Alumni Exchange: How Liberals and Conservatives View Diversity Differently

November 8, 12pm CT
There are few words in the English language that are both as ubiquitous *and* contentious as Diversity
A wide array of disciplines and organizations call for increased diversity...

Diversity in science: next steps for research group leaders

Many institutions publicly pledged their commitment to inclusion after Black Lives Matter protests this year. And researchers emphasize the need to maintain momentum.

Business

Wall Street says it cares about diversity. But most big banks won’t share complete workforce data.

We asked the 15 largest U.S. banks for workforce race and gender data that they already report to the federal government. Only two shared the full numbers.

Politics

These two charts show the lack of diversity in the House and Senate

America Needs More Teachers of Color and a More Selective Teaching Profession

By Lisette Partelow, Angie Spong, Catherine Brown, and Stephenie Johnson September 14, 2017, 9:00 am

The New York Times

In 30 Years, Little Progress for U.S. Sports Leagues on Leadership Diversity

By Gillian R. Brassil and Eleanor Lutz  Dec. 23, 2020

Fact Sheet: The Need for Diversity in the Health Care Workforce
'Reviews Matter.' Brie Larson Calls for More Diversity in Movie Reviews With Speech

Fonda says Hollywood needs more diversity after Globes honor

By JONATHAN LANDRUM JR. February 28, 2021
The Top 4 Benefits and Advantages of Diversity Training in the Workplace

Fostering Inclusion and Diversity

Lead diverse and inclusive teams that outperform their peers
The US is becoming increasingly diverse with each passing year.
Despite the Nation-wide emphasis on diversity, there is little political and governmental agreement on diversity issues and policy...

Problem: Despite obvious importance of diversity, policy and proactive change is stifled
Why this huge divide? One possibility...

- Increase in political and affective polarization: Liberals and Conservatives are increasingly divided on political issues, and increasingly dislike each other
  - Morally convicted about attitudes
  - Social media networks
  - Thus leading to: Inherently different attitudes towards diversity
Another possibility...

• What if Democrats and Republicans have different *understandings* of the meaning of diversity?
• Different understandings may lead to different attitudes and behaviors
• If people have different understandings and attitudes towards diversity, then it is possible diversity is not a unidimensional concept, but multidimensional...
  • Diversity is not a single thing, but is composed of many subcomponents
Why differences in understanding?

• Liberals and conservatives possess different Prototypes of diversity

• Prototypes: object or concept that represents the most ideal object for a category

• knowledge, culture, and life experiences determine how prototypes are formed

• Conservatives and Liberals exposed to different cultural, news, and social media worlds
  • And therefore possess different understandings...
Thus, we tested the possibility that...

1. Diversity is not a unidimensional concept—it is multidimensional

2. People have different attitudes towards different types of diversity...

3. These different attitudes may, in part, be rooted in different understandings of diversity
The Dimensionality of diversity: What is the structure of diversity attitudes? Do people differentiate between different types of diversity?

Ideological differences in these attitudes?
Study 1 Methods

P’s rated how much diversity they wanted in their neighborhood on a set of community features

- N = 1,001, yourmorals.org
- Political orientation, 7 pts, very liberal – very conservative

In considering ideal places to live, how similar or different would you want the residents to be, compared to yourself? For each issue, on a scale of 1 to 6, click on the button corresponding to how much you want people in your community to be similar to you. A "1" means you want nobody to be the same as you, while a "6" means you want everyone to be the same as you.
Study 1 Methods

• 23 different community features, including:
Study 1

Hypotheses:

Diversity attitudes will be multidimensional

Liberals would report more favorable attitudes towards diversity than conservatives

• Factor analysis
Study 1 Results
• Are diversity attitudes multidimensional?
  • Two factors emerged:
    • Demographic diversity
    • Viewpoint diversity
Ideological differences in demographic and viewpoint diversity?

$r = .19^{***}$

$r = -.22^{***}$
Study 1: Diversity is multidimensional, Liberals more tolerant of demographic diversity, conservatives more tolerant of viewpoint diversity

Study 2: Replicate Study 1, and also compare peoples’ attitudes towards the general concept of diversity with attitudes towards these two subtypes
Study 2: Methodology

P’s rated attitudes towards the community features, and attitude toward general concept

- N = 1,112 Amazon Mechanical Turk workers
- Political orientation, very liberal – very conservative

### Social class

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Everyone is the same</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>Everyone is different</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

How diverse would you want your ideal community to be?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Not at all diverse</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>Extremely diverse</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Study 2 Hypotheses

• Diversity will be composed of at least two dimensions, viewpoint and demographic.
• Conservatives will be more tolerant of viewpoint diversity, and liberals will be more tolerant of demographic diversity.
• Liberals will be more likely to support general diversity than conservatives.
• Attitudes towards general diversity will not predict attitudes towards the specific diversity types.
Study 2: Results

• 2 dimensions!
• Broad diversity?

\[ b = -0.18^{***} \]
\[ r = -0.20^{***} \]
\[ r = 0.11^{**} \]
Ideological differences in relationship between broad diversity and specific diversity

- Republicans: $b = 0.32^{***}$
- Democrats: $b = 0.29^{***}$

- Republicans: $b = 0.41^{***}$
- Democrats: $b = -0.05$
**Study 2 Recap:** Diversity attitudes are not one thing, and there are ideological differences in attitudes towards general diversity and specific types of diversity.

**Study 3:** Could these differences in attitudes stem, in part, from differences in understanding?
Study 3
Hypotheses

• Understandings of diversity will be multidimensional, will be composed of at least demographic and viewpoint subtypes
• Conservatives will rate viewpoint features as more relevant to diversity than liberals
• Liberals will rate demographic features as more relevant to diversity than conservatives
Study 3: Methodology

P’s rated the extent each feature was relevant to their understanding of diversity

- **N = 386**
- **23 Community features**

When you imagine a community with a lot of diversity, do you imagine there being a high variety in the number of children people have?

- **Political orientation**
- **Confirmatory factor analysis + Exploratory factor analysis**
Results

• Three factors!
What subtype do people overall perceive as most relevant to diversity?

\[ M = 6.46, \ SD = 1.13 \]

\[ M = 4.71, \ SD = 1.43 \]

\[ M = 4.67, \ SD = 1.91 \]
What do conservatives and liberals associate with diversity?

- For conservatives, diversity is associated with a positive correlation (r = 0.12*).
- For liberals, diversity is associated with a negative correlation (r = -0.11*).
- For both groups, diversity is associated with a significant positive correlation (r = 0.14**).
Study 3 Conclusions

Diversity is multidimensional! Demographic, viewpoint, and consumer subtypes

People perceive demographic as most central, followed by viewpoint and consumer subtypes

Ideological differences: Conservatives perceive viewpoint and consumer types to be more relevant to diversity compared to liberals

Liberals perceive demographic types to be more relevant to diversity than conservatives
Overall Conclusions

1. Diversity is multidimensional, at least 3 components: Demographic, Viewpoint, Consumer
2. Ideological differences in attitudes towards diversity subtypes
   1. Viewpoint diversity → Conservatives
   2. Demographic diversity → Liberals
3. Ideological differences in understanding of diversity
   1. Viewpoint diversity → Conservatives
   2. Demographic diversity → Liberals
   3. Consumer diversity → Conservatives
Implications?

We are speaking two different languages! Policy implications

Dimensionality: Diversity interventions

Methodological implications
Future Directions

• Liberals and conservatives possess overlap...how can we grow more?
• Why do liberals and conservatives have these different understandings?
  • Geographic locations?
• Different perceptions: Is this true for other words and concepts?
Thank you so much!