

Continuities and discontinuities in the workplace: A study on minoritized professionals

Efterpi Emmanouilidou (5345073)

Faculty of Social and Behavioral Sciences, Utrecht University

Assessor 1: Larike Bronkhorst

Assessor 2: Brianna Kennedy

17-06-2021

Word count: 7.980

Abstract

In recent years, a plea for diversity in the workplace has emerged. Despite legislation that promotes diversity, organizations are still dominated by certain majorities. Employees that belong to minoritized groups are often called to assimilate to majority norms and expectations. This is a situation that affects workplace boundaries for minoritized groups, who experience and create continuity and discontinuity while transitioning between their workplace and personal life. This research answers the research question: What types of continuity and discontinuity do minoritized professionals experience and create between their workplace and personal life? To address this issue, 15 professionals from minoritized groups participated in semi-structured interviews followed by a thematic analysis. Findings indicate that there are common patterns of continuity and discontinuity based on the broad categories of given continuity, intended continuity, given discontinuity and intended discontinuity. This research provides insights on how minoritized professionals react to workplace boundaries and their efforts to create coherence.

Keywords: continuity, discontinuity, minoritized professionals, thematic analysis, types

Continuities and discontinuities in the workplace: A study on minoritized professionals

In 2018, companies with above-average total diversity, regarding nation of origin, gender and age in their management teams reported 19% higher revenues than companies that did not follow the same path (Lorenzo et al., 2018). Professionals from minority groups were key factors to create more innovative solutions that boosted the income of those companies. Even though organizations can benefit from diversity (Chrobot-Mason & Thomas, 2002), employees who belong in minoritized groups are confronted with prejudice, discrimination, and pressures to assimilate to majority workplace norms (Van Laer & Janssens, 2014). The pressures to assimilate and the stereotyping they face creates boundaries between their workplace and their personal life (Van Laer & Janssens). Consequently, even though minoritized professionals can influence an organization's success (Bell & Nkomo, 2001, Thomas, 1997), they struggle to be accepted and feel comfortable in majority-dominated organizations.

In recent years, studies have shed light upon the issues that minoritized professionals face in the workplace and their effort to create coherence. Van Laer and Janssens (2014) explained how minoritized professionals merge characteristics of home and workplace to transition between them. Chrobot-Mason and Thomas (2002) highlighted that organizations that value assimilation are incapable of retaining employees who belong in minoritized groups. Even though these studies were specifically oriented to the workplace context, they focused only on the experiences of minoritized professionals as a whole. There is still a gap in the literature regarding the common patterns that minoritized professionals follow while transitioning between workplace and personal life and their connection to workplace boundaries.

This research focuses on the concepts of continuity and discontinuity regarding minoritized professionals. Continuity and discontinuity are relevant to boundaries and how

individuals experience and cross them (Akkerman & Bakker, 2011). Continuity suggests that transitions between contexts are easy, while discontinuity suggests that transitions between contexts are hard because of rigid or even insurmountable boundaries (Akkerman & Bakker, 2011, Bronkhorst & Akkerman, 2011). Individuals can experience continuity and discontinuity while transitioning between contexts and can also create it (Akkerman & Bakker, 2011).

The aim of the present work is to indicate the types of continuities and discontinuities minoritized professionals experience and create between their workplace and personal lives and distinguish possible patterns amongst these types. Unravelling these types of continuities and discontinuities can provide insight on the boundaries that minoritized professionals face, and the ways organizations and individuals can help cross those boundaries. In what follows, first a theoretical framework based on an analysis of relevant literature will be presented followed by the methods of data collection and analysis for this study.

Theoretical Framework

Minoritized professionals

From the first attempts to define what constitutes a *minority*, the term connoted discrimination and inequity (Little, 2014). In 1945, sociologist Louis Wirth defined a minority group as: *Any group of people who, because of their physical or cultural characteristics, are singled out from the others in the society in which they live for differential and unequal treatment, and who therefore regard themselves as objects of collective discrimination.* Recent definitions of minorities emphasize on the diversity of those populations (Little, 2014). The term minority includes people with distinguishing physical or cultural traits, like skin colour or language, people of different nationality than the majority of a certain group, members of the

LGBTQ community and religious practitioners whose faith is not widely practiced where they live.

Apart from its societal definitions, the term minority also extends in the workplace, as certain groups of people are still underrepresented in professional environments (Dipboye & Colella, 2013). Organizations tend to attract employees who display similarities to their existing majority, putting minority employees at a disadvantage in selection procedures (Hofhuis et al., 2016). Professionals of a different race, culture, gender or sexual orientation from the dominant majority are often *minoritized*, meaning that they are defined as minorities in the workplace (Thacker & Minton, 2021, Bryan, 2018). In this paper, the term minoritized professionals or minoritized employees will be used to refer to any group of individuals different from the dominant majority of employees in their workplace in terms of race, culture (for ex. religion), gender and sexual orientation.

Workplace discrimination

A discussion of minoritized employees in the workplace inherently involves questions of dominance and barriers that exist for certain groups because of discrimination (Chrobot-Mason & Thomas, 2002). In recent years, anti-discrimination laws aim to protect minoritized professionals from workplace discrimination, obstruction of their upward mobility and infringement of their rights (Chrobot-Mason & Thomas, 2002, Colella & King, 2018). However, there is still evidence to suggest that minority employees experience discrimination in various forms. This discrimination is considered an important stressor, as it influences their ability to find work-life balance (Van Laer & Janssens, 2014, Beech et al., 2012).

In the most simplistic terms, discrimination refers to unequal treatment of individuals or certain groups (Christie & Allport, 1954). Nowadays, discrimination has developed from a

blatant to a more subtle and everyday form (Van Laer & Janssens, 2011). Blatant discrimination is intentional (promoting only male employees, denying jobs to racial minorities), while subtle discrimination is often unintentional (jokes, incivility, avoidance) and resides in every day interactions (Lim et al., 2008, Dipboye & Colella, 2013). The unintentional character of subtle discrimination does not imply that it is less harmful than blatant discrimination (Dipboye & Colella, 2013).

The difference between blatant and subtle discrimination is mainly on recognizability and punishment (Colella & King, 2018). Blatant discrimination is easily documented and frowned upon in the modern society. Subtle discrimination is harder to recognize as a form of discrimination and is often not punishable by anti-discrimination legislation. Because of those characteristics, subtle discrimination is more prevalent in today's workplace. Minority employees are easily exposed to subtle discrimination, as they are recognized as "others", essentially different from the majority of employees in the workplace (Brief et al., 2005, Siebbers & Dennissen, 2014). This perception of otherness makes it difficult for minority employees to integrate in the workplace and creates boundaries between their jobs and everyday lives.

