for organizations there is an increasing need to understand the effect that some messages could have on their employer branding strategy.

Some organizations are currently using the depiction of a culturally diverse working environment as a mean of attracting a racially diverse applicant pool (Perkins, Thomas, & Taylor, 2000). These organizations are assuming that given a perception of a diverse workforce, more individuals will be attracted to the company. Studies confirm the validity of this assumption, in fact, roughly a third of female and racioethnic minority job seekers have eliminated a prospective employer from further consideration due to insufficient diversity (Thaler-Carter, 2001) in (Avery, et al., 2013). Thus, with inefficiently targeted employer branding strategies the company is losing access to potential highly skilled talent that may have some unique characteristics needed for contributing to the firm competitive advantage.

Studies also show that employees today are choosing to work for reputable organizations, which value their employees and treat them fairly (Sokro, 2012). Therefore, it is possible to assume that promoting team multiculturalism would be positively accepted by potential employees which pays attention to companies' social reputation because multiculturalism promotion is a sign of equal treatment despite diversity.

On the other side, it is equally important to consider if this assumption could be applicable to all the individuals. Other studies shows that although minorities generally might place greater value on diversity than members of the majority, different minorities values diversity in different ways (Avery, et al., 2013). Another study suggest that the racial diversity of employees portrayed in recruitment advertisements may serve as an attraction mechanism for Black individuals but not for Whites (Perkins, Thomas, & Taylor, 2000).

Therefore, it is crucial to understand how a communication about diversity in employer branding affects perceptions of individuals with a different cultural background.

The literature, so far, has only analysed the American Society and its responses to promotion of inclusion towards Afro Americans. Various studies, for example, investigated the responses of Whites compared to Blacks to job advertisements promoting diversity (Brown, Cober, Keeping, & Levy, 2006; James, Brief, Dietz, & Cohen, 2001; Perkins, Thomas, & Taylor, 2000); but no studies has been conducted on a European level.

Analysing how a communication about cultural diversity in a company affects the perceptions of European citizens coming from different countries would be of particular interest considering that at a European level discrimination in employment is mainly based on ethnic (7,2 percent) and racial origin (2,8 percent) (European Youth Forum, 2015).

Moreover, according to people perceptions, elements that put a candidate in disadvantage when looking for a job are the skin colour (37 percent), the way of speaking or candidate accent (33 percent) and the candidate ethnic origin (32 percent) (Kantar, 2019). This data shows how high is perceived to be discrimination on ground of cultural characteristics when looking for a job in Europe.

Finally, these statistics stimulates the interest to further research how cultural diversity affects employer attractiveness.

2.2 What attracts potential employees

The aim of adapting an employer branding strategy is to become ‘employer of choice’, a place where people prefer to work (Armstrong, 2007). This goal is achievable, if the company is able to communicate the benefits that offers as an employee and transmit to the stakeholders a sense of compatibility with their own needs and values.

Values are enduring beliefs that a specific mode of conduct or end-state is preferable to its opposite, thereby guiding individuals’ attitudes, judgments and behaviours (Cable & Judge, 1996). The core elements that define individuals’ culture are indeed values (Hofstede, 2011; Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner, 1998).

In accordance with the person-organization fit (POF) theory, when potential applicants will perceive a similarity between their values and the organizational values, they will be more attracted to the company because they will feel a certain degree of compatibility with the organization. Conversely, if the individual perceives values incongruence, meaning that the values of the organization are perceived as different or unfamiliar, this would increase the degree of uncertainty (Backhaus, 2003). Therefore, an organization that is reflecting different or unknown values will negatively affect employee attraction.

Similarly to the P-O fit, the Attraction-Selection-Attrition (ASA) theory, developed by Schneider, states that individuals are attracted by organizations showing values similar to their own (Schneider, 1987). Thus, potential employees use the information they have about the company, contained in the job advertisements, website or received through word of mouth, to make a first evaluation of the values of the organization and assess the degree of compatibility with that environment.

The complete ASA theory affirms that people are attracted to organizations that have values similar to their own (attraction), organizations select people who share their values (selection) and finally individuals who do not fit the organization will leave voluntarily or be asked to leave (attrition) (De Cooman, et al., 2009). According to the theory, companies tend to homogeneity (Schneider, 1987) because only individuals who have similar values will stay in the company, and as values are representative of culture, this means that over time culturally similar or compatible employees will compose the company workforce.

In conclusion, the principle underling the P-O fit and the ASA theories, is that people selects environments that fulfil their needs and thus prefer organizations that have the same “personality” as they do (Cable & Judge, 1996).

The P-O fit and the ASA theories evaluate candidate attraction based on the fit of values between the individual and the organization, not between individuals and the composition of the workforce of the company. However, other authors apply the elements of fit also to the currently employed employees, affirming that individuals' perception of compatibility with existing organizational environment and members will drive their attraction towards the potential employer (Perkins, Thomas, & Taylor, 2000). Theory suggests that applicants will be mainly attracted to organizations whose employees are similar to them because similarity facilitates social interaction and provides a sense of comfort (Devendorf & Highhouse, 2008). According to this school of thought if a company has already a diverse workforce it is possible to assume that a multicultural working environment will attract more individuals, as more of them will see similarities with the actual workforce of the company. On the other side, if the company is characterized by cultural homogeneity this situation is more likely to persist as it will attract individuals similar to the existing ones.

In fact, people want to be seen with others who are like them (Devendorf & Highhouse, 2008), meaning that they will more likely choose for an environment similar to the one they are used to. If the individuals identify with the majority, they will more likely seek to stay in the same environment, while if they identify with the minority, they will probably more likely stay in a diverse environment as they will feel a sense of belonging to others who like them live in a nation culturally diverse from their own.

Usually individuals relate to the social group they identify with (Hofhuis, Van Der Zee, & Otten, 2012). This means that they perceive similarities with other people in the same social group. Experiencing similarity with other group members provides a sense of security and helps individuals to predict and give meaning to their social environment (Hofhuis, Van Der Zee, & Otten, 2012). In this way people indirectly define different social groups, thus recognize people that are different from themselves.

Nevertheless, a study highlights that firms higher in Corporate Social Performance (CSP) have more positive reputations and are more attractive employers than firms lower in CSP (Turban & Greening, 1996). In line with the P-O fit theory, if individuals are socially responsible, they will be attracted by a socially responsible organization as they will share the same values. According to these findings, it is possible to assume that multiculturalism, as an ethic initiative, will have a positive impact on employer attractiveness.

However, this is not true for all the individuals. In fact, Brown, Cober, Keeping & Levy (2006) found that people react differently to diversity because of their different racial tolerance. According to their study, relative to racially tolerant individuals, intolerant individuals formed less positive perceptions of the prestige associated with being affiliated with an organization that emphasized diversity. They also found that job advertisements may serve as an important “attraction filter” in the recruitment and selection cycle, that may lead individuals holding intolerant attitudes to self-select out of an organization’s applicant pool (Brown, Cober, Keeping, & Levy, 2006).

Finally, it is possible to state that based on individual differences, the likelihood to be attracted positively by a multicultural environment could vary significantly depending on individuals’ level of openness and racial tolerance.

In general, it is possible to identify two categories of individuals; those who are more open minded and curious about new ideas and points of view and feel less threatened by those that are different from their own (Powell, 2006). They are the people who are more racially tolerant and feel comfortable or are even attracted by cultural diversity.

On the other side there are individuals who tends to categorize others based on their ethnic or cultural heritage displaying a positive bias towards who belong to the same cultural group and a negative bias towards those who do not (Hofhuis, Van Der Zee, & Otten, 2012). Some people may even prefer to avoid contacts with individuals that have other beliefs, attitude behaviours and habits. Stereotyping, prejudice and discrimination are behaviours resulting from this categorization.

Stereotypes are conventional notions that are usually associated uncritically with a person on the basis of his or her background (Hofstede, Hofstede & Minkov, 2010). Usually people classify others into a culture, based on the way they look, behave or other subject measurement metrics. They exaggerate and caricature the culture observed and, unintentionally, the observer (Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner, 1998). Collective properties are then ascribed to the citizens of certain countries: people refer to “typically American,” “typically German,” and “typically Japanese” behaviour (Hofstede, Hofstede & Minkov, 2010) and those classifications can hide positive as well as negative meanings.

A natural assumption could be that is the majority, because of its prevalence, that adopts stereotyping behaviours towards the minority, but migrants themselves sometimes behave in racist and ethnocentric ways, toward other migrants and even toward hosts (Hofstede, Hofstede & Minkov, 2010).

The more different the cultures are, the more difficult could be for people to interact. National cultural distance, defined as the degree to which the cultural norms in one country are different from those in another country (Kogut and Singh, 1988), affects the degree of compatibility between individuals and how they build relationships.

Previous research examined whether perceiver reactions to job advertisements that varied in racial composition were moderated by the perceiver's race (Perkins, Thomas, & Taylor, 2000). The result showed that while diversity positively influenced the perceptions of minority participants, had little effect on non-minorities (Perkins, Thomas, & Taylor, 2000). The assumption is that white job seekers, because of their majority status (in terms of both number and power), have the psychological privilege of not needing to consider the racial composition of potential places of employment, because the occasions in which they would be the racial minority are currently rare (Perkins, Thomas, & Taylor, 2000).

In addition, another study found that majority reacted less positively to organizations that depicted strong diversity values in their job advertisements (Brown, Cober, Keeping, & Levy, 2006). In particular, Caucasians perceived such organizations to be less attractive employers and to have fewer advancement opportunities (James, Brief, Dietz, & Cohen, 2001)

According to these studies it is possible to notice the dilemma with which companies have to deal. On one side diversity promotion could attract minority applicants, but on the other side may alienate potential talents represented by racially intolerant or culturally distant individuals.

Some authors developed frameworks to help understanding which are the elements that affects employee attractiveness. The first definition came from Ambler and Barrow, which conceptualized employer branding as the package of functional, economic and psychological benefits provided by employment, and identified with the employing company (Ambler & Barrow, 1996).

In line with this definition, the elements of brand attractiveness are the benefits in terms of developmental and/or useful activities (functional); material or monetary rewards (economic); feelings such as belonging, direction and purpose (psychological) (Ambler & Barrow, 1996).

Berthon, Ewing and Hah further developed the definition of Ambler and Barrow identifying a total of five benefits, called "values", which can influence the attractiveness of the employer.

Interest value assesses the extent to which an individual is attracted to an employer that provides an exciting work environment, novel work practices and that makes use of its employee's creativity to produce high-quality, innovative products and services (Berthon, Ewing, & Hah, 2005).

Social value assesses the extent to which an individual is attracted to an employer that provides a working environment that is fun, happy, provides good collegial relationships and a team atmosphere (Berthon, Ewing, & Hah, 2005).

Economic value assesses the extent to which an individual is attracted to an employer that provides above-average salary, compensation package, job security and promotional opportunities (Berthon, Ewing, & Hah, 2005).

Development value assesses the extent to which an individual is attracted to an employer that provides recognition, self-worth and confidence, coupled with a career-enhancing experience and a spring board to future employment (Berthon, Ewing, & Hah, 2005).

Application value assesses the extent to which an individual is attracted to an employer that provides an opportunity for the employee to apply what they have learned and to teach others, in an environment that is both customer orientated and humanitarian (Berthon, Ewing, & Hah, 2005).

Analysing the elements that affects those values, it is possible to notice a link with the benefits provided by diversity.

For example, an exciting and innovative working environment, as documented in chapter one, could be enhanced by a diverse team. In fact, diversity fosters creativity and innovation as a result of challenge thinking and interrelation of different point of views.

In the same way novel work practices and learning opportunities could be enhanced by employing individuals with diverse backgrounds. Diverse individuals will differently approach problems and deal with tasks thus diversity will foster learning from others.

Moreover, when equal opportunities are provided, despite of differences, the company will communicate that treats and values equally its employees. This will give an image of a humanitarian company which seeks to promote general well-being.

In conclusion, theoretically cultural diversity affects positively employer attractiveness values. Anyway, is it important to remember that some individuals may not be attracted by those elements, as identified by previous researches.

2.3 Hofstede's cultural dimensions and openness to cultural diversity

Culture shapes individual's human nature and personality (Hofstede, Hofstede & Minkov, 2010). Therefore, individuals from different countries are characterized by different perceptions, values, habits and attach different meanings to symbols, heroes and rituals (Hofstede, 2011).

While symbols are the more superficial element of culture, the core is formed by values, which are broad tendencies to prefer certain states of affairs over others (Hofstede, 2011). Consequently, values have the main impact in defining people's personalities and behaviours.

Moreover, values are acquired early in life (Hofstede, 2011), the main part of them as a result of parents or family teachings and habits, meaning that the majority are naturally handed down from generation to generation. In this way values are affected by a deep cultural background. Indeed, culture is not innate but is learned from people which at least partly shared the same social environment (Hofstede, Hofstede & Minkov, 2010).

As values influence individuals' judgment behaviours, they will also influence their perceptions about companies and their employer branding strategies. Therefore, it seems obvious that organizations ought to consider the specific cultural context when designing and implementing strategies aimed at enhancing its attractiveness as an employer (Alshathry, O'Donohue, Wickham, & Fishwick, 2014).

As a matter of fact, in the human resource management literature, there is increasing awareness of the importance of national culture as a contextual influence on the strength and nature of the relationship between an organization's characteristics and how it is perceived by its existing and prospective employees (Alshathry, O'Donohue, Wickham, & Fishwick, 2014).

Hofstede's model identifies six dimensions of culture based on which he classifies different nations. For each dimensions some behaviours are observed in the society and assigned to a culture. Although Hofstede's dimensions should not be used to stereotype individuals (Hofstede, Hofstede, & Minkov, 2010) because each individual is different, using nation as a proxy for culture is a common approach since members of a nation tend to share a similar language, history, religion, understanding of institutional systems, and a sense of identity (Soares, Farhangmehr, & Shoham, 2007).

In conclusion, Hofstede's cultural dimensions model will help to explain and predict job seekers behaviours towards organizations embracing cultural diversity as employer brand strategy.

2.3.1 Power distance

Power Distance (PDI) has been defined as the extent to which the less powerful members of organizations and institutions (like the family) accept and expect that power is distributed unequally (Hofstede, 2011).

