Summary
The topics of both talent management and diversity management are blossoming in organizations. Yet, according to my personal experience working in a multinational company, a tension exists between the fields, reflected in a statement that summarizes the feedback I received from a senior leader: *Diversity is an important topic, but working in the field of diversity management does not seem to be the best talent investment for advancing a career in a large international organization.*

This feedback made me realize that *diversity management* and *talent management* were not necessarily connected in organizational practice, and that there was a misalignment between diversity and talent management. Broadly defined, diversity management is concerned with minimizing intergroup inequalities and fostering an organizational culture in which every employee - irrelevant of their personal attributes (such as gender, race or educational background) - can realize their potential to add value to the organization. Talent management is concerned with deploying a human resource architecture to fill key positions with high potential and high performing (i.e. talented) employees in order to sustain the organization’s success. Combined, talent management and diversity management together ensure that an organization benefits from the qualities of all potential talents within its entire staff. Yet, looking to the introductory statement, there seems to be a mismatch between talent management and diversity management.

The literature on diversity management and talent management mirrors this clash. The diversity management literature acknowledges a friction between talent shortages and underutilization of diverse talent, and advocates integrating diversity management with talent management research. The talent management literature rarely addresses this tension. At the heart of this dissertation lies the exploration of the connection between talent management and diversity management in research and practice, followed by the suggestion to work towards a simultaneous consideration of the two areas.

The friction between the underlying aims and benefits of talent management and diversity management corresponds with other tensions that have previously been addressed in the human resource management (HRM) literature (e.g. tensions between employee advocacy and top management agency or tradeoff between short- and long-term orientation). Recently, the *paradox lens* has been promoted in HRM research to systematically analyze tensions - with the awareness to simultaneously consider opposing forces. Doing so facilitates thinking in tensions for theoretical considerations as it implies to embrace a both/and approach, rather than advocating either/or decisions.
Purpose of the dissertation

This dissertation connects talent management and diversity management through adopting a paradox lens. Doing so implies to investigate the opposing forces (or so called dualities) that become apparent when simultaneously considering talent management in both theory (i.e. when thinking through the tensions) and in practice (i.e. when living through the tensions). Thus, this dissertation’s overarching research purpose is to gain an enriched understanding of both theorized and lived tensions between the practices of talent management and diversity management. To cater to this purpose, I draw upon interview data and on empirical material from my employment in a multinational organization. In doing so, I provide insights into how the dualities between talent management and diversity management unfold in organizational practice. Three guiding research questions reflect this purpose statement:

- How can a paradox perspective contribute to conceptualizing the frictions, tensions and dualities between talent management and diversity management?
- How are talent management and diversity management related in organizational practice?
- How do organizational actors experience and respond to dualities in the context of talent management and diversity management?

I explore these questions through adopting a paradox lens when theoretically engaging with the talent management and diversity management literatures. Thus, the general contribution of this dissertation consists of systematically describing, explaining and understanding the emergence and meaning of dovetailing (i.e. reaching closer alignment) between talent management and diversity management in research and practice.

Moving beyond exploring the conceptual and practical dualities that exist between talent management and diversity management, I extend the focus of this dissertation by investigating the intrinsic duality of simultaneously being an academic researcher and practitioner during the course of my PhD trajectory. This contributes to the research purpose as the findings provide insights into how organizational actors may actively respond to dualities that pertain for an extended period of time. By exploring how I maneuver between co-existing professional identities (i.e. as a researcher and as a practitioner) that imply a permanent state of in-betweenness or liminality, this dissertation also contributes to the body of literature on liminality, a sub-domain of identity research. Together, this dissertation increases the understanding of the dualities between talent management and diversity management in an attempt to align the fields to a greater extent. The empirical base of this dissertation is grounded in a qualitative, mixed-method approach - data that I collected throughout my PhD trajectory. I conducted interviews with talent and diversity practitioners.
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and applied autoethnography – analyzing my own experiences of working in a multinational organization to which I refer under the pseudonym ‘SPARK’. Considering myself as a research object implies that I captured field notes, recordings and observations during my employment at SPARK, and that I gained formal approval to conduct this form of research within the organization. The empirical material is presented in the chapters 3, 4 and 5. Chapters 1, 2 and 6 supplement the collected data through the theoretical engagement with the bodies of literatures in the fields of talent management, diversity management, paradox theory and liminality.