Microaggressions in the workplace

In recent years, the discussion around workplace discrimination highlights the issue of *microaggressions* towards minority employees. The first definition of microaggressions refers to them as: "brief and commonplace daily verbal, behavioral, or environmental indignities, whether intentional or unintentional, that communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative racial slights and insults toward people of color" (Sue et al., 2007, p. 271). This first definition specifically refers to racial discrimination, but the following years, both the popular use of the term and the

academic study have redefined microaggressions. The definition has expanded to include small, common, and sometimes ambiguous comments towards various groups that carry stigma and/ or power imbalance (Williams, 2020). Microaggressions constitute of “deniable acts of racism” that reinforce social inequity and pathological stereotypes (Williams, 2020, p. 2). Therefore, microaggressions are common to people of marginalized identities, like minorities.

In the workplace environment, microaggressions towards minority employees can represent not only subtle, but also blatant discrimination. They can be intentionally hurtful through name-calling, avoidance and exclusion of an employee or subtle and ambiguous, communicating a hidden insult (Pitcan et al., 2018). Furthermore, targets of microaggressions in the workplace often accept them without rebuffing (Williams, 2020). This happens because there is a power differential between parties and because targets often question themselves over being “too sensitive” towards a comment (Pitcan et al., 2018). Even though microaggressions can be hard to detect, they are associated with job dissatisfaction and detrimental effects on the mental health of employees, such as anxiety and depression (Williams, 2020). Microaggressions can influence the way employees view their workplace and result in strong boundaries between workplace and personal life.

Workplace boundaries and hybrid identities

Over the past decades, scholars have studied the challenges that minority professionals face when transitioning between contexts by employing the term *boundaries* (Poole, 1975, Engeström, Engeström & Kärkkäinen, 1995, Suchman, 1994). The term boundaries refers to social or cultural differences between contexts, differences that lead to discontinuities in action and interaction (Akkerman & Bakker, 2011). Minority professionals usually experience those

differences between the workplace and personal life context, as the majorities that still dominate today's workplace influence the norms and rules of behavior in the organizations.

As minority employees experience discontinuities in action and interaction, they feel the need to negotiate their work and non-work domains (Van Laer & Janssens, 2014). These professionals attempt to construct hybrid identities that allow them to adapt to different audiences and expectations, while maintaining their personality and sense of self. To construct hybrid identities, they go through a process of creating continuities between the workplace and personal life, by seeking sameness with certain groups and individuals (Van Laer & Janssens, 2014). Constructing hybrid identities also involves creating discontinuities between the workplace and personal life context by erecting self – others boundaries (Ellis & Ybema, 2010). Thus, minority employees overcome the differences between their workplace and personal life by creating relationships of similarity and difference.

Given and Intended Continuity

The notion of continuity and discontinuity is multifaceted and cannot be described in a unilateral manner. As minority employees shift through contexts they may experience continuities and discontinuities but also intend continuities and discontinuities (Bronkhorst & Akkerman, 2016; Van Laer & Janssens, 2014). Experiencing continuity suggests that one's transition between contexts is effortless and occurs naturally (i.e. given continuity), sometimes without even the person involved realizing it. Given continuity suggests that the sociocultural norms and the expectations that individuals experience between two contexts are similar (Bronkhorst & Akkerman, 2016). Thus, employees who experience continuity do not struggle when moving between workplace and personal life.

Continuity can also be created (i.e. intended continuity, Bronkhorst & Akkerman, 2016). Intended continuity involves all efforts designed to establish continuity between two contexts. People take action to form those practices when they experience manageable differences between two worlds and they feel that they can cross the boundaries and adjust (Phelan et al., 1991). Regarding professionals, the expectations they encounter in the workplace may differ slightly with respect to culture, ethnicity or other factors, but they are still able to adapt. When creating continuity, professionals “build bridges between two worlds” (Fisher & Atkinson-Grosjean, 2002, p. 463) and they become *brokers* (Akkerman & Bruining, 2016) as they seek ways to link and transfer practices from one context to another.

Given and Intended Discontinuity

Apart from continuity between contexts, people can also experience or even create discontinuity between their personal lives and workplace. Discontinuity in action and interaction occurs when the boundaries between the two contexts are rigid and hard to cross (Phelan et al., 1991). In some cases, the workplace encourages those boundaries, while in other cases employees choose to disconnect the two contexts (Van Laer & Janssens, 2014). Boundary crossing theory addresses two types of discontinuity: given and intended. Employees experience discontinuity (i.e. given discontinuity) when they feel that the expectations and socio-cultural norms in their workplace are drastically different from those at home (Bronkhorst & Akkerman, 2016). Professionals who experience discontinuity feel that their workplace and personal life are two distinct worlds (Phelan et al., 1991). They sense the need to adjust and reorient, but unlike people that create continuity and manage to cross boundaries, they find transitions hazardous. However, professionals that experience given discontinuity can cross boundaries under strict conditions (Phelan et al., 1991). Their success is mainly a matter of changes in the organization

(Crohbot-Mason & Thomas, 2002). Organizations that cultivate a diversity-culture and aim in inclusivity can help employees (re)establish continuity between contexts.

It is noteworthy that employees can also create discontinuity (i.e. intended discontinuity) between their workplace and personal life (Bronkhorst & Akkerman, 2016). Most organizations cling to unspoken norms of behavior and interaction, norms that are familiar to the dominant majority (Van Laer & Janssens, 2014). Professionals that deviate from those norms feel the need to assimilate and adjust to become “good employees”. They respond to that need by raising strong boundaries between their workplace and personal life identity, thus creating discontinuity amongst the two contexts (Van Laer & Janssens, 2014). When creating discontinuity, professionals create hybrid identities in the workplace by maintaining their sense of self, while at the same time disconnecting from the norms they follow in their private lives.

Present study

In recent years, researchers have stressed that minoritized employees face identity tensions in the workplace, a situation that leads them to create discontinuities between the workplace and their personal lives (Bell, 1990, Kammenou, 2008). However, our knowledge is limited regarding the types of continuities and discontinuities they experience and create while transitioning between workplace and personal life. Understanding these types can increase our understanding of how minority professionals can productively cross those boundaries and what organizations and individuals can do to support them.

This research is needed, as organizations that aim on inclusivity need to first understand the challenges that minority professionals face and create policies that allow these professionals to express their diversity in the workplace. Moreover, acknowledging the fact that workplace and home is not a continuum for many people, would raise our understanding and acceptance of

minorities and their efforts to assimilate. Based on the above, it is evident that this study has not only a scientific but also a societal relevance. Therefore, the research question is: *What types of continuities and discontinuities do minority professionals experience and create between their workplace and personal life?* The types of continuities and discontinuities that minority professionals experience and create are expected to show commonalities as described in the theoretical framework.

Method

Research Design

To answer the research question, I opted for a qualitative design with semi-structured interviews with minority professionals. The topic of research is relevant to the experiences of minority professionals and the boundaries they face in the workplace. It is a topic that requires from the respondent to share sensitive information, such as experiences with stereotyping and discrimination. Semi-structured interviews allow certain freedom for the respondents to express their experiences and create a feeling of empathy (Dearnley, 2005) and for this reason, they were considered suitable for this research.