When there is high power distance in the society, it means that there are clear hierarchies with clear authorities and who is at the top should be respected and not contradicted. Individuals accept the inequality of power, perceive differences between superiors and subordinates as natural, and believe superiors are entitled to special privileges (Hofstede, 1984). People that are at the bottom levels of the hierarchy are very distant in terms of income and power from the people at the top and therefore they are more likely to be just compliant with this environment.

When the power distance is low, instead, there is more equality in the society, meaning that people at all levels have the right to express their opinions and cooperation is even desired. Individuals less likely tolerate class distinctions, are more likely to prefer democratic participation, and are less afraid of disagreeing with superiors (Lu, Rose, & Blodgett, 1999).

With a high hierarchical system and great centralization of power, combating prejudices becomes a more difficult task (Sperancin, 2010). In those societies minorities are treated unequally and are discriminated. Instead, in cultures with lower levels of power distance, openness to cultural diversity should be wider as inequality is more likely avoidable and undesirable. People seek for cooperation and try to avoid social classifications.

Ten Differences Between Small- and Large- Power Distance Societies

Small Power Distance	Large Power Distance
Use of power should be legitimate and is subject to criteria of good and evil	Power is a basic fact of society antedating good or evil: its legitimacy is irrelevant
Parents treat children as equals	Parents teach children obedience
Older people are neither respected nor feared	Older people are both respected and feared
Student-centered education	Teacher-centered education
Hierarchy means inequality of roles, established for convenience	Hierarchy means existential inequality
Subordinates expect to be consulted	Subordinates expect to be told what to do
Pluralist governments based on majority vote and changed peacefully	Autocratic governments based on co-optation and changed by revolution
Corruption rare; scandals end political careers	Corruption frequent; scandals are covered up
Income distribution in society rather even	Income distribution in society very uneven
Religions stressing equality of believers	Religions with a hierarchy of priests

Figure 7 - Power distance (Hofstede, 2011)

2.3.2 Individualism vs Collectivism

Individualism vs Collectivism (IDV) indicates whether or not the interest of the individual prevails over the interest of the group (Sperancin, 2010).

When societies are more collectivistic, people are more group oriented. From birth onwards individuals are integrated into strong, cohesive in-groups, often extended families (with uncles, aunts and grandparents) that continue protecting them in exchange for unquestioning loyalty, and oppose other in-groups (Hofstede, 2011).

When societies are more individualistic, people rather think about themselves and their well-being and that of their immediate family (Hofstede, 2011). Individuals tend to value their personal time, freedom, independence, personal goals, and pleasure (Lu, Rose, & Blodgett, 1999). In individualistic societies people will perceive their own goals and needs more important than those of the group.

In conclusion, individualistic societies will be more open to cultural diversity because they recognize as important values tolerance, harmony and solidarity with others (Hofstede, Hofstede & Minkov, 2010). Conversely, collectivistic societies identify as important value patriotism (Hofstede, Hofstede & Minkov, 2010), which leads to categorizations where the in-group prevails. Finally, countries with lower power distance and individualistic societies are more likely to accept positively cultural diversity.

Ten Differences Between Collectivist and Individualist Societies

Individualism	Collectivism
Everyone is supposed to take care of him- or herself and his or her immediate family only	People are born into extended families or clans which protect them in exchange for loyalty
"I" – consciousness	"We" –consciousness
Right of privacy	Stress on belonging
Speaking one's mind is healthy	Harmony should always be maintained
Others classified as individuals	Others classified as in-group or out-group
Personal opinion expected: one person one vote	Opinions and votes predetermined by in-group
Transgression of norms leads to guilt feelings	Transgression of norms leads to shame feelings
Languages in which the word "I" is indispensable	Languages in which the word "I" is avoided
Purpose of education is learning how to learn	Purpose of education is learning how to do
Task prevails over relationship	Relationship prevails over task

Figure 8 - Individualism vs Collectivism (Hofstede, 2011)

2.3.3 Masculinity vs Femininity

Masculinity vs Femininity (MAS) refers to the distribution of values between the genders (Hofstede, 2011).

Societies where masculinity is predominant are characterized by clear differentiation of roles between genders. Men are the head of the family and deal with facts, while women are perceived to be more emotional. In those societies mainly men cover the powerful positions and take decisions. Dominant values in masculine countries are achievement and success (Soares, Farhangmehr, & Shoham, 2007). Masculine individuals are characterized as assertive, aggressive, ambitious, competitive, and materialistic (Lu, Rose, & Blodgett, 1999).

Societies where femininity is predominant are characterized by equality between genders; both men and women have the same opportunities and decision power. Dominant values in feminine countries are caring for others and quality of life (Soares, Farhangmehr, & Shoham, 2007). Feminine individuals are described as modest, humble, nurturing, and responsible (Hofstede, 1984). Feminine individuals are also more interpersonally oriented, benevolent, less interested in recognition than masculine individuals, and define achievement in terms of close human relationships rather than material success (Lu, Rose, & Blodgett, 1999).

As feminine societies put higher value on human relationship and strive for a welfare society (Hofstede, 2011), they will more likely accept cultural diversity. In fact, the values driving those societies include caring for others and being benevolent, meaning that the willingness to integrate is stronger than the desire to exclude (Sperancin, 2010).

Masculinity has been found to be positively correlated with unethical behaviours (Chang and Ding, 1995). Those individuals will more likely discriminate and unequally treat minorities, as they will put their own interest values ahead of the social well-being.

Ten Differences Between Feminine and Masculine Societies

Femininity	Masculinity
Minimum emotional and social role differentiation between the genders	Maximum emotional and social role differentiation between the genders
Men and women should be modest and caring	Men should be and women may be assertive and ambitious
Balance between family and work	Work prevails over family
Sympathy for the weak	Admiration for the strong
Both fathers and mothers deal with facts and feelings	Fathers deal with facts, mothers with feelings
Both boys and girls may cry but neither should fight	Girls cry, boys don't; boys should fight back, girls shouldn't fight
Mothers decide on number of children	Fathers decide on family size
Many women in elected political positions	Few women in elected political positions
Religion focuses on fellow human beings	Religion focuses on God or gods
Matter-of-fact attitudes about sexuality; sex is a way of relating	Moralistic attitudes about sexuality; sex is a way of performing

Figure 9 - Femininity vs Masculinity (Hofstede, 2011)

2.3.4 Uncertainty avoidance

Uncertainty avoidance reflects the society's tolerance for ambiguity. It indicates to what extent a culture programs its members to feel either uncomfortable or comfortable in unstructured situations (Hofstede, 2011).

Uncertainty avoiding cultures are afraid of what is different or unknown. They try to minimize the possibility of such situations by strict behavioural codes, laws and rules (Hofstede, 2011). Those individuals are more concerned with security in life, prefer clear hierarchical structures in organizations and are intolerant of deviations from standard practices (Lu, Rose, & Blodgett, 1999). What is different creates anxiety and negative emotions. Moreover, individuals do not accept deviating opinions because they pretend to have already all the answers.

Uncertainty accepting cultures, instead, are curious about what is different or unknown. Individuals are more tolerant of opinions different from what they are used to (Hofstede, 2011). Rigid standard rules are not needed and even disliked because those individuals feel comfortable with ambiguity and chaos.

Cultural diversity implies the presence in a group of individuals which may think and behave differently from what individuals are used to. This would negatively affect uncertainty avoiding cultures. Uncertainty avoiding individuals, based on the limited information they have, will formulate prejudice about others, resulting in a high degree of nationalism, xenophobia and the repression of minorities (Hofstede, Hofstede & Minkov, 2010). Uncertainty accepting cultures, instead, will be curious about the other cultures and will positively value cultural diversity.

In consistency with what stated previously, cultural diversity is more likely avoidable in uncertainty avoiding and masculine cultures.

Ten Differences Between Weak- and Strong- Uncertainty Avoidance Societies

Weak Uncertainty Avoidance	Strong Uncertainty Avoidance
The uncertainty inherent in life is accepted and each day is taken as it comes	The uncertainty inherent in life is felt as a continuous threat that must be fought
Ease, lower stress, self-control, low anxiety	Higher stress, emotionality, anxiety, neuroticism
Higher scores on subjective health and well-being	Lower scores on subjective health and well-being
Tolerance of deviant persons and ideas: what is different is curious	Intolerance of deviant persons and ideas: what is different is dangerous
Comfortable with ambiguity and chaos	Need for clarity and structure
Teachers may say 'I don't know'	Teachers supposed to have all the answers
Changing jobs no problem	Staying in jobs even if disliked
Dislike of rules - written or unwritten	Emotional need for rules – even if not obeyed
In politics, citizens feel and are seen as competent towards authorities	In politics, citizens feel and are seen as incompetent towards authorities
In religion, philosophy and science: relativism and empiricism	In religion, philosophy and science: belief in ultimate truths and grand theories

Figure 10 - Uncertainty avoidance (Hofstede, 2011)

2.3.5 Short term vs Long term orientation

Short term vs Long term orientation refers to how much society values long-standing – as opposed to short term – traditions and values (Kulkarni, 2012).

Long-term orientation stands for the fostering of virtues oriented toward future rewards, in particular, perseverance and thrift (Hofstede, Hofstede & Minkov, 2010). Individuals rely on traditions but adopt them to the changing circumstances and are more open to learn from others to improve their situations.

Short-term orientation stands for the fostering of virtues related to the past and present, in particular, respect for tradition, preservation of “face,” and fulfilling social obligations and personal steadiness and stability (Hofstede, Hofstede & Minkov, 2010). Individuals are very conscious of what is improper or disgraceful and avoid behaving inappropriately (Lu, Rose, & Blodgett, 1999). They rely on standard rules and guidelines that have strong tradition.

Long term-oriented societies are more likely to value cultural diversity as they are more open to learn from others and adapt to different circumstances. On the other side, Short-term oriented societies, as more attached to their own cultural tradition, may be less tolerant to culturally diverse individuals because they view societal change with suspicion (Hofstede Insights, s.d.).

Ten Differences Between Short- and Long-Term-Oriented Societies

Short-Term Orientation	Long-Term Orientation
Most important events in life occurred in the past or take place now	Most important events in life will occur in the future
Personal steadiness and stability: a good person is always the same	A good person adapts to the circumstances
There are universal guidelines about what is good and evil	What is good and evil depends upon the circumstances
Traditions are sacrosanct	Traditions are adaptable to changed circumstances
Family life guided by imperatives	Family life guided by shared tasks
Supposed to be proud of one's country	Trying to learn from other countries
Service to others is an important goal	Thrift and perseverance are important goals
Social spending and consumption	Large savings quote, funds available for investment
Students attribute success and failure to luck	Students attribute success to effort and failure to lack of effort
Slow or no economic growth of poor countries	Fast economic growth of countries up till a level of prosperity

Figure 11 - Short-Term vs Long-Term Orientation (Hofstede, 2011)

2.3.6 Indulgence vs Restraint

Indulgence vs Restraint indicates the degree of allowed gratification in a society.

Indulgence stands for a culture that allows relatively free gratification of basic and natural human desires related to enjoying life and having fun (Hofstede, 2011). Everyone controls his own life and has the liberty to do what one pleases, without social restrictions that curb one's freedom of choice (Hofstede, Hofstede & Minkov, 2010).

Restraint stands for a culture that controls gratification of needs and regulates it by means of strict social norms (Hofstede, 2011). Individuals have fewer liberties and there is a perception that their life is controlled.

Indulgent countries would be more open to cultural diversity as they value important the freedom of speak, meaning that the societies are more open minded and allow everyone to express its own diversities.

Ten Differences between Indulgent and Restrained Societies

Indulgence	Restrained
Higher percentage of people declaring themselves very happy	Fewer very happy people
A perception of personal life control	A perception of helplessness: what happens to me is not my own doing
Freedom of speech seen as important	Freedom of speech is not a primary concern
Higher importance of leisure	Lower importance of leisure
More likely to remember positive emotions	Less likely to remember positive emotions
In countries with educated populations, higher birthrates	In countries with educated populations, lower birthrates
More people actively involved in sports	Fewer people actively involved in sports
In countries with enough food, higher percentages of obese people	In countries with enough food, fewer obese people
In wealthy countries, lenient sexual norms	In wealthy countries, stricter sexual norms
Maintaining order in the nation is not given a high priority	Higher number of police officers per 100,000 population

Figure 12 - Indulgence vs Restraint (Hofstede, 2011)

2.4 Trompenaars' cultural dimensions and cultural diversity perceptions

As defined previously by Hofstede, Trompenaars also affirms that values (together with norms) are the deeper levels of culture that guides individuals' behaviours. He defines values as the shared ways in which groups of people understand and interpret the world, and norms as the mutual sense a group has of what is "right" and "wrong" (Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner, 1998).

The author identifies a total of three levels of culture. The core, represented by the basic assumptions about existence, the middle level, represented by norms and values, and the surface level, represented by explicit culture.

Explicit culture is identified by language, food, buildings, houses, monuments, agriculture, shrines, markets, fashions and art (Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner, 1998). Those elements are comparable to the Hofstede's concept of symbols who defined it as the words, gestures, pictures, or objects that carry a particular meaning that is recognized as such only by those who share the culture (Hofstede, Hofstede & Minkov, 2010). Each culture has its own explicit culture. As this is also the first element that individuals enter in contact with when approaching a new culture, typically prejudices start on this symbolic and observable level (Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner, 1998).

The studies that Trompenaars conducted are based on the analysis of how culturally diverse people respond to specific situations. In fact, every culture distinguishes itself from others by the specific solutions it chooses to certain problems which reveal themselves as dilemmas (Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner, 1998). Individuals with different cultural backgrounds attach different meaning to situations. They see the same circumstances but have different interpretation of it. In those situations, conflicts between diverse individuals can emerge because there is a lack of mutual understanding, necessary for the social interaction. Indeed, social interaction, or meaningful communication, presupposes common ways of processing information among the people interacting (Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner, 1998).

Trompenaars's seven dimensions support in understanding how different individuals perceive circumstances based on their cultural background. Even if the author sustains that there could be individuals behaving differently within the same culture and that individuals may move from one extreme to another, the culture individuals come from, their personality, religion and the bonds with those concerned lead them to favour one approach more than another (Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner, 1998).

2.4.1 Universalist vs Particularist

Universalist vs Particularist defines how people judge others behaviour (Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner, 1998).

Universalism is also defined as rule-based behaviour, the individuals that fall in this category usually behave based on the rules that are supposed to be equal for everyone. Universalists are guided by an obligation to adhere to standards which are universally agreed to by the culture in which they live (Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner, 1998) and they try to deal fairly with people (Mind Tools, s.d.) without being influenced by personal relationships.