Dissertation outline

This dissertation is structured into six chapters. Chapter 1 sets the stage through presenting the misalignment between talent management and diversity management in practice through a prologue, providing a short excerpt from a situation I personally encountered during my employment at SPARK. Moving from this example in practice, the chapter introduces relevant literatures and outlines the purpose of the dissertation - including the research questions and a note on method and data collection. The chapter contains a graphical overview of the dissertation (figure 1.1) as well as an overview of the chapters previously presented at peer-reviewed academic conferences (table 1.1).

Chapter 2 defines and connects the concepts of paradox, diversity management and talent management as it provides a theoretical examination of the frictions between talent management and diversity management. Following a critical literature review of the diversity management and talent management literature respectively, I formulate a paradox that becomes apparent when considering the two fields simultaneously. I coin this paradoxical tension the exclusion-inclusion paradox, formulated in the question: How can organizations establish an exclusive talent management architecture for developing those deemed as high potential employees while simultaneously embracing inclusive diversity management principles that allow each and every employee to uncover and evolve their particular talents? I propose to actively work through the exclusion-inclusion paradox by purposefully oscillating between the exclusion and inclusion principles in order to consider the relevance of both forces simultaneously to a more equal extent.

Chapter 3 explores the dualities between talent management and diversity management empirically. This chapter offers insights into the relationship between diversity management and talent management practitioners in 13 multinational profit organizations across Europe. Analyzing the interview data uncovers a tension between the perception of diversity practitioners and talent practitioners on the relevance of collaboration. Unlike the talent practitioners, the diversity practitioners report high relevance of collaboration with
their talent peers and voice a struggle to achieve legitimacy and power to achieve success in their organizations. The talent practitioners implicitly criticize and distance themselves from their diversity peers. Yet, the diversity practitioners also express positive accounts that collaboration can be developed over time. Based on these descriptions, I develop a collaboration framework and suggest applying this tool to assess and improve the quality of collaboration between diversity and talent practitioners. Doing so supports the organizational actors to actively deal with the existing dualities between talent management and diversity management.

Chapter 4 focuses on the individual talent perspective; illuminating how conflicting organizational interests may lead to a paradoxical situation for identified talents. In this chapter I connect an excerpt from my personal career to the talent management literature and thus provide an inside-out perspective on talent management by applying autoethnography – a research approach that thus far has not been linked to talent management research. I argue that autoethnography is well suited to contribute to the maturation of talent management research. It overcomes the limitations of traditional research approaches, since it provides insights from the personal experiences of talents themselves. By providing personal insights into my own lived experiences of being identified as a talent in a large organization, I present a phenomenon that I coin the ‘talent paradox’ - manifested as the opportunities as well as risks that simultaneously coexist for identified talents.

Chapter 5 zooms in further on the individual level of analysis, by exploring the relevance of self-positioning for dealing with dualities at work. The focus in this chapter lies on investigating liminality – a state of in-betweenness in the process of identity formation in the context of multiple work settings. Without addressing talent and diversity management explicitly, this chapter provides insights into the identity formation processes of perpetual liminars - individuals who find themselves in a state of in-betweenness and ambiguity for an extended period of time. I extend the understanding of perpetual liminality through providing further specifications on this form of liminality on the basis of an autoethnographic study, describing the constant switch between the two work settings of academia and practice. I expand the notion of perpetual liminality through uncovering four shapes of perpetual liminality that I term: (1) subordinated perpetual liminality, (2) coequal perpetual liminality, (3) segregated perpetual liminality and (4) blended perpetual liminality. In addition to defining and distinguishing between these four shapes, I theorize on the relevance of the findings for the context of the present autoethnographic study, for other work settings, and for the broader context beyond multiple work settings.

Chapter 6 relates the findings of the previous chapters to each other and reflects on their significance within talent management and diversity management research and practice.
This general discussion highlights theoretical as well as practical implications, as outlined in the following paragraphs.

**Contributions to theory**

This dissertation contributes - through three overarching themes - to the body of literature that aims to connect talent management and diversity to a greater extent. *First*, in response to the first overarching research question, adopting a paradox lens facilitates the formulation of frictions that arise when considering talent management and diversity management simultaneously. On a conceptual level I coin these tensions the ‘exclusion-inclusion paradox’ and advocate an active response to the paradox by adhering to both forces simultaneously, and thus embracing a both/and approach rather than either/or decisions (see chapter 2). Responding actively breaks the cycle of avoiding frictions and offers a different lens through which to consciously deal with opposing tensions - with an awareness that these frictions are inevitable. Furthermore, adopting a paradox perspective contributes to the emerging body of talent management literature. The autoethnographic study in chapter 4 brings to the fore a tension that I coin the talent paradox, and presents a critical, novel viewpoint on the benefits and risks for identified talents.