Participants

The respondents were chosen through purposive sampling. This type of sampling is preferred in qualitative research (Patton, 2002) and ensures that respondents are chosen based on their qualities and their ability to give information (Etikan, 2016). The criterion of inclusion for participants was being a minority in their workplace. People that belong in racial, cultural (in terms of religious community) or gender minorities in the workplace took part in the interview process. For purposes of inclusion, people that define as LGBT members were also interviewed, as they are considered a vulnerable group in the workforce based on the European Union Agency

for Fundamental Rights in the Netherlands. All respondents for the interviews were employed individuals working at least 12 hours per week aged 25-55. The age choice was based on the majority of employed individuals in the Netherlands regarding jobs in organizations (Van Imhoff & Henkens, 1998). 15 respondents were sampled for this process. To ensure that communication was mutual, the sampled respondents were fluent English speakers, as the interviews were conducted in English.

Table 1

Interview Participants

Initial	Age	Profession	Minoritized based on
A.	29	project manager at clothing company	race
D.	27	software engineer in software company	race, sexual orientation
Di.	28	engineer intern in software company	race
G.	30	mechanical engineer in TU Delft	race
I.	27	project manager in telecommunications company	race, gender (woman)
M.	45	chemist in media company	gender (woman), sexual orientation
Ma.	27	learning designer in online educational platform	race, gender (woman)
Mar.	32	instructor at midwifery academy	sexual orientation
Mi.	29	social media manager for educational organization	race
N.	35	school secretary in vocational school	race, culture (religion)
No.	32	social worker in non-profit organization	race, culture (religion), refugee status

Initial	Age	Profession	Minoritized based on
S.	28	mechanical engineer in software company	race, culture (religion)
Sh.	28	mechanical engineer in automobile company	race, culture (religion)
S.	27	manager at multimedia company	race, sexual orientation
R.	38	social worker in non-profit organization	race, culture (religion), refugee status
V.	54	dentist in private clinic	race, gender (woman)

Instrumentation

As explained above, the instrument of data collection for this research was semi-structured interviews with minority professionals. Besides their potential regarding facilitating communication, semi-structured interviews are a versatile instrument for data collection that allows the interviewee to use individual verbal expressions (Rubin & Rubin 2005, Polit & Beck 2010). Moreover, they offer flexibility to the interviewer to improvise follow-up questions based on the participant's responses.

To structure the interviews an interview guide was formulated (Table 2, Appendix) based on the sensitizing concepts of given continuity and discontinuity and intended continuity and discontinuity of the theoretical framework. The theoretical framework serves as the structure and support for the rationale for the research, the problem statement, the purpose, the significance, and the questions (Grant & Onsaloo, 2017). This was the reason why the interview guide included questions relevant to the concepts presented in that segment. The interview guide did not include questions that explicitly touched upon the concepts of continuity and discontinuity to prevent bias in the responses. The questions were rather general, for example: *Are there any moments where you feel "singled-out" from colleagues in the workplace?* (given discontinuity)

and *Do you always feel “at home” in your workplace?* (given continuity). The questions were structured in a way that facilitated asking follow-up questions to encourage the interviewees to elaborate. All interviews were conducted online according to the social-distancing guidelines of RIVM due to the COVID-19 pandemic outbreak.

Procedure

All respondents in the interviews received an informational letter regarding the research and completed an online consent form created in Qualtrics (<https://www.qualtrics.com>) to participate in the procedure and consent to the audio recording of their answers (Statement of Consent, Appendix). The participants were also asked to provide an oral consent before starting the audio recording and were reminded of the research objective and the way their data would be used. For this research, the interviews had a 45-minute duration. After the interviews, the data were coded and analyzed.

Data analysis

The sensitizing concepts that this study focuses on are continuity and discontinuity in the workplace. In order to approach this topic, the data were analyzed through thematic data analysis. Thematic data analysis is used to minimally organize data and describe it in detail (Braun & Clark, 2006). Through thematic analysis the data are organized in themes and then broader categories. Thematic analysis is also used to define patterns. Therefore, it can be used to distinguish the common patterns in the types of continuities and discontinuities that minoritized professionals experience and create. The thematic analysis constituted of a first and second cycle coding as suggested by Saldaña (2021). The first cycle coding was an open coding procedure. In open coding the researcher first reads through the interview transcript and distinguishes parts that could serve as data (Glaser, 2016). Then each piece of data is interpreted and labelled based on

its meaning. For example, the segment: *The manager always helped me with the language, she is very easy going* was coded as: *Supportive manager* (Table 3, Appendix). The segment: *Someone made a joke about my sexuality. My colleagues immediately told him that this is inappropriate behavior* was coded as: *Support from colleagues* (Table 3, p.). The data were coded with the program NVivo. Using a program to analyze the results was preferred as it helps to keep a record of the codes and minimizes the possibilities of error.

After the open coding procedure, the second cycle analysis involves organizing the codes into themes based on the connections between them. For example, the coded segments above created the theme: *Workplace support*. Then, the themes are organized into broader categories based on their connections and meanings. In the present research, the broader categories were the sensitizing concepts of continuity (given and intended) and discontinuity (given and intended). The theme of *workplace support* along with other themes that connected with it in terms of meaning was organized into the category of *Given Continuity* (Table 3, p.). The analysis procedure was supported by creating a provisional coding scheme as a mind map and by keeping frequent memos during the process. Visualizing the coding scheme and keeping memos during the data analysis shows how codes are developed and helps the researcher making decisions about coding (Birks et al., 2008).

Validity and Reliability

In qualitative research ensuring validity and reliability is highly dependent on the researcher (Patton, 2014). Validity in qualitative research means “appropriateness” of the tools, processes, and data (Leung, 2015). For this reason, I chose to conduct a pilot interview on three participants from different minorities to improve the appropriateness of the interview instrument. Conducting pilot test to the interview instrument is suggested by scholars (Dikko, 2016,

Teijlingen & Hundley, 2001, Watson et al., 2007) as it can detect possible flaws at an early stage. The pilot interviews did not indicate changes in the initial interview guide. For this reason, they were added to the sample.

In quantitative research reliability exists when the results and the procedures are replicable (Leung, 2015). In qualitative research reliability cannot have the same meaning because as results are not numerical values. A qualitative research is reliable when the results are consistent with the procedure (Leung). In the present study, reliability is established through an audit trail. The audit trail was based on Akkerman's et al. (2006) audit procedure (Figure 1, Appendix) and was further examined by another researcher. For this process, the audit trail consisted of the transcribed interviews and the recordings, along with the codes from the NVivo software that was used for this research. After the auditor and auditee established the goals, roles and rules of the audit procedure, the auditor assessed the audit and negotiated with the auditee about discrepancies in the research. The auditor's report did not show any significant discrepancies in the research procedure and coding.