Particularist, instead, put the personal relations ahead of the social standards, meaning that they would behave to support a close person even if this would imply neglecting the rule. Thus, their behaviours are guided by particular obligations to people they know (Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner, 1998). Their response to a situation may change, based on what's happening in the moment, and who's involved (Mind Tools, s.d.).

Individuals with universalist behaviors are more likely to accept cultural diversity because they seek for equality of treatments, meaning that they value fairness in the society and inequality is undesirable.

Recognising the differences	
Universalist	Particularist
1 Focus is more on rules than relationships.	1 Focus is more on relationships than on rules.
2 Legal contracts are readily drawn up.	2 Legal contracts are readily modified.
3 A trustworthy person is the one who honours their word or contract.	3 A trustworthy person is the one who honours changing mutualities.
4 There is only one truth or reality, that which has been agreed to.	4 There are several perspectives on reality relative to each participant.
5 A deal is a deal.	5 Relationships evolve.

Figure 13 - Universalist vs Particularist (Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner, 1998)

2.4.2 Individualism vs Communitarianism

Individualism vs Communitarianism identifies individuals' inclination to put their own interests ahead of those of the society.

Individualists are people who primarily cares about themselves and their personal well-being. Their main focus is to achieve their own life goals. They believe that everyone makes his/her own decisions, and that has to take care of himself (Mind Tools, s.d.).

Communitarianists, instead, are committed to the society as to their family and they strive for the well-being of all. They believe in cooperation and collaboration. Therefore, they share a common sense of responsibility relatively to the situation in the community.

Communitarianits identify as important the participation of all the members of the society in decision making. They are loyal to the group and believe the quality of life is better when they help each other (Expert Program Management, s.d.). Thus, cultural diversity is more likely to be positively accepted in those types of cultures.

Recognising the differences	
Individualism	Communitarianism
1 More frequent use of "I" form.	1 More frequent use of "We" form.
2 Decisions made on the spot by representatives.	2 Decisions referred back by delegate to organisation.
3 People ideally achieve alone and assume personal responsibility.	3 People ideally achieve in groups which assume joint responsibility.
4 Vacations taken in pairs, even alone.	4 Vacations in organised groups or with extended family.

Figure 14 - Individualism vs Communitarianism (Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner, 1998)

2.4.3 Neutral vs Affective

Neutral vs Affective identifies the degree to which people explicitly express emotions.

Members of cultures which are affectively neutral do not telegraph their feelings but keep them carefully controlled and subdued (Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner, 1998). That does not mean that they do not have feelings, but just that they are not used to showing them.

In contrast, in cultures high on affectivity people show their feelings plainly by laughing, smiling, grimacing, scowling and gesturing; they attempt to find immediate outlets for their feelings (Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner, 1998). Individuals are very transparent in what they think and feel and are comfortable with showing explicitly their emotions.

When culturally diverse individuals are very different and distant in the ways they express emotions, misunderstandings may emerge, leading to the creation of stereotypes and prejudice towards a specific culture.

Recognising the differences	
Neutral	Affective
1 Do not reveal what they are thinking or feeling.	1 Reveal thoughts and feelings verbally and non-verbally.
2 May (accidentally) reveal tension in face and posture.	2 Transparency and expressiveness release tensions.
3 Emotions often dammed up will occasionally explode.	3 Emotions flow easily, effusively, vehemently and without inhibition.
4 Cool and self-possessed conduct is admired.	4 Heated, vital, animated expressions admired.
5 Physical contact, gesturing or strong facial expressions often taboo.	5 Touching, gesturing and strong facial expressions common.
6 Statements often read out in monotone.	6 Statements declaimed fluently and dramatically.

Figure 15 - Neutral vs Affective (Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner, 1998)

2.4.4 Specificity vs Diffuseness

This dimension defines the degree to which individuals engage others in specific areas of life and single levels of personality, or diffusely in multiple areas of their lives and at several levels of personality at the same time (Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner, 1998).

In specificity-oriented cultures people segregate situations into different levels of personal engagement. For example, managers segregate out the task relationship they have with subordinates and insulate this from other dealings (Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner, 1998). In the business context specific-oriented individuals believe that relationships don't have much of an impact on work objectives, and, although good relationships are important, they think that people can work together without having a good relationship (Mind Tools, s.d.)

In diffuseness-oriented culture every life space and every level of personality tends to permeate all others. The private spaces are large and diffuse, which means that once a friend is admitted, this lets him or her into all, or nearly all, your private spaces (Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner, 1998). In the business context, people believe that good relationships are vital to meeting business objectives, and that their relationships with others will be the same, whether they are at work or meeting socially (Mind Tools, s.d.).

Therefore, specificity-oriented cultures are more likely to positively accept cultural diversity at work, because even if prejudices or stereotypes will emerge at a private level, this will not affect the working environment. In fact, those individuals keep work and private life separate. In diffuseness-oriented cultures, instead, stereotypes and prejudices will affect the working environment because private and group interpenetrate (Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner, 1998).

Recognising the differences

Specificity	Diffuseness
1 Direct, to the point, purposeful in relating.	1 Indirect, circuitous, seemingly "aimless" forms of relating.
2 Precise, blunt, definitive and transparent.	2 Evasive, tactful, ambiguous, even opaque.
3 Principles and consistent moral stands independent of the person being addressed.	3 Highly situational morality depending upon the person and context encountered.

Figure 16 - Specificity vs Diffuseness (Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner, 1998)

2.4.5 Achievement-oriented vs Ascription-oriented

Achievement-oriented vs Ascription-oriented identifies if cultures accord status based on what people do rather than on who people are.

Achievement oriented cultures accord status to people on the basis of their achievements (Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner, 1998) rather than on the basis of who they are. Meaning that what someone achieves is more important than who the person is.

Ascription-oriented cultures value people on the basis of who they are by virtue of age, class, gender, education, and so on (Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner, 1998). Power, title, social connections and position matter in these cultures, and these roles define behaviors (Mind Tools, s.d.).

Because of their evaluation system based on objective achievement rather than on individual's background or connections, achievement-oriented cultures are more likely to accept cultural diversity. People in those cultures treat and value everyone based on the same standard without discrimination.

Recognising the differences	
Achievement-oriented	Ascription-oriented
1 Use of titles only when relevant to the competence you bring to the task.	1 Extensive use of titles, especially when these clarify your status in the organisation.
2 Respect for superior in hierarchy is based on how effectively his or her job is performed and how adequate their knowledge.	2 Respect for superior in hierarchy is seen as a measure of your commitment to the organisation and its mission.
3 Most senior managers are of varying age and gender and have shown proficiency in specific jobs.	3 Most senior managers are male, middle-aged and qualified by their background.

Figure 17 - Achievement-oriented vs Ascription-oriented (Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner, 1998)

2.4.6 Sequential Time vs Synchronic Time

Sequential Time vs Synchronic Time is connected with the relative importance cultures give to the past, present and future (Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner, 1998).

Sequential-oriented cultures view time as series of passing events (Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner, 1998). People like events to happen in order. They place a high value on punctuality, planning (and sticking to your plans), and staying on schedule. In this culture, "time is money," and people don't appreciate it when their schedule is thrown off (Mind Tools, s.d.).

Synchronic-oriented cultures view the past, present and future all interrelated so that ideas about the future and memories of the past both shape present action (Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner, 1998). People often work on several projects at once, and view plans and commitments as flexible (Mind Tools, s.d.).

As for neutral vs affective cultures, this dimension highlights the different values that guides individuals' expectations and behaviors. When cultures are very distant on this dimension conflict may emerge because of individuals' different mutual expectations.

Recognising time orientation	
Sequential	Synchronic
1 Only do one activity at a time.	1 Do more than one activity at a time.
2 Time is seizable and measurable.	2 Appointments are approximate and subject to "giving time" to significant others.
3 Keep appointments strictly; schedule in advance and do not run late.	3 Schedules are generally subordinate to relationships.
4 Relationships are generally subordinate to schedule.	4 Strong preference for following where relationships lead.
5. Strong preference for following initial plans.	

Figure 18 - Sequential Time vs Synchronic Time (Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner, 1998)

2.4.7 Internal control vs External control

Internal control vs External control concerns the role people assign to their natural environment (Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner, 1998).

Internal control cultures believe that they can and should control nature by imposing their will upon it (Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner, 1998). They perceive security when they are able to control the environment, they are part of.

External control cultures believe that man is part of nature and must go along with its laws, directions and forces (Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner, 1998). At work or in relationships, they focus their actions on others, and they avoid conflict where possible (Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner, 1998).

Therefore, cultural diversity is more likely to positively affect external control cultures, as they have more flexible attitudes, they try to avoid conflicts and leave in harmony with others. Moreover, they accept uncertain situations and are comfortable with a changing environment.

Recognising the differences			
Internal control		External control	
1	Often dominating attitude bordering on aggressiveness towards environment.	1	Often flexible attitude, willing to compromise and keep the peace.
2	Conflict and resistance means that you have convictions.	2	Harmony and responsiveness, that is, sensibility.
3	Focus is on self, function, own group and own organisation.	3	Focus is on "other", that is customer, partner, colleague.
4	Discomfort when environment seems "out of control" or changeable.	4	Comfort with waves, shifts, cycles if these are "natural".

Figure 19 - Internal control vs External control (Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner, 1998)

In conclusion, Trompenaars' dimensions of culture help in understanding different approaches to the same situation by different individuals based on their cultural background. The general meaning behind the dimensions is that the more distant are the cultures within one dimension, the more likely there is a probability of misunderstanding the others which can lead to cultural conflicts.

CHAPTER 3 – Dimensions that affect cultural diversity perceptions

3.1 A European overview

An efficient employer branding strategy has the power to attract to the company talented employees, needed for win in the marketplace. Diversity, instead, adds value to the organization thanks to the benefits it brings. Therefore, diversity as employer branding strategy is potentially seen as a good competitive decision.

The aim of this work is to understand if promoting a culturally diverse environment will be a valuable value proposition for potential employees. The topic is particularly relevant in the European contest because it is characterized by wide diversity of countries and cultures.

Moreover, the population of the European countries is changing. Families are having fewer children and the older population is increasing (Sperancin, 2010). This trend implies changes in terms of workforce: fewer young people will be available, while older people as well as minority groups that have been facing exclusion and deprivation will be more and more available, accessible and needed (Sperancin, 2010). The changes in the society composition will push companies in Europe to adopt increasingly diversity and inclusion strategies.

Although, diversity is perceived positively by almost 70 percent of European respondents, who see immigrants as an enrichment for their own culture (Zick, Küpper, & Hövermann, 2011) also negatives attitudes could emerge.

Behaviour and attitudes in the workplace could be influenced by implicit stereotypes (sometimes referred to as “subconscious bias”). It means that individuals associate groups of people with certain traits or activities (Hunt, Layton, & Prince, 2015). Stereotypes result therefore in prejudice, which influences people behaviours and decisions towards others. In the workplace prejudice may strongly affect, for example, the hiring decisions. Indeed, a report from the European Youth Forum demonstrates that the stereotypes attached to people belonging to certain nationalities force young people concerned to avoid mentioning their origin in order to be equally treated even for daily tasks (European Youth Forum, 2015).

On the other side, a prejudice could affect the potential candidates' decisions when looking for a job. For example, if the workplace is depicted as multicultural and the individual is intolerant to cultural diversity because of prejudice, he or she may tend to self-select out of the organization and seek for a working environment where individuals more similar to his or her own group in terms of nationality, gender, and race are included.

Even if they could not be aware of it, individuals tend to categorize themselves and others into groups and usually have a preference towards their own group (in-group) than the out-group. This categorization does not have any objective foundation but is rather a subjective perception of what is similar and what is different to us. Indeed, individuals make categorizations based on the limited set of information they have about the other culture.

Stereotyping of others also entails self-stereotyping because in defining how members of an outgroup are different people simultaneously attribute to themselves stereotyped characteristics of the ingroup. Thus, the stereotypes that exist within cultures are remarkably similar, and very resistant to change (Zick, Küpper, & Hövermann, 2011).

Finally, the purpose of this chapter is to understand, based on theoretical foundations, if cultural difference, generation and education level affect the acceptance or rejection of a multicultural working environment.

3.2 Cultural differences: Hofstede's dimensions in the European context

In Europe, 70 percent of respondents see immigrants as an enrichment for their own culture. Contrastingly, 62 percent of respondents believe that discrimination on the basis of ethnic origin is widespread (Zick, Küpper, & Hövermann, 2011). The question that arises is whether one or the other feeling prevails when potential candidates apply to a company.

Probably, the openness towards diversity varies based on the culture. Indeed, as analysed in chapter two, different levels of cultural dimensions could affect the way a culture reacts to diversity.

A study suggests that the reasons behind group-focused enmity are: authoritarianism (an underlying attitude espousing law and order and discipline), Social Dominance Orientation (advocating social status hierarchies) and the rejection of diversity (a general rejection of cultural, ethnic and religious diversity within a country) (Zick, Küpper, & Hövermann, 2011).

Authoritarianism and Social Dominance Orientation strictly relate to Hofstede's power distance dimension, which defines the degree to which hierarchies and inequality in the society exist. The higher is the index, the more individuals in that country will be contrasting regarding inclusion of diverse minorities. In fact, as underlined in chapter two, societies with high power distance are used to and accept inequalities.

Rejection of diversity, instead, is likely to be associated with uncertainty avoidance, as the more unknown the environment is, the less comfortable will the people feel within it. People will therefore tend to avoid uncertain situations, which could be represented by environments where individuals with different culture are included.

Through these correlations, the study (Zick, Küpper, & Hövermann, 2011) provides support to the assumption that Hofstede model could predict positive or negative attitudes of a culture towards cultural diversity.

People with different cultural backgrounds will cultivate various work values (Huichun & Miller, 2003). For that reason, Hofstede's cultural dimensions model could be used to make theoretical assumptions on the attractivity of companies that promote cultural diversity and predict the different responses of culturally diverse individuals.

Table 1 displays the values of Hofstede's cultural dimensions per each country within the European Union, apart for Cyprus for which data were not available.

For the purpose of this chapter, it will be assumed that scores under 30 are low, scores between 31 and 50 are moderately low, scores between 51 and 70 are moderately high and scores above 71 are high.

Table 1 - Hofstede's Cultural Dimensions for 27 EU Member States (Hofstede, Hofstede & Minkov, 2010; Hofstede Insights).

