

The Ethics of Diversity Ideology: Consequences of Leader Diversity Ideology on Ethical Leadership Perception and Organizational Citizenship Behavior

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Scholars have suggested that leader diversity ideologies are imbued with ethical or normative content (e.g., Nkomo & Hoobler, 2014). We advance this literature by examining the ethical consequences of leader diversity ideologies. Specifically, we integrate the ethical leadership framework and the theory of recognition to suggest that leaders who communicate about diversity by acknowledging individuals' racial/ethnic identities (i.e., use identity-conscious ideology) are deemed by followers as more ethical than leaders who do not (i.e., use identity-blind ideologies). We further suggest that this effect is stronger for followers who are higher in institutional discrimination awareness (defined as those who are more likely to view racial/ethnic identities as consequential within society). Finally, we assert that this interactive effect on ethical leadership will subsequently influence follower engagement in discretionary, proactive behavior directed toward the organization. We found support for our predictions across two experiments and a field study. Overall, our findings illustrate the ethical consequences of leader diversity ideologies.

Keywords: leader diversity ideologies, ethical leadership perception, institutional discrimination awareness, organizational citizenship behavior

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As racial and ethnic diversity becomes more prevalent within workplaces (Long & Van Dam, 2019), leaders are increasingly expected to communicate to stakeholders their diversity ideologies, or their "beliefs regarding the importance of demographic differences and how to navigate them" (Leslie et al., 2020, p. 454). Diversity ideologies have been classified into two broad categories: *identity-conscious* (beliefs that racial/ethnic differences should be acknowledged) and *identity-blind* (beliefs that racial/ethnic differences should be minimized; for a review see Leslie et al., 2020; see also Plaut et al., 2014). These ideologies are imbued with ethical or normative content because they communicate what the ideology-holder believes to be the proper and appropriate ways to manage diversity at work (van Dijk, 1998, p. 7; see also Plaut et al., 2011). For instance, in their description of the construct, Nkomo and Hoobler (2014)

described diversity ideologies as "societal beliefs and attitudes about non-dominant race/ethnic groups, their status, and how they *should* be incorporated into the society or nation" (emphasis added, p. 241). Leader diversity ideologies thus speak to the oughtness and shouldness of diversity management. These ethical or normative aspects may yield positive spillovers to organizations, or desirable effects to the organization beyond diversity goal progress (Leslie, 2019).

Despite the clear normative materiality embedded within leader's diversity ideologies, extant research has yet to examine the ethical spillovers that may ensue. This omission limits our capacity to provide a comprehensive account of the effects leader diversity ideologies have on outcomes beyond those tied to diversity goal progress (Leslie, 2019). To be clear, this is not to suggest that diversity-goal progress is or should be a secondary consideration. Rather, we suggest that by their very nature, the ethical content of diversity ideologies may yield important ethically laden spillovers for leaders and their organizations. Specifically, we suggest that positive spillovers from leaders' diversity ideologies can be seen or manifest in followers' positive attributions of leaders' ethical character (ethical leadership perception) and in their subsequent increased engagement in proactive actions to aid their organization (organizational citizenship behaviors directed toward the organization, or OCB-O).

Our research is grounded in the ethical leadership framework (Brown et al., 2005) and the theory of recognition (Fraser, 2003; Fraser & Honneth, 2003; Honneth, 1992; Iser, 2019; Taylor, 1992). The ethical leadership framework proposes that followers perceive leaders as ethical to the extent that leaders' behaviors align with normative standards of society. The theory of recognition suggests

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