Results

The results of this research show the types of continuities and discontinuities that minority professionals experience and create while transitioning between their workplace and personal life. The themes of each broad category are the types of continuities and discontinuities and each theme translates into a pattern of continuity and discontinuity common between minoritized professionals. To further explain the results, the following segment includes quotes from the interviewees. Each quote is marked with the interviewee's initial shown on Table 1 (p. 12).

Given Continuity

The thematic analysis showed four themes regarding the way minority employees perceive given continuity (Table 3, p.19). The first theme is acceptance in the organization. This theme is a merge of themes that were relevant to the organization such as friendships in the organization, support from the organization and inclusivity. Employees mentioned how working in an organization that views diversity as an asset, provides support, facilitates friendships and accepts them, makes the boundaries between the workplace and personal life almost transparent. Employees that mentioned the importance of the organization also mentioned how the accepting environment helped them be themselves in their workplace:

In that company that I work now for, I am very, very comfortable and I can be myself.

Everything is very inclusive, so I can speak the way that I want I can dress the way that I want. Everything is open. (D.).

The second theme regarding perceived given continuity is *comfortability with personal identity*. This theme is relevant to the identity of the employees and how they see themselves in the workplace. Employees that referred to their identity mentioned how the way they see themselves creates a sense of safety and makes them feel that there are no boundaries between their workplace and personal life. Employees that mentioned that they feel safe with their identity highlighted that they are open to discuss their diversity in their workplace:

In my working life, you know, like, nowadays, I really love to explain to people and talk.

Talk to people about it, you know, like, I really had to come from a far place to have an identity like this, you know, that I feel really, that I'm okay with (N.).

The next theme that was brought upon was the theme of *assimilation after years of experience*. Employees who experience continuity from years of experience were used in being a minority in their workplace. These employees did not feel that there was a boundary between their

workplace and personal life because they already have internalized the norms of the majority and they were able to assimilate to these norms:

I would say that they feel quite comfortable. I think that there is a cultural difference between the way I grew up, and Dutch people. But I think that almost two years in, I have come to be able to work with different kinds of people and different kinds of nationality traits. So, it doesn't bother me, I don't get stressed anymore (I.).

The final theme that was organized into the given continuity category is the *normalized given discontinuity*. The common characteristic of employees who have normalized given discontinuity was that they perceived racist or discriminatory treatment as funny or normal. This treatment did not create boundaries between the workplace and their personal lives, as they felt that it is positive or that it should be expected:

There's always some funny sense of humour and associated stereotype. I mean, for instance they would expect me to cook curry, would you call that a stereotype? (S.).

I never got discriminated but regarding the job, there's always a discrimination that you can expect in any country. So, I don't hold it against me. Given a choice for a Dutch person and me for the same position, even if I'm more qualified for it, definitely they would prefer a Dutch person because it's easy to interact (Sh.).

Table 3*Given Continuity Themes*

Meaning Units	Open Codes	Themes	Category
<p>"In that company that I work now for, I am very, very comfortable and I can be myself. Everything is very inclusive, so I can speak the way that I want I can dress the way that I want. Everything is open."</p>	International environment helps creating friendships	Acceptance in the organization: Friendships in the organization, support from the organizations,	(Perceived) Given Continuity
	Helpful managers supported by colleagues	Inclusivity	
	Freedom in expressing and dressing, Realizing that there are other minorities in the organization Easy to be open		
<p>"In my working life, you know, like, nowadays, I really love to explain to people and talk. Talk to people about it, you know, like, I really had to come from a far place to have an identity like this, you know, that I feel really, that I'm okay with."</p>	Openly discussing about personal diversity in the workplace	Comfortability with personal identity	
	Feeling accepted from an early age		
<p>"I think that there is a cultural difference between the way I grew up, and Dutch people, for example. And but I think that almost two years in, I have come to be able to, to work with different kinds of people and different kinds of nationality traits. So, it doesn't bother me, I don't get stressed anymore. "</p>	Used to being in an all-male environment	Assimilation after years of experience	
	Working for years in international environment		
<p>"There's always some funny sense of humor and associated stereotype. I mean, for instance they would expect me to cook curry, would you call that a stereotype?"</p>	Perceiving stereotypical jokes as funny	Normalized given discontinuity	
	Perceiving assumptions of colleagues as funny		
	Accepting being discriminated in employment		

Intended Continuity

Regarding the category of intended continuity there were two main themes highlighted by the thematic analysis that showed how minoritized professionals create continuity between the workplace and their personal lives (Table 4, p. 21). Based on the first theme, minority professionals create continuity by *creating relationships of sameness* in the workplace. Employees mentioned how discussing their issues with people that also belong in minorities made them feel understood and created bonds:

It's easier for me to discuss about the things you mentioned with the other expats instead of the whole team. It's the understanding that happens. Even if we are not of the same culture, of course it's completely different culture and all these things, but I think there is a mutual understanding (M.).

The second theme showed that minority employees create continuity between their workplace and personal life by *transferring their diverse characteristics* in the workplace. These employees mentioned that the characteristic that made them different was something that they applied to their daily work to enrich it. They also mentioned that they challenged themselves to do that and that transferring their diverse characteristic to their workplace was also a way to represent the minority they belong to in a positive way:

A lot of things that that my religion says like being honest, that are my way of living and my work I think that can be a really add a lot of value in my working as an employee, you know. Of course, like all values like being honest, being fair, I think everyone should do that. But me as Muslim, I feel that I have to show the world that being a Muslim is not that scary (N.).

Table 4*Intended Continuity Themes*

Meaning Units	Open Codes	Themes	Category
“Maybe actually it's easier for me to discuss about the things you mentioned with the other expats instead of the whole team. It's the understanding that happens.”	Easier to discuss with other expats Discussing same sex relationships with homosexual colleague	Creating relationships of sameness	(Created) Intended Continuity
“Well, a lot of things that that my religious says or that I believe in are a lot of things like being honest...that are my way of living and my work I think that can be a really add a lot of value in my working as an employee, you know.”	Training students on same-sex relationship issues Communicating with empathy other towards minorities	Transferring diverse characteristic in the workplace	

Given Discontinuity

The given discontinuity category highlighted the patterns on how minority employees experience insurmountable boundaries between their workplace and personal life (Table 5, p. 24). The first theme of *rejection in the organization* shows that minority employees experience discontinuity when they do not feel accepted in the workplace. This theme is a merge of other themes relevant to the organization such as hard to make friends, perceived microaggressions and lack of inclusivity. It also contains issues such as feeling redundant and experiencing high expectations. Based on the interview data, the respondents expressed how not feeling accepted in their workplace could make them experience discontinuity. They identified the organization as a

workplace that discourages friendly relationships between employees and is homogenous in terms of population:

It was a big corporation. In that part is more, you know, faceless, if I can use this term like people were there, but they wouldn't connect in the next level (G.).

It is not an inclusive system; the vacancies are hard to find. It looks like they have some internal system or something in which they spread (M.).