Country	PDI	IDV	MAS	UAI	LTO	IVR
Austria	11	55	79	70	60	63
Belgium	65	75	54	94	82	57
Bulgaria	70	30	40	85	69	16
Croatia	73	33	40	80	58	33
Czech Republic	57	58	57	74	70	29
Denmark	18	74	16	23	35	70
Estonia	40	60	30	60	82	16
Finland	33	63	26	59	38	57
France	68	71	43	86	63	48
Germany	35	67	66	65	83	40
Greece	60	35	57	100	45	50
Hungary	46	80	88	82	58	31
Ireland	28	70	68	35	24	65
Italy	50	76	70	75	61	30
Latvia	44	70	9	63	69	13
Lithuania	42	60	19	65	82	16
Luxembourg	40	60	50	70	64	56
Malta	56	59	47	96	47	66
Netherlands	38	80	14	53	67	68
Poland	68	60	64	93	38	29
Portugal	63	27	31	104	28	33
Romania	90	30	42	90	52	20
Slovakia	100	52	100	51	77	28
Slovenia	71	27	19	88	49	48
Spain	57	51	42	86	48	44
Sweden	31	71	5	29	53	78
United Kingdom	35	89	66	35	51	69

Power distance (PDI)

Country's PDI score can be accurately predicted from the following (Hofstede, Hofstede & Minkov, 2010):

- The country's geographic latitude (higher latitudes associated with lower PDI)
- Its population size (larger size associated with higher PDI)
- Its wealth (richer countries associated with lower PDI)

In general, scores tend to be higher for East European countries and lower for Germanic and English-speaking Western countries (Hofstede, 2011). Indeed, the highest level of power distance are observed in Slovakia (PDI 100) and Romania (PDI 90), while the lowest levels in Austria (PDI 11), Denmark (PDI 18) and Ireland (PDI 28). In general, within the European Union, there is an equilibrium between high power distance and low power distance countries.

In countries with lower scores social hierarchies are less likely to exist and as a consequence of that there is more equality between citizens. In these countries diverse minorities are more likely to be included. It is possible to conclude that, for example, in Austria (PDI 11) compared to Slovakia (PDI 100), cultural diversity would be more welcomed as in this country equality is widespread.

Individualism (IDV)

Country's IDV score can be accurately predicted from two factors (Hofstede, Hofstede, & Minkov, 2010):

- The country's wealth (richer countries associated with higher IDV)
- Its geographical latitude (countries closer to the equator associated with lower IDV)

Individualism tends to prevail in developed and Western countries, while collectivism prevails in less developed and Eastern countries (Hofstede, 2011). Furthermore, countries having achieved fast economic development have experienced a shift toward individualism (Hofstede, Hofstede, & Minkov, 2010). As a matter of fact, countries with higher individualism are UK (IDV 89), Netherlands (IDV 80) and Hungary (IDV 80), while the lowest scores are observed in Portugal (IDV 27), Slovenia (IDV 27), Bulgaria (IDV 30) and Romania (IDV 30). Overall, within the European Union, there is a strong tendency towards individualistic cultures. Indeed, countries scoring high or moderately high in this dimension represent the 78 percent of the total.

Higher scoring countries tend to be more open to what is diverse because, relatively to low scoring countries, they do not focus on their in-group, but classify themselves as individuals and in the same way they see the others. Therefore, they do not tend to classify others in out-groups and protect their in-group interests but rather focus on each individual separately. Higher is the individualism index, higher will be the acceptance of cultural diversity.

Masculinity (MAS)

Masculinity is high, in German speaking countries and it is moderately high in English speaking Western countries while it is low in Nordic countries and in the Netherlands. It is moderately low in some Latin countries like France, Spain and Portugal (Hofstede, 2011).

Indeed, the lowest values are observed in Sweden (MAS 5), Latvia (MAS 9) and Netherlands (MAS 14), while highest values are present in Slovakia (MAS 100), Hungary (MAS 88) and Austria (MAS 79). In general, within the European Union, there is a slight tendency of the countries to be feminine. Indeed, 30 percent of countries score low on this dimension and only 10 percent high. For the rest of the countries is noticeable a balance between moderately low and moderately high scores.

In countries that are more feminine there is more equality between gender and inequality is undesired. In addition, feminine countries promote well-being of all individuals as well as their equality in the social context. The wide difference in scores between Sweden and Latvia and Slovakia predict the strong differences existing between those cultures. Indeed, while Swedish and Latvian countries are truly feminine, meaning that they embrace equality, inclusion and importance of well-being, Slovakia is truly a masculine country, where clear roles in the society are established. In conclusion, cultural diversity would more positively accepted in feminine countries.

Uncertainty Avoidance (UAI)

Societies where UAI tend to be higher are East and Central European countries as well as Latin and German speaking countries, instead, values are lower in English speaking and Nordic countries (Hofstede, 2011).

As expected, countries with lower scores are Denmark (UAI 23) and Sweden (UAI 29), while higher scores are observed in Portugal (UAI 104), Greece (UAI 100) and Malta (UAI 96). Overall, within European Union, there is tendency towards high uncertainty avoidance. Indeed, countries scoring high or moderately high in this dimension represent 85 percent of the total.

Countries with higher scores are characterized by many rules and standards adapted in order to avoid that something that is uncontrollable happens because uncertainty provokes anxiety and negative feelings. On the contrary, countries where uncertainty avoidance is lower have a more open and flexible mindset. Populations of those countries are able to adapt to different situations and may even be attracted and curious about what is different. Therefore, the countries with lower uncertainty avoidance index, like Denmark and Sweden, would be more open to cultural diversity.

Long term orientation (LTO)

Long term oriented are Eastern- and Central Europe Countries, while short-term oriented are South- and North-European countries (Hofstede, 2011).

Indeed, the countries with the higher scores are Germany (LTO 83), Belgium (LTO 82), Estonia (LTO 82) and Lithuania (LTO 82). Countries with the lowest scores are Ireland (LTO 24) and Portugal (LTO 28). In general, within European Union, there is a tendency towards long term orientation. Indeed, countries scoring high or moderately high in this dimension represent 67 percent of the total.

Short term orientation is about behaving looking at what happened in the past as a reference. As stated in chapter two, short term oriented societies are more conservative when taking decisions and see suspiciously changes. In contrast, in long term oriented societies people set up behaviours without relying too much on what happened in the past. They see circumstances as new and adapt to them. As cultural diversity challenges the equilibria within a society, it is possible to conclude that long term-oriented countries would be more adaptable and open to cultural diversity.

Indulgence vs Restraint (IVR)

Indulgence tends to prevail in Western Europe, while restraint prevails in Eastern Europe. Mediterranean Europe takes a middle position on this dimension (Hofstede, 2011).

Indeed, higher scores are observed in Sweden (IVR 78) and Denmark (IVR 70), while lower scores are visible in Latvia (IVR 13), Bulgaria (IVR 16), Estonia (IVR 16) and Lithuania (IVR 16). Overall, within European Union, there is a tendency towards indulgence. Indeed, countries scoring low or moderately low in this dimension represent 63 percent of the total. Moreover, only one country (Sweden IVR 78) scores high.

Individuals in indulgent countries are more likely to enjoy life and freedom, therefore they are more open and curious about what is different. While restraint characterize countries governed by rules and definitions of what is desirable and what is not and as a consequence of that, where individuals are more narrow-minded and limited in their thinking.

In conclusion, countries where inequality is a norm, strict hierarchies and rules exist, and the unknown or uncertain is viewed as negative, are more likely to formulate prejudice towards others that are different.

To further verify the link between cultural diversity acceptance and Hofstede's cultural dimensions, it would be taken into consideration a study conducted in eight countries within the European Union. The respondents of these countries had to express their agreement or disagreement to the following statement "Some countries are clearly superior to others". The results are shown in the table below.

Table 2 - % agreement to the sentence "Some countries are clearly superior to others" (Zick, Küpper, & Hövermann, Intolerance, Prejudice and Discrimination. A European report, 2011)

Statement: Some countries are clearly superior to others	% agreement
France	29,4
Germany	41,6
Hungary	38,5
Italy	28,6
Netherlands	37,9
Poland	49,4
Portugal	61,3
UK	20,1

To verify the relation between the statement and Hofstede's cultural dimensions, the highest scoring and lower scoring countries in Table 2 would be analysed based on their cultural dimensions' indexes.

The highest level of agreement to the statement is recorded in Portugal (61,3 percent). This means that more than half of Portuguese respondents believe there is a hierarchy between cultures. The lowest level is observable in UK (20,1 percent), which corresponds to almost one third of the value registered in Portugal. Therefore, the gap between those two countries in terms of cultural distance should also be wide.

Portugal:

- PDI=63 is moderately high, meaning that there is a tendency to define hierarchies in the society and thus inequality between groups is accepted.
- IDV=27 is low, meaning that people classify themselves and others into groups. They are loyal and protect the interest of their in-group. Therefore, the tendency is to discriminate the out-groups.
- MAS=31 is moderately low, meaning that the country embraces mostly values of feminine societies, like caring about others and promotion of a welfare state.
- UAI=99 is very high, meaning that uncertain situations scare and are highly undesirable. Thus, the society is more likely to respect established standards and rules and avoid different influences.
- LTO=28 is low, meaning that the society has a strong short-term oriented view of the world, very conservative and reliant on past standards.
- IVR=22, is low, which signals a society that tends to behave within the defined set of rules of what is appropriate and what is not.

Overall, the cultural dimensions for Portugal indicate a very close and rigid culture, where rules and roles established in the past continue to hold true. This society is not likely to accept diversity but rather to avoid it as what is different is unknown and uncertain. The only dimension that is in contradiction with what assumed previously is masculinity. A reason for that could be that it is necessary to look at this dimension in terms of the individualism index. In fact, IDV defined that in Portuguese society individuals are more likely to live in harmony with their in-groups. Based on this, the interpretation of low MAS would define a society where individuals strive for well-being of their in-group.

United Kingdom:

- PDI=35 is moderately low, which defines a society characterized by equality, freedom of choice and decision and consequently no hierarchies. In this culture all minorities are likely to be represented and treated as fairly as the majority group.
- IDV=89 is high, meaning that the society is valuing each individual separately and not based on which group they belong. In this society there is no need to protect the in-group from external influences, therefore diversity would be more likely accepted.
- MAS=66 is moderately high, which means that individuals do not strive for well-being of the society but rather for their own goals' accomplishment.

- UAI=35 is moderately low, meaning that the individuals in the society are not afraid of what is different and unknown. Cultural diversity would be positively accepted in such an environment.
- LTO=51 is moderately high, what indicates a tendency of the people to adapt to new circumstances and not only rely on past standards and rules. High LTO is a signal of a culture that is more open and flexible.
- IVR=69 is moderately high, meaning that the society fosters expression of each individuals' desires and impulses. People are free to behave and be themselves without restrictions.

Overall, the cultural dimensions for United Kingdom confirm a positive tendency to diversity. UK citizens are more openminded and strive for the representation and inclusion of everyone in the society. Similarly to the Portuguese society, the only contrasting value is observed for MAS. This index should be again read in line with the IDV index. Indeed, the society is mainly individualistic meaning that individuals focus on themselves and their goals, in this way they do not behave because influenced by their in-group.

In conclusion, cultural dimensions for Portugal and United Kingdom reliably predict the tendency of those countries towards cultural diversity. In fact, the prejudice that there is a hierarchy between cultures is highly spread in Portugal which is defined by cultural dimensions analysis as a conservative, rigid and narrow-minded culture. In terms of culture, Portuguese have less disposition to accept the differences of those groups that are excluded from the mainstream of the society, and to treat those groups well (Sperancin, 2010). On the contrary, United Kingdom is a more open, fair and flexible society, which is confirmed by the responses to the statement that a hierarchy between cultures exist. Finally, Hofstede's cultural dimension could be used to reliably predict individuals' attitudes towards diversity based on which culture they are part of.

3.3 Generational approaches to diversity

Although some researches state that work values are related to where individuals are in their life-cycle (Hayes, Parks, McNeilly, & Johnson, 2018), comparisons between the generation analysis and the age analysis suggest that generation had more influence on work values than did age (Hansen & Leuty, 2012). Therefore, the focus in this paragraph will be on the approach different generations have towards cultural diversity in the workplace.

The current workforce is characterized by four generations: Boomers, Generation X, Generation Y (or Millennials) and Generation Z.

Different authors provide different ranges of age for each of the categories above. For the purpose of this study, the Pew Research Centre classification (as in the figure below) will be adopted. Moreover, silent generation would not be considered as it comprises individuals that are already retired from the job market. While Generation Z would be limited to individuals that can legally look for a job, therefore, only individuals currently aging from 18 to 22 would be included.

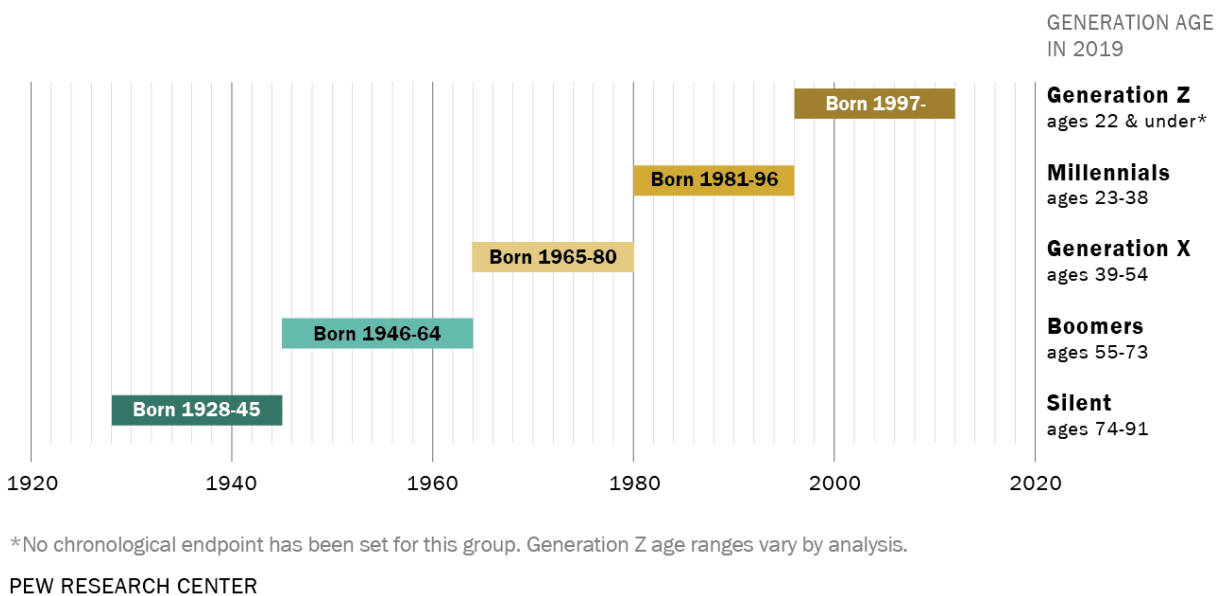


Figure 20 - Generation Age in 2019 (Pew Research Centre, s.d.)