The *second* overarching contribution of this dissertation is to dovetail the talent management literature with the diversity management literature. Connecting the bodies of research both theoretically and through empirical analysis provides a set of responses to the second research question, exploring the relationship between talent management and diversity management in research and practice. Chapters 2, 3 and 4 uncover a disconnect between these areas. The theoretical examination of the tensions in this dissertation contributes to the emergent body of literature that dovetails these areas with the intention to reach closer alignment between talent management and diversity management.

This dissertation’s *third* overarching contribution is the application of autoethnography to uncover the experiences of organizational actors who are dealing with dualities. Applying autoethnography as a research method provides a set of responses to the third research question – how organizational actors experience and respond to dualities in the context of talent management and diversity management. Displaying my personal career experiences in the chapters 4 and 5 provides an insider talent perspective that thus far has not yet been presented in talent management research. Furthermore, I argue that the four shapes of perpetual liminality are relevant for the context of talent management and diversity management as they provide insights into the identity formation processes of diverse talents.
Practical implications

Adding to the three overarching theoretical contributions, the fourth contribution of this dissertation entails a set of implications for practitioners. The empirical data in chapters 3, 4, and 5 highlights that dealing with dualities is unavoidable for organizational actors. The collaboration framework developed in chapter 3 and the four developed shapes of perpetual liminality defined in chapter 5 provide concrete options how organizational actors can actively respond to these tensions. Furthermore, based on my research, I suggest various activities that practitioners and talents themselves can adopt in order to engage with and actively respond to the dualities between talent management and diversity management.

1. **Infuse diversity aspects into talent management processes:** Talent and diversity practitioners can increase their collaboration through critically reviewing existing talent management practices with regards to diversity. Subsequently, diversity aspects can be integrated in all parts of the talent lifecycle, for example by including diversity aspects in the talent definition or through the composition of diverse, multi-rater panels that follow a transparent talent assessment process.

2. **Invest in functional development for talent and diversity practitioners:** Both, talent practitioners as well as diversity practitioners are often placed in newly created positions that have not yet been established and legitimized within the HR function. I suggest to extend the application of the developed collaboration framework (chapter 3), and to utilize the outlined steps in the model as a starting point for designing coordinated job activities, training and/or development interventions for talent and diversity practitioners.

3. **Actively chose how to address the paradox:** Adopting a paradox lens to analyze the tensions between talent management and diversity management implies that organizations have a choice to respond either actively or defensively to the arising dualities. Active responses entail openly dealing with tensions and acknowledging that dealing with paradox is an inevitable part of work. I suggest that both talent and diversity practitioners acknowledge the tensions that may arise and that they openly communicate and respect each others’ positions. This includes the awareness that not addressing tensions implies a defensive response - often classified as avoidance tactic to the exclusion-inclusion paradox.

4. **Include paradoxes in talent development projects:** Moving beyond the practical implications of this dissertation for talent and diversity practitioners, I suggest that the findings are also relevant for identified talents in organizations. The exclusion-inclusion paradox (see chapter 2), the talent paradox (see chapter 4) and the shapes of perpetual liminality (see chapter 5) enable sense-making and personal reflection. Thus,
integrating these concepts in talent development workshops facilitates an increased self-awareness for talents and encourages them to share their experiences with their peers. This creates a joint understanding of the experienced dualities and contributes to learning from job experiences. Moreover, I propose to share aggregated and anonymized reports with top management and their representatives that summarize the tensions that talents experience. Doing so increases the awareness of the prevailing dualities that exist for certain employee groups and fosters top managements’ sponsorship to simultaneously address talent management and diversity management.

Overall, the proposed practical implications provide a diverse range of activities with the intent to engage an entire organizational system and create sustainable change.

**Personal reflection**

Given the personal nature of this dissertation through the application of autoethnographic data, I end with a brief personal reflection. I have explored the relationship between talent management and diversity management in research and practice during the years from 2011 to 2016. Thus, in addition to the above-summarized contributions, this dissertation contains insights into my own personal and professional development during the past five years. Working on this dissertation taught me that dualities are inevitable parts of my professional life. Rather than reconciling the tensions I uncovered, I found myself in a constant position of in-betweenness. Trading one set of challenges for another led at times to struggles and frustration, but it also constituted opportunities, as I was able to experience and analyze meaningful situations. Motivated by my personal ambition to combine research and practice in the fields of talent management and diversity management, it is my hope that this dissertation will contribute to connecting the areas and to stipulate an active engagement with the inevitable tensions between talent management and diversity management in research and practice.