Other employees mentioned that they experienced microaggressions in the workplace that connoted blatant or subtle discrimination:

You know, once in a while, someone would throw a joke like, okay, you know, leaving stuff with me while we're going to get food or whatever, and somebody would mention, okay, let's be careful, the Greek might steal it (I.). Two of my colleagues for four months, they tried to ignore me completely. I mean, if I said like, good morning, they would reply. But then the whole day they just act like I'm a shadow in the office (No.).

Employees also mentioned feeling redundant, feeling that even though they had a job in the organization, they were not preferred for the position and that they had to adjust to very high expectations. All employees that perceived given discontinuity as such, were women:

Well, apart from the fact that I think it's a very old factor, a part of the company that I'm working in, and maybe there are no preferring it, like women are not preferred or accepted. So that's also limiting (Ma.).

I think when it comes to especially the woman part in a field where you don't see a lot of women sometimes it feels that as a woman, you're expected to stand out more. And that creates an unnecessary pressure for us to perform better than the rest around us. Because

otherwise you get comments like, “Okay, why do we need 50% men and 50% women, if the women were good enough, they would be here now” (I.).

The second theme for the given discontinuity category was *boundaries without discrimination*. Minoritized employees mentioned how working in a workplace that they were simply not a “good fit” for created strong boundaries between workplace and personal life and made it hard to retain their positions. These boundaries were created in organizations where employees shared backgrounds, experiences or interests. The respondents mentioned that they felt singled-out but not discriminated against or stereotyped:

There has been a funny moment that I felt singled out sometimes because uh, in my year of people that got hired in the same scheme at the same time, all nine of these people have lived and studied in the UK. So, they have a lot of the times common topics of discussion that I don't know about, or common jokes that I don't get (A.).

I felt-singled out. I used to work for a company that created sports software and I'm not a big fan of sports, but many times the conversations would be around sports and the team-building events would be around sports. And me as not a big fan of sports. I couldn't participate (Di.).

Table 5*Given Discontinuity Themes*

Meaning Units	Open Codes	Themes	Category
<p>"It was a big corporation. In that part is more, you know, faceless, if I can use this term like people were there, but they wouldn't connect in the next level."</p> <p>"Two of my colleagues for four months, they tried to ignore me completely. I mean, if I said like, good morning, they would reply. But then the whole day they just act like I'm a shadow in the office."</p>	<p>Colleagues avoiding friendships in the workplace, cold corporate environment</p> <p>excluded from meetings, completely ignored, receiving racist comments</p> <p>No diversity in the team, Hard for non-natives to find vacancies</p> <p>Women not preferred in the organization, underrepresentation</p> <p>Women expected to work harder</p>	<p>Rejection in the organization: Hard to make friends, Microaggressions, Lack of inclusivity</p> <p>Feelings of redundancy, Very high expectations</p>	(Perceived) Given Discontinuity
<p>"In my year of people that got hired in the same scheme at the same time, all nine of these people have lived and studied in the UK. So, they have a lot of the times common topics of discussion that I don't know about, or common jokes that I don't get."</p>	<p>Feeling singled-out from inside jokes</p> <p>Unable to find common interests with colleagues</p>	<p>Boundaries without discrimination</p>	

Intended Discontinuity

The final themes applied to the intended discontinuity category and showed how minority employees create boundaries between their workplace and personal life (Table 6, p. 26). The first theme shows that minority employees *change a characteristic* in the workplace. For example, they choose to moderate their tone of voice or they general behavior to be accepted. Employees that chose to change characteristics mentioned that they needed to do so, in order to be well-respected or to assimilate:

I behave in a more cis-male way when we have important meetings. I feel that my manager prefers alpha-male characteristics. He is apathetic in meetings and becomes competitive. When having an important meeting I have to be very straight forward to my points and very assertive for my manager to listen to my ideas (Sh.).

I felt that I had to tone-down my voice. As a Mediterranean, I felt that I was too loud and expressive and that I had to make my voice more, more soothing in a way (S.).

The last theme that was prominent regarding intended discontinuity was *avoiding discussions*. Minority employees mentioned that they would avoid certain discussions or disagreement to people's assumptions relevant to their identity. This way, they created a boundary between the workplace and their personal life.

One thing I don't talk much about is, typically, we don't, I don't open at work the topic of my country, in terms of how we handle do the situation with the crises and the debt and everything. Because I understood that a lot of Dutch colleagues have a lot of strong sentiments about that, they consider that we have stolen their money, and they're not very hesitant to express it at times. So, this is a topic that I usually don't touch upon. (I.).

This (having to put up with assumptions about sexuality) happened quite sometimes, even now in the company. So, it was it was again, the same situation. You are being put in a norm that doesn't exist anymore and people don't aim to hurt you, but, yes. You have to spend energy to explain that again. So that's a situation that you might want to avoid (D.).

Table 6

Intended Discontinuity Themes

Meaning Unit	Open Codes	Themes	Category
"I behave in a more cis-male way when we have important meetings. I feel that my manager prefers alpha-male characteristics. He is apathetic in meetings and becomes competitive. When having an important meeting I have to be very straight forward to my points and very assertive for my manager to listen to my ideas."	Behaving in a cis-male manner Controlling loudness of voice and expressiveness	Changing a characteristic	(Created) Intended Discontinuity
"This (having to put up with assumptions about sexuality) happened quite sometimes, even now in the company. So, it was it was again, the same situation. You are being put in a norm that doesn't exist anymore and people don't aim to hurt you, but, yes. You have to spend energy to explain that again. So that's a situation that you might want to avoid."	Not discussing about culture Not discussing about relationship	Avoiding discussions	

Discussion

The research question of this thesis was: *What types of continuities and discontinuities do minoritized professionals experience and create in their workplace?* The themes that emerged from the data analysis represent the types of continuities and discontinuities that minority professionals experience and create. The results of this research show that there are common patterns regarding continuity and discontinuity between the workplace and personal life.

Given continuity

The first type of given continuity is shown through the theme of *acceptance in the organization* (Table 3). Minoritized professionals experience continuity when the workplace is inclusive and accepting towards them. This theme shows how organizations that promote friendly relationships and offer support to minoritized employees show them that they do not need to assimilate to majority norms and create or surpass boundaries. Despite this promising result, employees that mentioned how accepted and open they feel in their workplace also stressed that there were situations that they felt singled out or stereotyped by individual colleagues. Even when the organization is inclusive and diverse in terms of population, minoritized employees may still feel that there are boundaries between the workplace personal lives. This is in line with Chrobot-Mason & Thomas (2002) who highlighted how important it is for an organization to actively pursue diversity, encourage it and confront behaviors that cause boundaries.

The second type of given continuity is when minoritized employees are *feeling comfortable with personal identity*. This theme shows that employees who have a developed sense of self and identity can move across the context of their workplace and personal life without raising or experiencing boundaries. This finding is consistent with Helms (1990) individuals who

feel safe with their identity do not define themselves based on others, but they rather focus on how they should act. Minority employees who mentioned how their views of themselves influenced their experience of continuity, focused more on the way they react when their identity is challenged and less on their workplace environment.