The term generation typically refers to a group of individuals who share common life experiences such as world events, natural disasters, politics, economic conditions, and pop culture (Hansen & Leuty, 2012).

Historical events affect some generations in a special way (Hofstede, Hofstede, & Minkov, 2010). Indeed, the historical moment when the generation grow up, influenced its early learned values, behaviours and attitudes. As a matter of fact, generations differ in symbols, heroes, rituals, and values (Hofstede, Hofstede, & Minkov, 2010).

The four generations in today's workplace are so different that they meet the definition of being different cultures. Their outlooks, worldview, upbringing, traditions, and perspectives (the things that make up a culture) are fundamentally different (Brinckerhoff, 2013). They are characterized by unique personalities and characteristics specific to their individual cohort group (Hayes, Parks, McNeilly, & Johnson, 2018). They show also substantial difference between their work values, work attitudes and work expectations (Huichun & Miller, 2003).

Based on the reasons just mentioned, generations are different in many aspects. One of them is the way they perceive diversity. Boomers and Generation X think at diversity and inclusion as creating a workplace where individuals with different ages, gender, race and sexual orientation are included. Completely different is the point of view of Millennials and Generation Z, who mainly focus on cognitive diversity and take demographic diversity for granted.

Cognitive diversity is about including in the workforce individuals with diverse attitudes, values and beliefs (Bryant, 2019). As values are the core of the culture, it is possible to conclude that younger generations will think about diversity as creating a multicultural working environment.

Another difference among generations is that older cohorts view diversity and inclusions as a moral issue, while Millennials and Generation Z value diversity because of the benefits it brings for the business growth, because it stimulates teamwork, innovation, collaboration and creativity. It fosters the combination of different ideas and approaches to better overcome challenges and achieve business goals (Smith & Turner, 2015).

In addition, with the progress of technology, each generation compared to the previous one has experienced a more integrated world. In this way the mind-set of younger generations should be more international and open than this of older generations. Indeed, a study shows that in Great Britain, Germany, France and Netherlands the older respondents exhibit conspicuously more prejudice than younger respondents (Zick, Küpper, & Hövermann, 2011).

For the reasons just mentioned, it is interesting to understand whether different generations, which define differently diversity, have different perceptions of a firm multicultural environment.

3.3.1 Boomers

Boomers are individuals born between 1946 and 1964, which grew up in an era of unprecedented economic growth and stability this is why they tend to be more diligent on the job and prefer a more stable working environment (Huichun & Miller, 2003). In addition, during their era, the workplace was more heavily weighted toward a single race (Caucasians) (Mencil & Lester, 2014). Therefore, the gradual inclusion of diverse individuals slightly changed the equilibria of the workplace Boomers were used to.

Indeed, Boomers were the first generation that met with the topics of diversity. As earlier boomers reached the height of their careers, diversity and inclusion began to be talked about in the workplace (Bryant, 2019).

Because of the reason above, Boomers have a more traditional vision of diversity, which is focused on inclusion of demographically diverse individuals. According to their point of view diversity is about integrating in the workplace people of different gender, faith, ethnicity and physical ability (Bryant, 2019).

Moreover, Boomers are more likely to see diversity as a reputational issue for their workplace, or a moral and legal imperative, than a concept that makes the workplace more pleasant (Bryant, 2019). In fact, this is the hugest difference in the way older and younger generations perceive diversity.

Millennials and Generation Z see diversity as a mean to achieve business success as they believe diversity fosters creativity and innovation. On the contrary, Boomers conceptualize diversity as a way to reach fairness regarding representation of diverse groups in terms of gender, religion, ethnicity and sexual orientation. Boomers see diversity as a strategy aimed at protect, treat fairly, and provide consistent opportunities free from discrimination and prejudice (Smith & Turner, 2015). Therefore, they will see multicultural companies as workplaces that promote fairness and equal treatments and will be attracted to companies because of these elements and not because of the benefits diversity entails.

Boomers are also described as motivated to change the world with their idealism (Hayes, Parks, McNeilly, & Johnson, 2018). Indeed, 85 percent of Boomers say it's important that their work involve "giving back" (Hewlett, Sherbin, & Sumberg, 2009). Furthermore, studies showed that 55 percent of them are members of external volunteer networks to advance environmental, cultural, educational, or other causes (Hewlett, Sherbin, & Sumberg, 2009).

According to the data, the evidence is that Boomers pay attention to the well-being of society, but still, because of their generational culture, could have preference for a more conservative workplace. A study shows that only 27 percent of Boomers are comfortable working with people from different ethnicities and cultures (Hewlett, Sherbin, & Sumberg, 2009). The reason for that is that they are used to a stable working environment characterized mainly by Caucasians, and therefore the acceptance of individuals culturally diverse, which have different values, attitudes and behaviours, could require some time. Indeed, Boomers prefer a stable working environment and stability is associated with slow change, meaning that they are more slowly adaptable to a workplace characterized by wide diversity.

In conclusion, Boomers will not be discouraged by a firm multiculturalism, but their attraction would vary based on the individuals' adaptability rate. Anyway, Boomers attraction will not be as strong as the attraction for younger generations, because of the different meaning they attach to the concept. For Boomers diversity will reflect an equal opportunities employer, while for younger generations, diversity will signal an innovative, dynamic and creative working environment.

3.3.2 Generation X

Generation X is represented by individuals born between 1965 and 1980.

Similarly to Boomers, Generation Xers embrace a traditional concept of diversity, defining it as representation of and fairness to all individuals and their various identifiers of gender, race, religion, ethnicity, and sexual orientation (Smith & Turner, 2015).

Generation Xers are less attached to stability than the previous generation and are more adaptive to change (Hayes, Parks, McNeilly, & Johnson, 2018). They developed this ability because approximately 40 percent of them are products of divorce, and many of them were brought up in single-parent homes (Yrle, Hartman, & Payne, 2005). Furthermore, this is the first generation where the majority of both parents worked outside the home causing many Generation Xers to become latchkey kids, taking care of themselves for hours each day (Hansen & Leuty, 2012). They grew up with relatively little parental involvement and guidance (Yrle, Hartman, & Payne, 2005) and, as a result they self-learned how to adapt to different situations.

Moreover, Generation Xers grew up during rapid technological and social change representing financial, family and social insecurity and has entered the workforce without expecting job security (Cennamo & Gardner, 2008). Thus, Generation Xers are characterized by a low level of uncertainty avoidance, as there are used to live and work in a quickly evolving environment with rapidly changing circumstances.

They were revolutionized by television and the media that provided this generation with more exposure to world events and pop culture than previous generations (Hansen & Leuty, 2012). The media's violence and sensationalism have led them to be rather unwilling to trust those they do not know well. This is why they expect less of their society and others than previous generations (Yrle, Hartman, & Payne, 2005). Therefore, it is possible to notice a tendency of Generation Xers towards individualism and self-reliance.

Similarly to Boomers, Generation Xers value respect and equality (Hansen & Leuty, 2012), but differently from Boomers they place more value on social connections at work and value a fun and challenging working environment (Hansen & Leuty, 2012),

These findings signal a tendency of Generation Xers towards the modern concept of diversity, which is about inclusion of individuals with diverse backgrounds and experiences and which fosters the creation of an innovative, dynamic and challenging working environment.

In conclusion, Generation Xers, because of the era they grow up in, are more resilient and adaptive to change than other generations. They are not afraid of what is different or unknown. But they are also less concerned with equality than the Boomers. Therefore, Generation Xers probably would feel comfortable in working in a multicultural working environment, especially if they will see benefits in terms of dynamicity and innovation; but multiculturalism would rather not be an element of strong attraction as they do not have the tendency to seek for equality.

3.3.3 Generation Y (Millennials)

Generation Y or Millennials are individuals born between 1981 and 1996, which nowadays constitute the majority of the workforce.

This generation has a very different understanding of diversity compared to the previous ones. Indeed, Millennials were born in an era where globalization started to rise, and technology has fostered the interaction of people all over the world. They have grown up in a connected world, which they see as a small and manageable place (Bryant, 2019).

This culturally diverse upbringing has played a big role in making Millennials significantly more comfortable talking about diversity and inclusion than older generations (WeSpire, s.d.). Because of the external influences, they have developed an international oriented mindset and when looking for a job they value international experience. They will happily begin their careers outside their home countries if the employment or role prospects are greater abroad (PwC, 2010). For them, walking into an office lobby and seeing all types of people is a given (Smith & Turner, 2015).

As they are used to study, work and live in multicultural environments, they take demographic diversity for granted. Their vision of diversity is based on cognitive diversity, which is about the inclusion of individuals with a mix of unique experiences, identities, ideas, and opinions (Smith & Turner, 2015). Millennials see diversity as the blending of different backgrounds, experiences, and perspectives, and believe emphasizing their differences helps them bring value to their organization (Smith & Turner, 2015). They don't downplay their diversity but rather, celebrate it (Bryant, 2019).

For millennials, inclusion isn't just about getting people of different creeds together. It's about connecting these individuals, forming teams on which everyone has a say, and capitalizing on a variety of perspectives in order to make a stronger business impact (Smith & Turner, 2015). Therefore, according to their vision diversity does not need to be achieved because of legal or moral needs but because there are real benefits that can emerge from its implementation.

Furthermore, for Millennials diversity means being free to express oneself and be listened to and extends far beyond merely achieving compliance (Bryant, 2019). Indeed, surveys reveal that Millennials favour companies where communication is open and team members are not afraid to voice ideas, however unorthodox (Bryant, 2019).

They are more likely to avoid companies that limit their freedom of voice and dictate strict behavioural rules. Because they strive for freedom of opinions, they are more open minded and willing to consider other points of view, even if contrasting with their own thoughts.

Similarly to Boomers, Millennials put a great emphasis on fairness (Hayes, Parks, McNeilly, & Johnson, 2018). They share with Boomers a heightened sense of obligation to make a positive contribution to society and are attracted by employers who shares their social consciousness, indeed, 86% of Millennials say it's important that their work make a positive impact on the world (Hewlett, Sherbin, & Sumberg, 2009). As a matter of fact, almost half of millennials reported not pursuing an employer that doesn't maintain or encourage a diverse and inclusive working environment (WeSpire, s.d.).

When millennials perceive an inclusive culture, they report above-average levels of engagement, empowerment, and authenticity. In fact, a study by Deloitte shows that 83 percent of millennials are actively engaged when they believe their organization fosters an inclusive culture (Smith & Turner, 2015). Employee engagement is crucial to retain best talents and spread word of mouth to attract new highly skilled individuals. Having the right talent is fundamental for a company to be more competitive and profitable in the marketplace.

Another element that characterize Millennials is that they love to connect with others and enjoy working in offices that are open and conducive to socializing (Hewlett, Sherbin, & Sumberg, 2009). They are more open and curious about others, encouraging a culture where everyone is free to express his/her-self. Indeed, a study shows that 78 percent of Millennials are comfortable working with people from different ethnicities and cultures and when it comes to networking, more than a quarter of them network primarily with people of a different ethnicity (Hewlett, Sherbin, & Sumberg, 2009).

In conclusion, Millennials should be more likely attracted to companies that promote cultural diversity as they will be incentivized by the benefits diversity brings to their work in terms of innovation and creativity. They would be less affected by prejudices as they grow up in multicultural environments and thus see demographic diversity as something normal.

3.3.4 Generation Z

Generation Z is composed by individuals born after 1997, which are now entering in the workplace and will represent the workforce of the future. Even if not much attention is given to them now, they represent the future stakeholders which companies would have to attract. Looking forward is the main strategy to be fast and successful. Therefore, the importance of this stakeholders should not be undervalued.

Even more than Millennials, Generation Z has grown up in a globalized and interconnected world. They are the first generation to have spent their whole lives in the digital age. Because they grow up in a world without borders, they are even more global in their thinking and interactions than Millennials (Bryant, 2019).

Because of their young ages, few are the studies that analyse Generation Z work values and behaviours in the workplace, but there is a clear trend that this generation would be attracted by an employer that guarantees freedom of self-expression.

3.3.5 Conclusions

In conclusion, Generation Z would see the same benefits of Millennials in a diverse and inclusive working environment, but even more than the previous generation, they will be attracted by multiculturalism in the workplace as it will signal a company that allows freedom of expression. Indeed, they seek for the freedom of being themselves, meaning that they value when a company fosters this attitude.

In general, diversity and inclusion strategies are valuable for all the generations and differ in the meaning that each generation attach to it. While for Boomers diversity is a matter of moral issue and a signal of equality and fairness, for Millennials diversity is a mean to achieve company success. Overall, all generations believe employers emphasize diversity and inclusion primarily to make their organization a better place to work (Weber Shandwick, 2016).

Because of the different eras they grow up, each generation defines differently diversity. For Boomers and Generation X diversity is about demographic diversity, instead, for Millennials and Generation Z diversity is about cognitive diversity.

Attention to diversity emerged when the workforce was predominantly characterized by a homogenous workforce. The change that occurred over time enabled Generation X and, even more so, Generation Y to interact and collaborate with a more diverse workplace than their predecessors (Mencil & Lester, 2014). Therefore, Boomers were the first to deal with diversity and inclusion topics, Generation Xers started to work and live in an increasingly diverse environment, while Millennials and Generation Z are already born in a multicultural world. As a matter of fact, Millennials are more comfortable discussing diversity and inclusion at work than Boomers and Generation X (Weber Shandwick, 2016).

Finally, younger generations would be increasingly attracted by companies that embrace cultural diversity, whereas multiculturalism would have a neutral effect on older generations. This assumption is supported by the fact that Millennials are significantly more likely than Generation Xers and Boomers to consider diversity and inclusion as an important factor when considering a new job (47% vs. 33% and 37%, respectively) (Weber Shandwick, 2016).

3.4 The influence of education on cultural diversity acceptance

Studies conducted in Europe underline that the lower the respondents' level of education the stronger their overall level of prejudice (Zick, Küpper, & Hövermann, 2011). As education enhances the knowledge of individuals, it is natural to assume that the wider knowhow would allow people to see the world in a more informed and objective way. When individuals are informed, there is little space for prejudice.

An advanced education attenuates prejudice and fosters a real commitment to racial equality by providing knowledge about the historical, social, and economic forces responsible for inequality; teaching the dangers of prejudice; neutralizing fear of the unknown; promoting democratic norms of equality and civil rights; and facilitating contact between racial groups (Wodtke, 2012).

Stereotypes and prejudices are not based on information and knowledge, but on the contrary on perceptions and beliefs. Indeed, prejudice arise from the perceptions and opinions that individuals attach to others, identified as different, and which lead to development of negative attitudes towards the prejudiced class.

A prejudice guide individuals' behaviours and decisions, therefore, it is interesting to understand whether education level could affect the way in which individuals perceive cultural diversity.

Overall, quite few previous studies have been conducted to understand the effects of education on the acceptance of diversity and especially cultural diversity. Past studies have focused mainly on racial diversity, considering, for example, white attitudes toward blacks. So far, no studies have been conducted regarding the level of education and behaviours of majority groups towards minorities.

One of the studies that investigated the relation between education and racial diversity has been conducted among large samples of whites, Asians, Hispanics, and blacks. The aim of the study was to estimate education effects on negative stereotypes, perceptions of discrimination, and support for affirmative action policies. The results of this analysis indicated that education is associated with rejection of racial stereotypes and is also related to increased awareness of discrimination against minorities (Wodtke, 2012).

According to this study, it is possible to state that higher education contributes to dissolve the negative stereotypes associated with racially diverse individuals and make people more self-conscious about the discriminatory behaviours towards minorities. Therefore, more educated individuals pay more attention to equality relative to less educated minorities, because they have a more objective understanding of the society. In fact, education enhances individual's awareness of the world and other cultures, shaping the way they see and perceive the others.

Individuals with lower levels of education, formulate prejudices based on the limited set of information they have and fosters their prejudice with subjective elements, like perceptions or word of mouth. Usually these individuals display also an attitude towards selective listening, meaning that when they listen to an information, they only select the elements that they want to hear and interpret the information accordingly.

Another study revealed that people with high levels of education tend more to individualism (Huichun & Miller, 2003). As individualism has been assumed to be related with more openness to cultural diversity, the study provides further support that level of education is positively correlated with diversity acceptance.

Education helps to open the mind, to consider other point of views and be willing to listen to contrasting opinions. Moreover, it stimulates the curiosity to go more in deep when deciding norms of behaviours and taking decisions. A study by Wodtke (2012) supports this assumption by demonstrating that highly educated individuals are more likely than their poorly educated counterparts to reject negative racial stereotypes, accept residential and school integration in principle, attribute racial inequalities to structural causes, be more perceptive of racial discrimination, and support democratic norms of equality.

Therefore, education has a profoundly liberalizing influence on intergroup attitudes. An advanced education promotes a more enlightened world outlook, characterized by a heightened commitment to democratic norms of equality and tolerance of racial outgroups (Wodtke, 2012).

Education fosters a more open mind set because its stimulates the individual awareness that there are: (a) other places than his own locality; (b) other times than the immediate present; (c) persons other than himself and his immediate primary group; and (d) other values he cherishes as ingredients of other aspects of his self. In brief, prolonged exposure to formal education contribute to enlarge people perspectives on time, place, person and values (Tumin, Barton, & Burrus, 1958). According to this approach, education is expected to discourage negative stereotyping and enhance awareness of discrimination.

Another valid assumption is that countries where inequalities (high PDI) are widespread correlate with lower education levels. Indeed, in culture where power distance is high, different social classes exist. The classes differ in their access to and their opportunities for benefiting from the advantages of society, one of them being educated (Hofstede, Hofstede, & Minkov, 2010). Therefore, power distance index is highly related with education opportunities.

Wodtke (2012) suggests that not always higher level of education could be associated with more openness to diversity, but rather that education could foster a greater exposure to the dominant racial ideology. This assumption could hold true in countries with high power distance and inequalities. A reason for that is that usually in high power distance countries the top levels of the societies take the decisions and guide the rest of the society. There is wide intolerance of individuals that have contrasting thoughts and opinions. Therefore, in those societies, an education close to the creed of the high levels may be spread. Indeed, education could be used as a tool to maintain and reinforce existing cultural values (Stedham & Yamamura, 2004).

Finally, based on this theoretical analysis, it is possible to conclude that highly educated individuals would positively accept cultural diversity, whereas low educated individuals would rather reject diversity because their behaviour would be prejudiced-driven. Less educated individuals would be less open and comfortable within companies that promote cultural diversity.

CHAPTER 4 – Qualitative analysis

4.1 Research Methodology

In order to verify the assumptions made in chapter three, a qualitative research has been performed. This choice has been made because, regarding the topic of study in this work, no static data were needed but rather an analysis of the perceptions of individuals. Indeed, qualitative research allows to understand social reality in a subjective but scientific manner (Wildemuth, 2017).

Among the various methodologies, semi-structured interviews have been chosen as the right mean because of their greater flexibility and thus adaptability to the respondent and the interview flow.

Firstly, the layout of the topics to consider during the interview has been designed. The layout included open-end as well as some multiple-choice questions. The closed questions were offering a possibility of three choices and subsequently the respondent had to justify his/her choice. Some additional questions have been asked when the answer was not particularly rich or understandable or when was interesting to further investigate the thoughts of the respondent.

The interviews were structured based on (Wildemuth, 2017):

- Essential questions: necessary for the aim of the research.
- Extra questions: to check on the reliability of responses.
- Probing questions: to ask respondents to further elaborate and justify their thoughts.

The essential questions were formulated based on the assumptions and analysis of the theory of chapter two and three, in order to verify the findings emerging from the theoretical frameworks. Overall, the layout of the topic to face during the interview has been designed to try the most possible that the order of the questions does not influence the answers. For the same reasons, variations in the order of the asked questions has been tried to be minimized.

Secondly, it was decided to perform the interviews targeting individuals from two different countries: Italy and Poland. This choice was made because the mother tongues of the author are Polish and Italian and in this way was possible to conduct the survey in the mother tongue of the respondents.

This had three main advantages:

- 1) Avoid language bias and thus obtain more reliable responses. Indeed, using the mother tongue, there is more certainty that the questions as well as the answers are understood and interpreted in the correct way.
- 2) Possibility to interview non-English speaking individuals, usually represented by older generations, therefore, allowing to not be limited in the research.
- 3) Making the respondents feel more comfortable and thus stimulating them to express freely thoughts and opinions in a more articulated way.

The selection of Italian and Polish respondents was made not only because of the reasons above, but also because the two countries are geographically distant and culturally different, resulting in a perfect sample for this study. Indeed, there are likely to be cross-cultural differences in employer attractiveness (Berthon, Ewing, & Hah, 2005).

Therefore, 50 percent of respondents were identified in Italy and 50 percent were selected in Poland. Subsequently, the answers were then translated in English for the purpose of this work.

Finally, the respondents have been identified in order to try to find the right balance between generation, education level, gender and international experience. In this way, was possible to verify the other two assumptions made in chapter three about generation and education. Moreover, even if there is no literature that allows to make assumptions about gender and international experience, those two dimensions has been investigated through the analysis of interviews and the findings will be represented later in this chapter.

The final aim of the qualitative analysis has been to verify how the fact that a firm has a multicultural workforce could affect the potential candidates' attraction and if there are some variations among different nationalities, generations, educational levels, genders and experiences.

For achieving the research results, in total 20 individuals have been selected and 20 interviews have been conducted. Table 3 shows the composition of the sample.

The interviews lasted on average 30 minutes and were all performed face to face in order to better capture respondents' non-verbal communication. Some of the interviews have been made in person and, when this was not possible, via video call through WhatsApp or Messenger. The time schedule of the survey was chosen by the respondents, so that they took the time to answer in the moment that they felt was the most suitable for them.

Table 3 - Composition of the interviews' sample

	COUNTRY OF ORIGIN	GENDER	GENERATION	EDUCATIONAL LEVEL	INTERNATIONAL EXPERIENCE (in years)
1	ITALY	F	B	HIGH SCHOOL	2
2	ITALY	F	X	MIDDLE SCHOOL	
3	ITALY	F	Y	BACHELOR	1
4	ITALY	F	Y	HIGH SCHOOL	
5	ITALY	F	Z	HIGH SCHOOL	
6	ITALY	M	B	MASTER	
7	ITALY	M	X	MBA	17,5
8	ITALY	M	X	HIGH SCHOOL	
9	ITALY	M	Y	MASTER	3,5
10	ITALY	M	Z	BACHELOR	0,5
11	POLAND	F	B	BACHELOR	
12	POLAND	F	X	HIGH SCHOOL	26
13	POLAND	F	Y	MASTER	8
14	POLAND	F	Z	BACHELOR	
15	POLAND	M	B	HIGH SCHOOL	
16	POLAND	M	X	HIGH SCHOOL	1,5
17	POLAND	M	X	MASTER	6,5
18	POLAND	M	Y	HIGH SCHOOL	16
19	POLAND	M	Y	MASTER	
20	POLAND	M	Z	HIGH SCHOOL	

After all the interviews have been completed an analysis of the answers have been performed. The analysis was made through a rewriting of the answers of each respondent grouping them per topic, in order to see if some similarities per topic were emerging.

Later, some key words were identified per respondent per answer and an excel file has been created to allow a more immediate identification of trends among nationalities, generations, educational levels, genders and international experience.

The final findings would be illustrated in the following's paragraphs.

4.2 Cultural dimensions' analysis

In chapter two and three, based on the study of theory, emerged that relying on the Hofstede's cultural dimensions, it is possible to predict if a country could be more or less open to diversity. In this first part of the analysis, would be defined whether the culture of belonging influences individuals' attraction to a multicultural company.

The starting point of the analysis would be a theoretical investigation of the Italian and Polish culture based on the comparison of Hofstede's cultural dimensions per country as represented in the figure below.

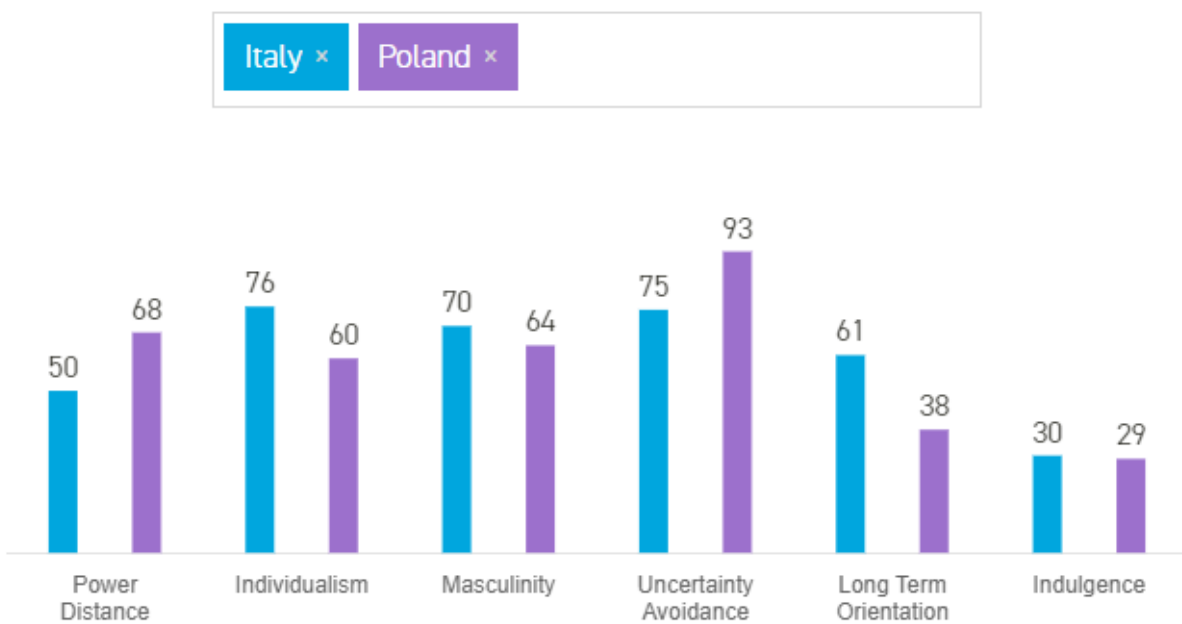


Figure 21 - Country comparison, Italy vs Poland (Hofstede Insights, s.d.)

In order to be consistent with previous assumptions, the same analysis methodology as in chapter two will be used also for the purpose of this chapter. It will be assumed that scores under 30 are low, scores between 31 and 50 are moderately low, scores between 51 and 70 are moderately high and scores above 71 are high.

Italy

PDI=50 is moderately low, meaning that there is rather equality in the society and that there are no strict group hierarchies.

IDV=76 is high, which defines more openness of the culture, as the individuals are identified based on their characteristics and not on the comparison between the in-group and out-group.

MAS=70 is moderately high, which signals a society that does not embrace the values of altruism and general well-being, but mainly values of self-achievement and self-focus.

UA=75 is high, which signals a culture that prefers stability and avoidance of what is unknown.

LTO=61 is moderately high, meaning that the society is forward looking and adapting to the changes rather than relying on past standards and believes.

IVR=30 is low, which signals a culture that highly values freedom of expression.

Overall, the cultural dimensions values indicate that Italy is rather an open country to diversity, because it is characterized by equality, attention to the individual rather than to the group of belonging, adaptability to changing environment and freedom of expression. The contrasting value of the masculinity index, as emerged in chapter three, has to be read in line with the individualism index. Indeed, Italian society is highly individualistic and masculinity highlights that focus on the self is more important than focus on the society, but this does not automatically imply inequality.

Poland

PDI=68 is moderately high, signalling that there are hierarchies in the society and inequalities are likely to exist.

IDV=60 is moderately high, which means that there is a tendency to openness, because the individuals classify others based on their characteristics rather than on their group of membership.

MAS=64 is moderately high, which reflects a society where the main focus is on the self rather than on the achievement of a welfare state.