Even though this finding highlights how important is identity development regarding perceived continuity, it is crucial to mention that these professionals were generally satisfied by the treatment they received in the workplace. This is expected as according to Chrobot-Mason & Thomas (2002), minoritized professionals that accept themselves and feel safe with their identity are less likely to continue working in non-inclusive organizations, as they receive the message that their diversity is not accepted. These hese professionals get quickly dissatisfied with their status and seek workplaces where they feel that their diversity is accepted.

The next type of given continuity is *earlier assimilation*. This theme suggests that employees who have an extensive experience in workplaces where they were a minority have already assimilated to the majority norms. Consequently, they do not feel that there are any more boundaries between their personal lives and workplace, as they have already engaged in boundary crossing or creating in the past. This type of continuity is consistent with the notion of hybrid identity of Van Laer and Janssens (2014). The respondents who mentioned that their years of experience shaped their workplace boundaries have constructed hybrid identities by crossing or creating boundaries. The hybrid identities allowed them to transition between contexts while maintaining their sense of self. After years of transitioning with their hybrid identities, they have permanently adopted characteristics that allow them to feel accepted in both contexts. It needs to be noted that respondents who experienced continuity as such, needed to

negotiate their identity from an early stage for example, while being one of the few women in a male-dominated university.

The last type of given continuity is *normalized given discontinuity*. This type highlights an interesting phenomenon: Minority employees accepting discrimination or stereotyping in their workplace but without perceiving or creating discontinuity because of that. Contrary to other situations of employees who perceived microaggressions as a treatment that raised strong boundaries for them (see *given discontinuity*), these employees found stereotypical jokes funny and racial discrimination in recruitment acceptable. To explain this theme, it is important to delve into the nature of microaggressions. Microaggressions show a difference in power in the workplace context and for this reason they are perceived as derogatory (Williams, 2020). The power balance between minority employees and the person who tells a stereotypical joke is the reason why their identity is not threatened.

Intended Continuity

Both the types of intended continuity show how minority employees seek to cross the boundaries between their workplace and personal life. The first type of intended continuity is *creating relationships of sameness* in the workplace with employees who also belong in minorities. This finding is in line with Van Laer & Janssens (2014) who suggested that minoritized professionals try to compromise the boundaries between their workplace and personal life by seeking relationships of sameness.

This search for relationships of sameness is a way for employees to construct hybrid identities (Van Laer & Janssens, 2014) where they keep characteristics of their personal identities in the workplace and at the same time assimilate to the majority norms. Employees who behaved as such, mentioned that they felt understood and created bonds. According to Cox

(1991), organizations, especially large firms, take affirmative action to inclusivity and acceptance. However, they often fail to address the social integration of employees. Creating relationships of sameness in the workplace suggests that even though the organization may be inclusive, employees may still perceive boundaries towards the majority.

A more confident approach to boundary crossing is presented in the second type of intended continuity which is *transferring diverse characteristic in the workplace*. This type shows how minority employees create continuity by using their diversity as an advantage in the workplace. Contrary to employees that experience given continuity in workplaces where diversity is considered an asset, minoritized professionals who transfer a diverse characteristic express their diversity in the workplace without necessarily being encouraged by it. These professionals reflected on themselves and discovered how their diversity could be applied to their workplace to increase their work quality. In that sense they developed a positive stance towards their identity. According to Rowe et al. (1994), individuals that feel confident with their personal identity interact with members of other groups and are not afraid to express themselves.

Given discontinuity

The types of given continuity show how boundaries between workplace and personal life can be very rigid for minoritized employees. The first type of *workplace rejection* highlighted that boundary rigidity. Minoritized professionals experience strong boundaries in workplaces where microaggressions are encouraged, while creating relationships is discouraged and there is little to no inclusivity. Employees who mentioned these experiences felt that it was hard for them to be themselves in the workplace. This is in line with Phelan et al., (1991) who stated that for minoritized professionals who experience given discontinuity, the workplace and personal life are two different worlds. This also agrees with Chrobot-Mason and Thomas (2002) when

minoritized professionals are encouraged to assimilate to the organization's "traditional" majority norms without question they cannot feel accepted.

The theme of *rejection in the organization* was a merge of issues that minoritized professionals faced such as *microaggressions* and feelings of redundancy. Employees who experience discontinuity through microaggressions felt that it was difficult to react to them. This is in line with Williams (2020) who stated that microaggressions are *hidden insults* that cause the employees to second-guess themselves and not react. The respondents said that they experienced microaggressions not only in workplaces where they experienced discontinuity, but also in workplaces where they experienced continuity. Microaggressions were a cause of given discontinuity for employees who did not perceive boundaries between their workplace and personal life otherwise. The reason for that is that even in organizations with high diversity orientation and actions towards inclusivity, microaggressions can be very hard to detect and confront.

The *feelings of redundancy* and having to adapt to *very high expectations* were specifically experienced from women. This finding shows how women perceive discontinuity in a men-dominated workplace. Women who mentioned these issues were working in traditionally "male" professions in big organizations. The way they experience discontinuity in their workplace agrees with Chrobot – Mason and Thomas (2002) who showed how hiring minority employees does not guarantee that the workplace takes action to minimize the boundaries that these employees experience.

The last type of given discontinuity, *boundaries without discrimination* shows that minority employees experience discontinuity when they do not "match" to the interests or experiences of the majority. This is in line with Van Laer & Janssens (20014) who stated that

even though organizations aim for inclusivity, they continue to cling to unspoken norms of behavior and interaction, norms that are familiar only to the dominant majority. This is a situation that creates strong boundaries for minority employees as they still feel that they have to adapt to these norms.

Intended discontinuity

The last broad category for this research is *intended discontinuity*. Minority professionals create discontinuity in the process of assimilating to majority norms in the organization. The two types of intended discontinuity show the common patterns that minoritized employees follow while creating discontinuity between their personal life and workplace. The first type of intended discontinuity is *changing a characteristic* of behavior or identity. Employees who chose to change a characteristic, thus creating discontinuity have previously experienced given discontinuity and quickly understood that the characteristic they needed to change would not be accepted. This choice of discontinuity agrees with the study of Bronkhorst and Akkerman (2016) who found that students who intended discontinuity have previously tried to adjust in spaces where they were marginalized. The same situation applies also to the second theme of *avoiding discussions*. Minority employees who intended discontinuity by avoiding certain discussions were trying to protect themselves from being criticized or talked down as they have understood that their choices or opinions were unwelcome in their workplace.

Overall, the results of this research showed the types of continuities and discontinuities that minoritized professionals experience and create in the workplace. The results of this research confirmed the expectation that minoritized employees experience and create continuity and discontinuity by following common patterns. The present work highlighted how minoritized professionals transition between the workplace and personal life context. Thus, it is important for

organizations to understand the efforts of these professionals to create coherence and take action towards creating a workplace that can benefit from diversity instead of asking for assimilation.