UA=93, is very high, identifying a society where what is uncertain is highly undesirable and tried to be avoided through the establishment of rigid rules and standards.

LTO=38 is moderately low, which defines a culture that is more linked to the tradition and makes decision driven by past standards and believes.

IVR=29 is low, meaning that freedom of the individuals to self-express is highly appreciated.

Overall, the cultural dimensions values indicate that Poland is a country characterized by hierarchies where rules and standards from the past continue to hold true, reinforced by the fact that, as the uncertainty avoidance is very high, the society likes stability. At the same time the country shows also a tendency to openness and appreciation of freedom of expression.

When compared, Polish culture results more conservative and thus tendentially more closed than the Italian culture. The theoretical evidence is confirmed by the qualitative research.

Indeed, respondents affirmed:

- *“Poland is a closed country; people will be distanced from a multicultural environment because they are not used to meet and deal with individuals from other cultures”* (Polish, Female, Generation X, 26 years living in Italy).
- *“Poland is the most closed and conservative country in Europe, I cannot identify a more closed one. Depending on individuals, multiculturalism would produce a neutral effect on some of them, and an alienating effect on others”* (Polish, Male, Generation X, 6,5 working abroad).
- *“Poland is a very closed country. There are many people intolerant of other cultures, religions and sexual orientations. The potential candidates would probably be distanced by a multicultural company because of the existing stereotypes that would affect their perceptions. Even if, I think, there are some individuals from the younger generations that would be attracted by cultural diversity because they would be curious to learn more about them”* (Polish, Male, Generation Z).

According to the statements above, it is possible to notice that Polish citizens themselves recognize that Poland is a conservative country and, as predicted by the cultural dimensions' analysis, is tendentially a closed country where cultural diversity would have a negative or neutral impact on potential candidates.

But respondents also reported that nowadays the society is changing and is moving towards more openness. Indeed, one of the respondents stated that *“Younger generations are more open minded because they have received a different education and they have enhanced opportunities to meet other cultures and learn about them. Older generations are more conservative and attached to the past because they were educated and grew up in a different world”* (Polish, Male, Boomer).

The comment, made by a person part of the older generation, further supports the assumption that people in the society are conscious that in the past they were conservative, mainly because of historical reasons, and that now the circumstances are changing. Indeed, respondents stated that *“Poland now is more open than before. In big cities, which are more developed, diversity would attract potential candidates, but in small cities where the reality is more traditional, diversity would still alienate potential candidates”* (Polish, Female, Generation Y, 8 years in

Ireland) and “*younger generations have the need to learn and be open to the world*” (Polish, Male, Generation Y, 16 years working abroad).

The statements above highlight the fact that cultural dimensions in Poland have been playing an important role in defining individuals openness to other cultures in the past, but that nowadays the situation is changing and younger generations would be influenced by new values, more diversity oriented.

When looking at the Italian society, the culture is more open to diversity. As a matter of fact, respondents stated:

- *“In Italy a multicultural environment will attract candidates because it is already a multicultural country. Additionally, Italians would positively accept a multicultural environment as they would feel free to express their selves without the fair of being judged because in such an environment gives a perception of more equality”* (Polish, Female, Generation X, 26 years living in Italy).
- *“Multiculturalism will cause attraction because globalization is happening and is the future. The integration that is starting now inside the companies represents the future. Diversity leads to an enrichment of the organizational reality.”* (Italian, Male, Boomer).

Besides these two quotes, most of the respondents stated that the attraction, neutrality or alienation to a multicultural working environment depend mainly on the individuals' inclinations. Indeed, some individuals in the Italian society are racist and very narrowminded and they would reject multiculturalism. Other individuals, which have a desire to develop and go abroad, would be attracted by a multicultural environment. Finally, there would be some individuals indifferent to multiculturalism.

This variations may be influenced by the historical context, in fact, in the last years Italy is strictly dealing with topics regarding the immigrants, which has an influence on the politics and thus on the society, leading to a creation of mixed feelings for Italian individuals regarding topics of diversity.

Although the differences between Poland and Italy are apparent, further evidence has been provided by the fact that when respondents were asked to identify a culture that they consider distant from their own, Italians said Northern and East European countries and Polish said Italy and Spain.

Italian respondents have the perception that Northern and Eastern European countries “*have a different way of thinking and looking at the world*”, “*have different social systems, politics, values and principles*” and even if they are perceived as more closed than Italian culture, they are respected because they “*attach more values to respect the resources of the world*” and are “*consistent with their traditions*”.

On the other side, Polish respondents think that in Europe, in general, there are no strong differences among countries and that the main dissimilarities are in the degree of openness of the countries. Indeed, Polish respondents think that Western European cultures like the Italian and Spanish are slightly different than their culture because “*Italians and Spanish have a different way of behaving, a more thoughtless life-style and more freedom*”.

Based on the differences just highlighted, the questions that naturally arises is whether Italians and Polish have the same perceptions when asked to work in a multicultural environment.

From the qualitative research it emerged that 14 out of the 20 respondents, said that they would be curious, interested and happy about working with someone of a different culture, while 4 out of 20 stated that for them this would not produce any thoughts and feelings, they would be indifferent. Of the individuals that would feel neutral, three stated that they would be indifferent because they are living and working in a very multicultural environment (respectively Ireland, Denmark and Norway), therefore, they are used to have daily relationships with culturally diverse people because in the country they live this is normal and that is why they do not show a particular excitement. This finding highlights another aspect that would be analysed later on in this chapter, which is about how international experience affect individuals’ attraction to a multicultural employer.

The few respondents that said they would feel anxious about working with individuals from different cultures, stated so because of the lack of the language. Indeed, they answered:

- “*I would be worried to work with someone from another culture because I do not know English and therefore, I would be afraid that we could not understand each other’s*” (Italian, Male, Boomer).
- “*I am not afraid of working with someone with another culture, but I may think that I would not be able to speak with this person and this would cause me some anxiety*” (Polish, Female, Generation Z).

Both the two individuals, in other responses showed a very open mindset thus it is possible to state that the lack of language skills was the only element of alienation regarding working with someone from a different culture.

Many respondents, in both the cultures, also highlighted the fact that there could be a predominant acceptance or neutrality toward cultural diversity in their country, but there would always be someone that would be alienated because there are always in the society people that are racist and behave guided by prejudice.

In general, the people that were curious and excited about working in a multicultural environment were represented by a mix of Polish and Italian respondents. Thus, no variations between the two different cultures were observed.

Moreover, Polish and Italian respondents believe that conflict could emerge not because of different cultures but because of different religions. Indeed, respondents stated:

- *“European countries are similar because we all believe in the same god and this does not cause conflicts”* (Polish, Male, Generation Y, 16 years working abroad).
- *“If I would have to work with a Muslim, that at 5p.m. has to leave because needs to pray, this would mean that I would have to work instead of him and this would impact my likeliness to work with him”* (Polish, Male, Boomer).
- *“Regarding my job, the religion is very important, because strongly affect the conscientious objection attitudes”* (Italian, Female, Millennial, 1 year living in UK).

These comments highlights that is not the cultural diversity itself that would affect the individual's attractiveness to an employer, but rather than the religion of the diverse individuals would affect their choices about working in a multicultural environment.

It is possible to conclude that in Europe, cultural distances are not perceived as very wide, therefore if multicultural communication focus on European cultural diversity this would create attraction or neutrality of the potential candidates towards the employer. Another important consideration that emerged from the qualitative research and has to be made is that distance in terms of religions would more likely have a negative effect on employer attractiveness.

Anyway, there is evidence that different cultures affect some aspects of individuals perceptions. Indeed, when asked what is the major fear of working in a multicultural environment, one respondent stated *“I would be afraid by the fact that some individuals may believe in another religion than mine and thus would have different ways of behaving and I prefer a more stable working environment”*(Polish, Male, Boomer).

Furthermore, another respondent stated *“If I would search for a job abroad I would choose for a multicultural working environment but mostly because in this way I would feel less excluded and more secure”*(Polish, Female, Generation X, 26 years living in Italy).

Stability is sign of high uncertainty avoidance. In that case both the respondents were polish and polish culture is characterized by a very high uncertainty avoidance index.

Another answer that clearly highlights the influence of the culture dimensions is the following *“Multiculturalism would create attraction, because globalization is happening and is the future. The integration that is starting now inside the companies represents the future”* (Italian, Male, Boomer). This statement strongly reflects the long-term orientation value, moderately high in the Italian society.

An interesting finding is that this connections with cultural dimensions has been mainly observed and perceived in the answers of older generations (Boomers and Generation X).

This could signal that older generations, because of the different historical moment they grow up, identified with less globalization and higher borders between countries, absorbed most of the culture of their countries. While younger generations, because of more external influences, absorbed less these values. For that reasons an analysis of the generations would be made in the next paragraph.

4.3 Generations analysis

When looking for differences among generations, the theory in chapter three suggest that multiculturalism would have no effect on older generations but will attract younger generations because they seek for a dynamic and innovative working environment that diversity would foster.

When asked “If you would look for a job in your country now, would you decide for a company with national colleagues, a company with multicultural colleagues or you would not have any preference?”, the only respondents that answered that they would rather choose for national colleagues were Boomers. Moreover, the individuals for which homogeneous and multicultural workplace offer the same growth opportunities were only Boomers and Generation X.

Millennials and Generation Z all responded that a multicultural working environment provide better growth opportunities because:

- *“You can learn to see the things with a different perspective”* (Italian, Female, Millennial).
- *“A multicultural environment offers more opportunities of personal and professional growth because gives the opportunity to freely exchange ideas”* (Italian, Female, Millennial, 1 year living in UK).
- *“A multicultural environment is exciting because allows you to go out of our comfort zone and understand new perspectives and point of views”* (Italian, Female, Generation Z).
- *“You could learn more people and their different ways of being”* (Polish, Male, Generation Z).

Furthermore, even if there are other respondents belonging to Generation X and Boomers that think that a multicultural working environment provides better opportunities of growth than a homogenous one, interestingly and differently from younger generations, all of them mainly focused on the fact that a multicultural environment would give the opportunity to learn new working methods and competencies.

Therefore, the assumptions made in chapter three are confirmed by the qualitative research. Indeed, it is true that older generations would be mainly indifferent to cultural diversity, thus neither attracted nor alienated. The findings also suggest that different generations see different benefits in working in a multicultural environment.

Indeed, while Boomers and Generation X highlighted the practical benefits of learning new working methods, Millennials and Generation Z focused mainly on the benefits deriving from exchange of ideas, understanding new perspectives and going out of the comfort zone.

Another element that emerged from the qualitative analysis is that there is a tendency of the older generations to be worried about the multiculturalism because of lack of the language knowledge. Indeed, they grow up in a different era, where English teaching was not widespread. This further confirms the assumptions that older generations are not intolerant but because they grew up in a homogeneous environment, they lack information and international influences. Thus, they are more afraid when approaching multiculturalism, but this does not mean that they will reject it. Indeed, when asked to express whether they would find easy or difficult to work with a person of a different culture, a boomer answered that *“it is a difficult question, because I do not know other cultures, so I cannot even imagine how would it be to work with someone different”* (Polish, Female, Boomer). Other respondents stated, *“I see that I am more open than my mother, but not because she is racist, but just because she does not know other cultures”* (Italian, Female, Generation X) and *“older generations have seldom been abroad, so they lack the knowledge about other cultures and because of that they are more closed than younger generations”* (Polish, Male, Millennial, 16 years working abroad).

Indeed, Hofstede in an interview stated *“I would say that understanding of other languages is almost a necessary, albeit insufficient, condition for the understanding of the phenomenon of culture”* (Powell, 2006). Also, during the interviews, has been observed that Boomers had difficulties in formulating any thoughts about culturally diverse individuals because they do not know them.

When respondents were asked if different generations have different degree of openness, all of them strongly agreed or agreed. Most of them provided the same reason already assumed in chapter three and therefore:

- *“Younger generations accept more likely diversity because they grow up in an international environment”* (Polish, Female, Generation X, 26 years living in Italy).
- *“Generations differ in their aspirations and ways of processing information. The differences are the results of the increased opportunities that younger generations have because of the fact that nowadays the world is more boundaryless”* (Polish, Female, Millennial, 8 years living in Ireland).

- *“Younger generations are more open because they grow up in a multicultural environment, while older generations grow up in a more homogeneous and conservative environment”* (Italian, Male, Generation Z).
- *“Since they are born, Millennials and Generation Z are affected by influences of other cultures, this is why they are more open.”* (Italian, Female, Millennial, 1 year living in UK).
- *“Younger generations have more opportunities of contacts with foreign cultures because of the increasingly efficient methods of communications, thus they are more open because they have more opportunities to meet other cultures and learn about them”* (Italian, Female, Generation Z).
- *“Older generations are more attached to the past because they were educated and growth up in a different world. Younger generations are more open because have more opportunities to deal with other cultures and learn about it”* (Polish, Male, Boomer).

The statements highlight a clear distinction between generations, which is mainly based on the different degree of international experience opportunities and external influences.

Globalization is breaking down the walls that individuals perceive between countries and younger generations are increasingly developing an international mindset. Qualitative research confirms this evidence, in fact, when asked if individuals from different cultures share different values, behaviours and attitudes, only Generation Z respondents stated that they do not think there are huge differences. This finding is in line with what authors predict and thus that new technologies will make societies more and more similar (Hofstede, 2011).

In conclusion, differences among generations exist and are evident. The main reason for that is the environment in which individuals grow up. With the spread of globalization younger generations had the opportunity to absorb external influences and be more informed about other cultures. Therefore, Millennials and Generation Z are attracted by a multicultural environment, while Generation X could be both attracted and indifferent. Boomers are not discouraged by cultural diversity but could feel anxiety because they lack knowledge about others.

4.4 Educational level analysis

Does education have any impact on the acceptance of cultural diversity? The assumption that was made in the third chapter, was that the higher the educational level, the more open an individual is because has an enhanced knowledge and view the world in a more informed and objective way. On the other side, it was also assumed that in countries with high power distance, where there is inequality and less freedom of information and decision, education may strongly influence individuals' values and perceptions. Indeed, professors could project their own values of a high-power distance society on students, leading to a contrary effect and thus intolerance towards cultural diversity.

According to this assumption, in Poland, because the society is characterized by moderately high-power distance, the more educated individuals should be more intolerant of cultural diversity. This statement is not confirmed by the qualitative research.

Indeed, the respondents did not show strong variations in the answers based on their educational level, neither in Poland, nor in Italy.

The only element of difference was that when asked in which environment they would more likely work, high school educated respondents said that they have no preference, while university students said mostly that they would choose for a multicultural environment. A reason for that could be that when studying at the university, it is more likely to meet with individuals from other cultures and therefore capture the benefits that a multicultural environment offers.

When respondents were asked to give their opinion if educational level affect individuals openness to cultural diversity, very different and contrasting answers have been recorded.

Some individuals stated that education has not impact at all, and that is mainly about the values transmitted by the family. One respondent stated, *“Is not about the level of education, but about the parents' teachings. If the family taught the children to be open, travel, learn new cultures then the person will be more open. If, on the contrary, the parents taught discriminatory behaviours, this person would be more closed”* (Female, Polish, Generation X, 26 years living in Italy, high school qualification).

Others, said that education affect diversity because it enhances the general knowledge:

- *“Although I think education level has low impact on openness, education allows to study other cultures and therefore to know more about them and thus be more comfortable with others”* (Italian, Female, Generation Z, high school qualification).
- *“Higher education reflects higher knowledge and more elaborated way of processing information”* (Polish, Female, Boomer, bachelor qualification).
- *“Higher education allows better access to information and better use of it”* (Polish, Male, Boomer, high school qualification).

Finally, a respondent stated that *“education may influence the way you see the world but does not have a strongly positive or negative effect on your openness to diversity. It could influence the individual in both ways”* (Polish, Male, Millennial, 16 years working abroad, high school qualification).

Therefore, based on the qualitative analysis it is not possible to confirm that a higher education enhances the individual openness to cultural diversity. Probably, the most likely conclusion is that education has an impact on the way individuals process information. It affects the way of making considerations about other cultures, but the effect could be positive as well as negative.

In conclusion, level of education may have an impact on employer attractiveness when the workforce is multicultural but is not possible to reliably and univocally predict the positive or negative attitude.

4.5 Additional investigations: gender analysis

Hofstede states that women compared to men carry different symbols, hero images, rituals and values (Hofstede, Hofstede & Minkov, 2010). The questions that naturally arises is whether gender affect the potential candidates' attraction to a multicultural company.

So far, only few studies researched gender attitudes to diversity and no study has investigated gender perceptions about cultural diversity. The few findings available are reported below.



Figure 22 - Male vs Female intolerance levels (Marty, 2019)

Figure 22, shows the level of intolerance toward different aspects of diversity of men and women. The graph highlights that men are more intolerant of women; therefore, a natural assumption would be that overall women are more open to diversity and thus would more likely be attracted than men to a multicultural working environment.

However, this assumption cannot be made, because another study reports that group-focused enmity differs little between men and women (Zick, Küpper, & Hövermann, 2011), as showed in figure 23.

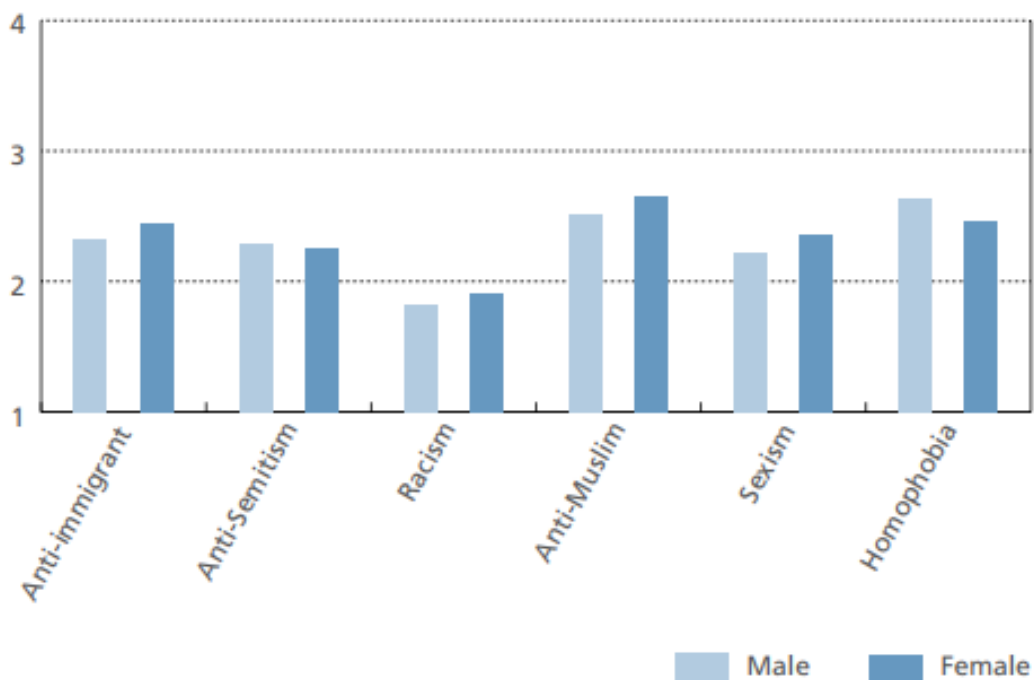


Figure 23 - Social prejudice in Europe by gender (means)
(Zick, Küpper, & Hövermann, 2011)

Furthermore, the qualitative research, does not bring evidence of any differences among the answers of different genders.

The only interesting observation is that when respondents were asked in which working environment, they would more likely choose to work in their country, all the respondents that answered that they would prefer a homogeneous national workforce were men. However, this does not bring any evidence, because those individuals were Boomers and as stated before, generation has a strong impact on openness. Therefore, the answer probably was affected by the generation and not by the gender of the respondents.

When respondents were asked whether gender has an impact on level of openness, half of them stated that has no impact, while the other half said that has impact but only in some cultures outside Europe.

Indeed, one respondent stated, “Women of other cultures, for example the Arabic countries, are more closed because they are used to some values based on their religions” (Polish, Female, Generation X, 26 years living in Italy).

Interestingly, another respondent stated exactly the opposite, saying that *“Men are more racist while women are more tolerant. I think this is because traditionally in some cultures, e.g. Muslims, men are more closed. But of course, this is valid only for some countries”* (Polish, Female, Millennial, 8 years living in Ireland).

Therefore, also regarding gender, contrasting are the opinions, and is very difficult to make assumptions.

One respondent stated that, *“women are more tolerant, because they have a different way to elaborate information. Men are more practical and come faster to conclusions while women are more thoughtful”* (Italian, Female, Boomer).

Indeed, in the interviews emerged that the respondents that said that they are intolerant to some specific cultures were men. In fact, those respondents stated that they are in general open, but less tolerant to some specific cultures because of a bad experience with an individual belonging to that culture. This statement would reflect the more pragmatic approach of the men to the various circumstances.

In conclusion, is not possible to state that women or men are more open and tolerant. But it is possible to confirm that men attached high values to past bad experiences and are guided by the events happened in the past when making future decisions.

4.6 Additional investigations: international experience analysis

Qualitative research demonstrates a clear trend for respondents with international experience. Indeed, most of the respondents that would feel indifferent about working with individuals from other cultures have an international background.

Those respondents are indifferent, because they live in a country that is multicultural and as a consequence where the working environment is characterized by cultural diversity.

Indeed, multiculturalism is assimilated by the respondents with international background as something normal. Respondents stated:

- *“Ireland is a very multicultural environment, characterized not only by people of different cultures but also by companies from different nations. Here multiculturalism in the workplace is normal”* (Polish, Female, Millennial, 8 years in Ireland).
- *“I am constantly working with Norwegians and Danish and I have no problems of working with other cultures. In Norway there are so many culturally different employees, that I do not care anymore with who am I working”* (Polish, Male, Generation X, 1,5 years working abroad).

Finally, it is possible to conclude that international experience enhances the acceptance of diversity and therefore a communication about multiculturalism would not attract but would have a neutral effect on those individuals that are already used to live and work in such an environment.

4.7 Conclusions

The qualitative research allowed to verify the assumptions made in chapter two and three and to investigate some elements where the existing theory is latent.

Starting from the cultural dimensions' analysis, it has been made possible to capture some trends characterizing the European context.

Firstly, respondents do not think that huge differences across European countries exist in terms of culture. For that reason, they positively accept cultural diversity within Europe. Different is the case of extra European countries, but this is mainly guided by the fact that those countries have different religions and religion distance affect the openness to diversity.

Secondly, older individuals, probably because of the context they were educated and grow up, absorbed more than younger individuals, the values, behaviors and attitudes of their culture.

This is why the qualitative analysis proceed to investigate generations. The evidence showed that strong differences exist among generations and those differences affect their attraction to a multicultural environment.

Indeed, the findings suggest that for Boomers multiculturality causes anxiety, because they are not used to cultural diversity and they lack knowledge about foreign cultures and languages.

Later, the educational level analysis has been performed and the qualitative research showed that education affect individuals' openness to diversity, but the effect cannot be univocally predicted, thus, they may be positive as well as negative.

Finally, some analysis has been conducted based on gender and international experience differences. The qualitative data highlighted that is not possible to make assumptions on how gender affect individuals' openness towards cultural diversity but that, instead, international experience has a strong impact. Indeed, after working and living abroad, individuals are used to a multicultural environment and therefore take diversity for granted, meaning that multiculturality would not be an element of attraction for them.

CONCLUSIONS

The aim of this work was to investigate how a culturally diverse working environment affect individuals' perceptions about employer attractiveness.

The topic is of crucial relevance because today's business environment and social context is characterized by wide multiculturalism. Moreover, the focus on human resources is gaining in importance as it has been demonstrated by various studies and reports, widely presented and discussed in chapter one, that the right talents could bring many benefits to the company and as a result lead to company success and business growth.

However, very few studies so far have been conducted in this field. Most of them focused on an analysis of the effect of diversity communication in job advertisements for whites compared to black individuals. No studies have been conducted in Europe and until now none has investigated whether diversity, intended as cultural diversity, is a good employer branding strategy. Therefore, this work aimed at analyzing aspects that are still latent in the common literature.

Chapter one was designed to present the context and the relevance of the phenomena on company performance. Indeed, all the benefits that diversity could bring to the companies have been identified, in chapter one, through an analysis of reports and relevant literature. Overall, the benefits that emerged are an enhanced reputation, higher employees' attraction and retention rate, better decision making, innovation and creativity and enhanced customer focus. All these elements affect each other and further strengthen their influence.

In order to benefit from the advantages of diversity, a company has to be able to increase representation levels of diverse talent, gain an understanding of where in their organizations diversity matters most, and create truly inclusive organizational culture (Hunt, Prince, Dixon-Fyle, & Yee, 2018). This is a challenging process that requires a lot of time and resources.

Moreover, even if many are the companies trying to put in place efficient diversity policies, at the end, looking at the European level, diversity is not widespread. Instead, as illustrated in chapter one and three, discrimination is diffuse and potential candidates could be driven by prejudice in selecting their future working environment. This is an important factor to consider because in this way the company may lose access to valuable human resources.

Considering that managing diversity is challenging and prejudice exist, it was interesting to understand whether cultural diversity is a good employer branding strategy.

Firstly, in chapter two, an analysis of the theoretical frameworks of the Attraction-Selection-Attrition model and the Person-Organization fit theory has been made. What emerged was that individuals are attracted by organizations that reflects their own values and personalities. Moreover, the actual composition of the workforce is a driver in attracting potential candidates because similarity facilitates social interaction and provides a sense of comfort (Devendorf & Highhouse, 2008). This means that a homogeneous environment would foster homogeneity while a diverse environment would foster diversity. The reasons of that is that people choose the working environment that they feel more similar to how they classify themselves. If the individuals identify with the majority, they will more likely seek to stay in the same environment, while if they identify with the minority, they will probably more likely stay in a diverse environment as they will feel a sense of belonging to others who like them live in a nation culturally diverse from their own.

In the second chapter also the cultural dimensions models of Hofstede and Trompenaars have been presented. Hofstede's model was used in order to understand how the values of cultural dimensions could affect individual openness to diversity, while Trompenaars' model was used to understand the distance in terms of meaning and interpretations that exists between cultures.

After understanding the concepts of employer branding, attraction values, culture and cultural distance, an analysis of the concrete elements that could affect individuals' perceptions towards multiculturalism has been made in chapter three.

Overall, the formulation of assumptions was not a simple task, because the current literature is not exhausting regarding the cultural diversity thematic. This is also the reason way only three elements have been identified and analyzed in chapter three and those are: cultural dimension, generation and educational level.

The qualitative research aimed at verifying the assumptions made in chapter three, regarding the influences of cultural dimensions, generations and educational level. Moreover, two additional dimensions have been analyzed: gender and international experience.

The findings confirmed the assumptions made about cultural dimensions, highlighting that cultural dimensions affect the individuals' perceptions about different situations and circumstances, but it also emerged that differences in religion play even a more important role when defining distance between individuals. Indeed, while all the respondents were comfortable with other cultures, they showed to not be tolerant towards other religions.

Another finding that emerged from the qualitative analysis is that the individuals reflecting the most the cultural dimensions of a country are older generations. The reason for that could be that older generations, because of the different historical moment they grow up, identified with less globalization and higher borders between countries, absorbed most of the culture of their countries. While younger generations, because of more external influences, absorbed less these values.

Furthermore, qualitative data brought strong evidence of differences among generations. Millennials and Generation Z are curious and interested in cultural diversity because they grow up in a strongly globalized environment that influenced their way of looking at the others. According to the findings, Generation X could be both attracted and indifferent about cultural diversity. While Boomers would be characterized by feelings of anxiety because they lack knowledge about other cultures and languages. However, this does not mean that they are not open to cultural diversity.

Regarding educational level, the qualitative research did not confirm its positive effect on cultural diversity acceptance. The findings suggested that education has an effect on individuals' tolerance, but this cannot be univocally defined.

The additional analysis about gender and international experience, showed that gender does not have any impact, while international experience has a huge impact on cultural diversity attraction. Indeed, individuals with international experience live and work in multicultural environment therefore they take diversity for granted and thus are neutral towards employees that promote cultural diversity.

It is possible to conclude that overall, on a European level, cultural diversity is a good employer branding strategy because it allows to attract young generations that would represent the leaders of tomorrow. Moreover, the effect on other individuals is not of alienation but of neutrality, meaning that multicultural companies would not lose potential candidates as those individuals would be indifferent between homogeneous and multicultural companies.

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