Limitations

Even though the results of this study showed the types of continuities and discontinuities that minority professionals experience and create, it is important to take into consideration some limitations. First, the interviews for this research were conducted in English. English was used as the lingua franca for communication and is not the mother tongue of neither the researcher nor the participants. Conducting interviews in a language different than the native may cause gaps in communication and misunderstandings, a situation that influences the data. Second, even though purposive sampling was chosen to select the participants, the pandemic situation affected the sampling procedure as contacting a wider audience and establishing connections was hard. Lastly, the minority status of the researcher may create bias in data collection and manipulation and affect the trustworthiness of this research.

Future research

The aim of the present research is not only to provide insights on the types of continuity and discontinuity. Its aim is also to show how after years of promoting the diversity agenda and laws that protect minorities from discrimination, minoritized professionals still face marginalization and racist treatment. The research regarding continuity and discontinuity can expand further than the workplace into other environments. Recent events in Europe such as banning the use of hijab and niqab in France can be researched based on the continuities and discontinuities they cause.

Another suggestion for future research would be to explore types of continuities and discontinuities between other contexts or roles (transition between two different professions,

transition between workplace and motherhood, or transition between university and first workplace). Continuities and discontinuities between transitions are a topic that still needs exploration to validate peoples' feelings towards transitions and make these transitions as smooth as possible.

References

- Akkerman, S., & Bruining, T. (2016). Multilevel Boundary Crossing in a Professional Development School Partnership. *Journal of the Learning Sciences*, 25(2), 240–284.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/10508406.2016.1147448>
- Akkerman, S. F., & Bakker, A. (2011). Boundary Crossing and Boundary Objects. *Review of Educational Research*, 81(2), 132–169. <https://doi.org/10.3102/0034654311404435>
- Beech, N., Gilmore, C., Hibbert, P., & Ybema, S. (2016). Identity-in-the-work and musicians' struggles: The production of self-questioning identity work. *Work, Employment and Society*, 30(3), 506-522. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0950017015620767>
- Bronkhorst, L. H., & Akkerman, S. F. (2016b). At the boundary of school: Continuity and discontinuity in learning across contexts. *Educational Research Review*, 19, 18–35.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.edurev.2016.04.001>
- Bell, E. L. (1990). The bicultural life experience of career-oriented black women. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 11(6), 459–477. <https://doi.org/10.1002/job.4030110607>
- Birks, M., Chapman, Y., & Francis, K. (2008). Memoing in qualitative research: Probing data and processes. *Journal of research in nursing*, 13(1), 68-75.
- Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative research in psychology*, 3(2), 77-101.

Brief, A. P., Umphress, E. E., Dietz, J., Burrows, J. W., Butz, R. M., & Scholten, L. (2005).

Community Matters: Realistic Group Conflict Theory and the Impact of Diversity.

Academy of Management Journal, 48(5), 830–844.

<https://doi.org/10.5465/amj.2005.18803925>

Bronkhorst, L. H., & Akkerman, S. F. (2016). At the boundary of school: Continuity and

discontinuity in learning across contexts. *Educational Research Review*, 19, 18–35.

<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.edurev.2016.04.001>

Bryan, S. E. (2018). Types of LGBT microaggressions in counselor education programs. *Journal*

of LGBT Issues in Counseling, 12(2), 119–135. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1553860>

5.2018.1455556

Christie, R., & Allport, G. W. (1954). The nature of prejudice. *The American Journal of*

Psychology, 67(4), 742. <https://doi.org/10.2307/1418507>

Chrobot-Mason, D., & Thomas, K. M. (2002). Minority employees in majority organizations:

The intersection of individual and organizational racial identity in the workplace. *Human*

Resource Development Review, 1(3), 323-

344. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1534484302013004>

Colella, A. J., & King, E. B. (2018). *The Oxford handbook of workplace discrimination*. Oxford

University Press.

Ellis, N., & Ybema, S. (2010). Marketing identities: Shifting circles of identification in inter-

organizational relationships. *Organization Studies*, 31(3), 279-

305. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0170840609357397>

- Engeström, Y., Engeström, R., & Kärkkäinen, M. (1996). The emerging horizontal dimension of practical intelligence: Polycontextuality and boundary crossing in complex work activities. *Intelligence, Heredity and Environment*, 440-462. <https://doi.org/10.1017/cbo9781139174282.016>
- Fisher, D., & Atkinson-Grosjean, J. (2002). Brokers on the boundary: Academy-industry liaison in Canadian universities. *Higher Education*, 44(3/4), 449–467. <https://doi.org/10.1023/a:1019842322513>
- Glaser, B. G. (2016). Open coding descriptions. *Grounded theory review*, 15(2), 108-110.
- Helms, J. E. (1990). Black and White racial identity. New York: Greenwood.
- Hofhuis, J., van der Rijt, P. G. A., & Vlug, M. (2016). Diversity climate enhances work outcomes through trust and openness in workgroup communication. *SpringerPlus*, 5(1), 1–30. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s40064-016-2499-4>
- How diverse leadership teams boost innovation*. (2018, January 23). United States - EN. <https://www.bcg.com/en-us/publications/2018/how-diverse-leadership-teams-boost-innovation>
- Kamenou, N. (2008). Reconsidering work–life balance debates: Challenging limited understandings of the ‘Life’ component in the context of ethnic minority women's experiences. *British Journal of Management*, 19(s1), S99-S109. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-8551.2008.00575.x>

Leung L. (2015). Validity, reliability, and generalizability in qualitative research. *Journal of family medicine and primary care*, 4(3), 324–327. <https://doi.org/10.4103/2249-4863.161306>.

Lim, S., Cortina, L. M., & Magley, V. J. (2008). Personal and workgroup incivility: Impact on work and health outcomes. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 93(1), 95-107. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0021-9010.93.1.95>

Little, W. (2014). *Introduction to Sociology – 1st Canadian Edition*. Victoria, B.C.: BCcampus. <https://opentextbc.ca/intro>

Lorenzo R. & Reeves M. (2018). *How and Where Diversity Drives Financial Performance*, Harvard Business Review

Patton, M. Q. (2014). *Qualitative Research & Evaluation Methods: Integrating Theory and Practice* (4th ed.). SAGE Publications, Inc.

Phelan, P., Davidson, A & Cao H. (1991). Students' Multiple Worlds: Negotiating the Boundaries of Family, Peer, and School Cultures. *Anthropology & Education Quarterly*, 22(3), 224–250. <https://doi.org/10.1525/aeq.1991.22.3.05x1051k>

Pitcan, M., Park-Taylor, J., & Hayslett, J. (2018). Black men and racial microaggressions at work. *The Career Development Quarterly*, 66(4), 300-314.

Polit D. S. & Beck C. T. (2010) *Essentials of Nursing Research. Appraising Evidence for Nursing Practice*. 7th edn. Lippincott-Raven Publishers.

Poole, M. E. (1975). B. Bernstein, class, codes and control, volume 1 – Theoretical studies towards a sociology of language; and B. Bernstein (ed.) class, codes and control, volume 2 – Applied studies towards a sociology of language. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1971; 1973 Pp. xiv+238 (Vol. 1); Pp. xvi+377 (Vol. 2). *Language in Society*, 4(1), 73-84. <https://doi.org/10.1017/s0047404500004504>

Putnam, L. L., Edmondson Bell, E. L., & Nkomo, S. M. (2003). Our separate ways: Black and white women and the struggle for professional identity. *The Academy of Management Review*, 28(4), 677. <https://doi.org/10.2307/30040759>

Rodrigues, R., Guest, D., & Budjanovcanin, A. (2016). Bounded or boundaryless? An empirical investigation of career boundaries and boundary crossing. *Work, Employment and Society*, 30(4), 669-686. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0950017015570726>

Rowe, W., Bennett, S. K., & Atkinson, D. R. (1994). White racial identity models: A critique and alternative proposal. *The Counseling Psychologist*, 22, 129-146.

Rubin, H., & Rubin, I. (2005). Qualitative interviewing (2nd ed.): The art of hearing data. <https://doi.org/10.4135/9781452226651>

Saldaña, J. (2021). *The coding manual for qualitative researchers*. sage.

Sekaran, U., & Bougie, R. (2003). Research method for business: A skill building approach, 5th edition. United States: John Wiley & Sons Inc.

Siebers, H., & Dennissen, M. H. J. (2014). Is it cultural racism? Discursive exclusion and oppression of migrants in the Netherlands. *Current Sociology*, 63(3), 470–489.

<https://doi.org/10.1177/0011392114552504>

Sue, D. W., Capodilupo, C. M., Torino, G. C., Bucceri, J. M., Holder, A. M. B., Nadal, K. L., Esquilin, M. (2007). Racial microaggressions in everyday life: Implications for clinical practice. *American Psychologist*, 62, 271–286

Thacker, N., & Minton, C. A. B. (2021). Minoritized Professionals' Experiences in Counselor Education: A Review of Research. *Counselor Education and Supervision*, 60(1), 35-50.

Thomas, D. A. (1997, September-October). A question of color: A debate on race in the US workplace. *Harvard Business Review*, pp. 119-132. (n.d.).

Van Laer, K., & Janssens, M. (2011). Ethnic minority professionals' experiences with subtle discrimination in the workplace. *Human Relations*, 64(9), 1203-1227. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0018726711409263>

Van Laer, K., & Janssens, M. (2014). Between the devil and the deep blue sea: Exploring the hybrid identity narratives of ethnic minority professionals. *Scandinavian Journal of Management*, 30(2), 186-196. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.scaman.2013.08.004>

Van Teijlingen, E., & Hundley, V. (2002). The importance of pilot studies. *Nursing Standard*, 16(40), 33-36. <https://doi.org/10.7748/ns2002.06.16.40.33.c3214>

Watson, R., Atkinson, I., & Rose, K. (2007). Editorial: Pilot studies: to publish or not? *Journal of Clinical Nursing*, 16(4), 619-620. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1365-2702.2006.01830.x>

Weber, R. P. (1990). *Basic Content Analysis (Quantitative Applications in the Social Sciences)* (1st ed.). SAGE Publications, Inc.

Williams, M. T. (2020). Microaggressions: Clarification, evidence, and impact. *Perspectives on Psychological Science*, 15(1), 3-26.

Appendix

Table 1

Interview Guide

Topics	Questions
General questions	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Could you tell me some things about yourself (where are you from, how long have you been living in the Netherlands, your marital status) 2. What is your profession? 3. For how long have you been working as..? 4. What are the different workplaces you have worked so far? 5. What is your current workplace?
Workplace environment	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. What norms of behavior should employees be aware of when working in your workplace? 6. What is the role of the organization (your workplace) in employee relations? Are there any chances for social interaction, team building events? 7. Have you ever been asked to participate in workshops regarding communication or client services in the workplace? 8. How strict are the requirements regarding the employee's appearance in your workplace? Is there a specific dress-code or a policy? 9. Do you feel that you have to change characteristics of your appearance every time you go to work? 10. What is the policy of your workplace regarding employee inclusivity?
Given Continuities and Discontinuities	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 11. What are the norms of behavior in the workplace that align/do not align with your personal ethics? 12. Do you always feel "at home" in the workplace? 13. Is it possible for you to create friendships with colleagues? Why? Why not? 14. Are there any moments where you feel "singled-out" from colleagues in the workplace? Why do you believe that is? 15. Have you ever experienced any negative behavior in the workplace that you perceived as connected with stereotypes about you? 16. Have you ever felt that you lost opportunities for professional development in the workplace because of stereotypes about you?
Intended Continuities and Discontinuities	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 17. What are your personal norms of behavior that can be helpful in the workplace? 18. Are there any personal norms of behavior that you choose not to express in your workplace? Why? 19. Have you ever been in a position at your workplace where you behaved in a way you would not normally behave? 20. Are there any parts of your personal life (for ex. family, social relationships, gender relationships) that you do not talk about in the workplace because you are afraid they could be viewed negatively?
Closing Remarks	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 21. Is there anything that you would like to add?

Figure 1

Audit Trail Scheme

Stage	Description
1. Orientation to the audit procedure	Both auditee and auditor negotiate and agree upon goals, roles and rules of the audit.
2. Orientation to the study	Auditee arranges the logistics for the auditor and explains the audit trail, and auditor becomes familiar with the study.
3. Determination of the auditability of the study	Auditor determines the completeness, comprehensibility and utility of the audit trail. Auditee and auditor discuss the auditability.
4. Negotiation of the contract	Auditee and auditor establish timeline, determine goals, specify roles, arrange logistics, determine outcomes and format, and identify renegotiation criteria.
5. Assessment	Based on the audit trail auditor assesses the research process in terms of the specific quality criteria.
6. Renegotiation	Auditor presents findings and discusses discrepancies; Auditee assesses the accuracy of the auditor claims and adherence to the agreement. This conversation might result in redesigning the research process (leading to another audit), adjustment of the auditor report, or a modification of the agreement.
7. Final auditor report	Auditor writes a substantiated assessment on the trustworthiness of the study.

Statement of Consent

Link for Statement: https://qfreeaccountssjc1.az1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_8rkAs4mb7FO9vvg

Statement of Consent

I herewith declare to have read the information letter concerning research "Continuities and discontinuities in the workplace: A study on minority professionals" and to agree to participate in the research.

Respondents need to click all four boxes.

This means that I agree with:

- participation in the research
- collection of my contact details
- collection of special personal data, namely: profession, company/organization of work
- audio recording of my interview

Full Name:

Date: