Chapter 3

Exploring the interaction between diversity and talent practitioners in multinational organizations: Creating a collaboration framework
“You see, talent diversity and inclusion, it really needs somebody to be there and saying, oh, pay attention to this you know. Otherwise, people forget. [...] So the pain is that, but I should say really, it is part of the job. To me, it feels like you know, this job comes with that. You have to push all the time. All the time, you know and it's kind of you know it's not good or bad, it's just the way.” [DM_10]

This quote comes from a global diversity practitioner working in the European head office of a multinational organization, when asked to reflect on the collaboration with her peers working in global talent management. According to her, ‘talent diversity and inclusion’ need to be actively integrated within a company’s talent management and HRM practices and policies so that other members in the organization, do not forget about the relevance and connection between talent management and diversity. While the diversity practitioner describes the need to ‘push all the time’ as an integral part of her role and ‘just the way’ it is, she also refers to it as ‘pain’. Apparently, diversity management is not automatically on the company’s HRM agenda. It needs constant pushing.

The struggle of diversity practitioners to push for a link to talent management is mirrored in the literatures on diversity management and talent management: whereas the diversity management literature claims the need to be closely linked to talent management, the talent management literature hardly seems to respond to this quest. In diversity management literature, scholars have raised the need to connect diversity and talent management as a relevant means to achieve sustainable change since more than a decade. For example, Singh and Point (2004, p. 312) argue: “Promoting diversity management is not just another management fad, but implies new thinking about inclusion, talent management, reputation and environment.” In a similar vein, Thomas (2010, p. 11) expresses his disbelief in the lack of connection when he states: “Now, incredibly, it’s possible to engage in discussions and read books about talent management with barely a mention of diversity. The reality of global talent pools calls for thinking in terms of worldwide best practices in diversity management.” The British Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD) promotes the connection by providing a definition of talent management and diversity: “Talent management and diversity need to be interlinked. Diversity should be threaded through all talent management activities and strategies to ensure that organizations make the best use of the talent and skills of all their employees in ways that are aligned to business objectives” (McCartney & Worman, 2010, p. 1). In a recent publication, Sheehan and Anderson (2015) argue to conceptually merge the diversity and talent literature in order to avoid negative consequences for the promotion of equality and diversity, resulting from overemphasizing exclusive talent management practices.
Yet, talent management definitions provided in the talent management literature do not seem to embrace the quest for integration of diversity aspects. For example, the seminal definition of talent management provided by Collings and Mellahi (2009) which is considered as the most influential contribution to the talent management literature (Gallardo-Gallardo, Nijs, Dries, & Gallo, 2015) and which I apply as definition of talent management throughout this dissertation, does not refer to diversity and inclusion when referring to the building blocks that constitute talent management:

Activities and processes that involve the systematic identification of key positions which differentially contribute to the organization’s sustainable competitive advantage, the development of a talent pool of high potential and high performing incumbents to fill these roles, and the development of a differentiated human resource architecture to facilitate filling these positions with competent incumbents and to ensure their continued commitment to the organization. (Collings & Mellahi, 2009, p. 305)

The suggestion to differentiate between key positions and a specialized HR architecture for high performers promotes the idea of exclusion, which stands in contrast to the call for integrating the notions of diversity and inclusion into talent management as advocated in the diversity management literature. Looking into more recent talent management literature reveals that the link to diversity management is mentioned occasionally to explain the emergence of global talent management (e.g. Bowman & Hird, 2014; Doh, Smith, Stumpf, & Tymon Jr., 2014; Vaiman, Scullion, & Collings, 2012) or to constitute an area for future research (e.g. Al Ariss, Cascio, & Paauwe, 2014; Doh et al., 2014). However, concrete examples of how diversity and talent management practitioners interrelate within organizations are absent. In a recent study Festing, Kornau, and Schäfer (2015) explored the link between talent management and diversity management more concretely and analyzed whether talent development is an inclusive HRM practice with respect to gender in the German context. The authors identified five talent management elements in which gender diversity is relevant - including talent definition, underlying career orientation, the content of talent development programs, the talent management approach, and the talent selection process (Festing et al., 2015). However, the study does not shed light on the relationship and collaboration between the talent management and diversity management practitioners within organizations that would actively weave the two areas of talent and diversity together.

The seemingly different expectations between the diversity and talent management literature with regards to aligning the two fields raises the question about the alignment of diversity and talent management in practice. Results from a recent website analysis
comparing how diversity is communicated and promoted on fast-moving-consumer-goods (FMCG) companies’ websites indicates that the terms ‘diverse talent’ are often communicated in conjunction (Ueckert, 2013). Thus, based on the intertwined website communication, one might expect that diversity and talent management activities are aligned within the global HR function in order to serve the objective of creating more diversity at management levels. Furthermore, the organizational structure of many multinational organizations suggests a formal link between diversity and talent management, as they are often sub-functions within the corporate HR function, hierarchically reporting to the same top executive.

While both diversity management as well as talent management are well explored domains, the international nature of performing diversity and talent management on a geographically global level (versus application to local context) emerged more recently, focusing on the globally relevant development of management strategies in multinational organizations (Özbilgin, Tatli, & Jonsen, 2015; Tarique & Schuler, 2010). The appearance of both global diversity management and global talent management functions in multinational organizations is embodied through individuals who work in these functions, who are the gatekeepers and ‘experts’ in their respective areas, i.e. global diversity and global talent practitioners.

Previous research on diversity practitioners include the public sector such as the higher education context (Ahmed, 2007) as well as private sector in specific countries, such as the United Kingdom (Tatli, 2011), or a mix of both (Kirton & Greene, 2009). Some studies implicitly address the concept of collaboration with other members in the organization, as diversity practitioners highlight the importance of ‘getting organizations to commit to diversity’ (Ahmed, 2007), or the need to position the practitioners themselves credibly in the organization in order to gain respect and authority (Kirton & Greene, 2009).

In talent management, Farndale, Scullion, and Sparrow (2010) address the role of the corporate HR function for the advancement of global talent management and highlight the importance of facilitating collaboration across the organization. Yet, global talent management literature has largely been silent on the role of effective collaboration between talent practitioners and other parts of the HR function.

Moving beyond the conceptual mismatch between the diversity and talent management literature, in this chapter I explore the relationship between global diversity and global talent practitioners in large multinational organizations and thus provide a lens on how diversity and talent management are practiced and interlinked in organizations. On the basis of interview data with 13 diversity practitioners and 3 talent practitioners, the present study explores whether the mismatch in literature is reflected or contested in the respondents’
discourses about the relevance of collaboration between the diversity and talent roles. In order to do so, this chapter offers two key contributions.

First, I first explore the relationship between global diversity and global talent practitioners. Interestingly, and perhaps problematically, global diversity practitioners express struggles for legitimacy and power to achieve success in the wider organization. The diversity practitioners’ discontent about the collaboration (or lack thereof) with talent practitioners is echoed in the talent practitioners’ implicit criticism about the work of their diversity peers, and the general lack of interest in collaborating with their diversity peers.

Second, in order to reduce the tensions and divide between talent and diversity practitioners, I propose design specifications for a collaboration framework based on the diversity practitioners’ comments about positive interactions with their talent peers. This framework, tailored to the relationship between diversity and talent practitioners, offers a roadmap for better collaboration between the global diversity and global talent functions in practice. Furthermore, this framework acts as an analytical tool for those interested in studying the relationship between diversity and talent management and thus provides avenues for further research in order to advance the theoretical integration of the domains.

The remainder of this chapter is structured as follows: Following this introduction, the theoretical landscapes for researching global diversity practitioners and global talent practitioners are introduced. Next, I present the study method explaining the study procedure as well as the theoretical concept of collaboration that acts as a sensitizing concept for the data analysis. Then the results are presented. After the discussion, the chapter ends with an outline of implications, limitations and conclusions.

Researching global diversity practitioners

Özbilgin, Tatli and Jones (2015) define global diversity management as:

Planning, coordination and implementation of a set of management strategies policies, initiatives, and training and development activities that seek to accommodate diverse sets of social and individual backgrounds interests, beliefs, values and ways of work in organizations with international, multinational, global and transnational workforces and operations. (p. 10)

This definition emphasizes the difference between local and global diversity management. While local diversity management is focused on formulating and implementing relevant diversity policies in the specific national context, global diversity management is focused on the development and coordination of diversity initiatives that reach across subsidiaries and national borders - with the aim to promote organizational cultures and structures which leverage the overall diversity within the entire organization (Özbilgin et al., 2015).
Chapter 3

2015). The differentiation between local and global diversity management (GDM) indicates that diversity management research should reflect the correlating context. However, little is known about GDM, as existing research has primarily focused on the local context (Özbilgin et al., 2015). Furthermore, research about diversity practitioners as a professional occupational group is scarce. There is no institutionalized body of knowledge that defines and provides insights into the expectations and training of skills and competencies that are relevant for the success of diversity practitioners. Instead, most of the skills and competencies seem to be acquired through experience and on-the-job learning, rather than through formal education or training courses (Özbilgin et al., 2015; Tatli, 2011). According to Tatli (2011), empirical studies analyzing samples of diversity practitioners are rare, despite the relevant role of these individuals in developing and implementing diversity policies and programs. Exceptions include studies by Ahmed (2007), Kirton and Greene (2009), Tatli (2011), and Özbilgin et al (2015). However, these studies are focused on higher education (see Ahmed, 2007) or in the context of a single country, i.e. on the UK (see Kirton & Greene, 2009; Özbilgin et al., 2015; Tatli, 2011), and do not take multiple countries into account, such as within the European context. Furthermore, existing studies do not explicitly address the collaboration with other functions in the organization. Yet, understanding more about the process of collaboration would provide another lens to Özbilgin et al.’s (2015) call for exploring the role of diversity practitioners in the GDM process. One relevant cooperation partner for diversity practitioners is the occupational group of talent practitioners, as they design talent review and succession planning processes. According to Kilian et al. (2005), these processes should directly incorporate diversity in order to ensure that high potential women and people of color are not excluded from advancing through the talent pipeline. The next section introduces the relevance of researching talent practitioners.

Researching Global Talent Practitioners

Talent management practice in organizations has been developed since the late 1990s, when an article published by a consulting firm announced the ‘war for talent’ (Chambers, Foulon, Handfield-Jones, Hankin, & Michaels, 1998), highlighting that the future success of multinational, large organizations will depend on the successful sourcing, development and retention of talented employees. Since then, managing talents in organizations has been identified by consulting firms as one of the most important priorities for human resource (HR) functions, paired with the lowest degree of current capabilities to respond to this topic (BCG, 2008). In parallel to the developments in practice, talent management has emerged as one of the fastest growing areas of academic work in the management field (e.g. Scullion, Collings, & Caligiuri, 2010), and Collings, Scullion and Vaiman (2015) observe an
“increasing legitimacy for talent management as an area of study” (p. 234). Recent publications in the field of talent management have stressed the relevance of global talent management, which focuses on global aspects of managing talented employees within internationally operating firms (Collings et al., 2015). Scullion, et al. (2010) refer to the global aspects of talent management in their proposed definition: “Global talent management takes into account the differences in both organizations’ global strategic priorities as well as the differences across national contexts for how talent should be management in the countries where they operate” (p. 106). In the literature, global talent management (GTM) is considered to represent a subset of international human resource management (IHRM) and has been defined as:

Systematically utilizing IHRM activities (complementary HRM policies and policies) to attract, develop, and retain individuals with high levels of human capital (e.g. competency, personality, motivation) consistent with the strategic directions of the multinational enterprise in a dynamic, highly competitive, and global environment (Tarique & Schuler, 2010, p. 124).

This definition emphasizes the three key pillars of a GTM system, i.e. attracting, retaining and developing talented employees for the purpose of an adequate talent positioning, or as Tarique and Schuler (2010) describe it: “Having the right talent at the right place at the right time with the needed competencies and motivation at all levels and all locations of the firms” (p. 128). In their summary of major GTM challenges, the authors describe workforce characteristics, which might impede the achievement of the talent positioning, such as the shortage of needed competencies or the risk of generational conflicts between older and younger employees (Tarique & Schuler, 2010). Thus, while the definition of GTM and the description of GTM challenges do not preclude the relevance of workforce diversity explicitly, they do not include it either. Furthermore, there is no reference to the organizing of GTM, i.e. how it is embedded in the corporate HR function and which characteristics are relevant for GTM practitioners in order to develop and implement the pillars of a GTM system. Farndale et al. (2010) consider the changing role of the corporate HR function in GTM and point out the need for better coordination across internal functions in order to create aligned tools, techniques and processes for talent management. Yet, research focusing on the occupational group of talent practitioners in multinational organizations is scarce. While the relevance of GTM for achieving company objectives is pointed out in GTM literature (Vaiman, Haslberger, & Vance, 2015), it seems a logical consequence that analyzing the activities of GTM practitioners would provide more insights into the opportunities and challenges this occupational group is facing in order to successfully contribute to the company’s goals. Thus, analyzing what GTM practitioners are reporting
about their activities provides insights into the ‘doing of GTM’ in multinational organizations.

Linking the quest for more research on GTM practitioners with the previous section on the relevance of GDM suggests a route to explore the links between GTM and GDM through analyzing the work of GTM and GDM practitioners, and the intersections they report when asked about their work. In doing so, connections between the globally relevant activities can be identified and synergies can be realized. Together, this provides avenues for alignment and coordination of global HR processes in order to provide internationally consistent tools, techniques and processes for the global talent population.

In an effort to explore the interlinks between GDM and GTM in the context of European multinational organizations, this empirical study investigates the perceptions of global diversity and global talent practitioners - with regards to the set-up of their roles and interaction with others entities in the organization.

Method

In order to explore the relationship and perceived collaboration between diversity managers and talent managers in multinational organizations, I conducted a total of 16 interviews. 13 respondents worked in the area of global diversity management, 3 respondents held senior positions in the field of global talent management in the same organizations as three of the diversity practitioners.

Procedure

The interview participants were initially accessed through a European Diversity Manager’s network, a self-initiated network of approximately 70 diversity practitioners working in multinational corporations that are headquartered or based in Europe. Furthermore, I used existing networks to reach other potential respondents. In the attempt to recruit a suitable study sample, I experienced similar reactions as reported by Kirton and Greene (2009). Two diversity practitioners responded to my e-mails and referred to their corporate policies not to participate in diversity research. Interestingly, both organizations were headquartered in the United States, even though I had approached the diversity directors who were responsible for the European, Middle East and African (EMEA) region, all based in European countries. Some diversity practitioners responded that they did not have time to participate, and referred to changing positions as the main reason. The majority of contacted diversity practitioners did not respond, despite a reminder e-mail being sent after the initial e-mail to request for their participation in the study. I sent a general reminder e-mail to those diversity practitioners I did not know personally; those diversity practitioners who I had met
personally before, received a personalized reminder, which resulted in two additional positive responses to participate. I ended this first round of interviews with the question of whether the diversity practitioners would be willing to connect me with their peers who were responsible for talent management. While initially almost all respondents indicated interest in connecting me with their colleagues, only three further interviews resulted, due to a lack of response and follow up to my e-mails.

For the diversity practitioners, the intention of the study was described as gaining more insights on the organization of diversity management, to get a deeper understanding of the interfaces between diversity management and other parts of the organization. For the talent practitioners, the intention of the study was described accordingly, i.e. gaining more insights on the organization of talent management, to get a deeper understanding of the interfaces between talent management and other parts of the organization. This vague description, combined with the semi-structured interview method, enabled the respondents to share their opinions openly, without being probed into responses that would emphasize the intersection between diversity management and talent management.

The semi-structured interviews were conducted between April and October 2014, and lasted between 30 and 65 minutes, with an average of 41 minutes. The chosen semi-structured interview method ensured a level of focus and structure, while allowing for flexibility and spontaneity for respondents to express their experiences and opinions. All interviews started with general questions such as the job title, industry sector and how their position was embedded in the organizational structure, and then moved into more open questions about the organization itself, the collaboration between the respondent’s position and other departments, and the effects of the company’s financial situation on diversity or talent management. Appendices A and B present the interview guides. I conducted all interviews via telephone; the conversations were recorded and transcribed verbatim.

**Sample**

Table 3.1 provides an overview of the respondents, including demographic descriptions, as well as the industry sector and location of their organization. The respondents represented a total of 13 international organizations, headquartered mainly in Europe (two organizations were headquartered in the US, whereas the respondents were based in the European Head Offices). Out of the 16 respondents, 15 were based in Europe, and one in Singapore (whereas the organization was headquartered in the United Kingdom). With regards to gender, 13 respondents were female, and 3 were male.
### Table 3.1. Overview of the study respondents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No</th>
<th>Synonym</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Nationality</th>
<th>Industry</th>
<th>Location</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>DM_1</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>British</td>
<td>Energy Sector</td>
<td>Netherlands</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>DM_2</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>British</td>
<td>Pharmaceuticals</td>
<td>UK</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>DM_3</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>British</td>
<td>Professional Services</td>
<td>UK</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>DM_4</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Malaysian</td>
<td>Pharmaceuticals</td>
<td>Switzerland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>DM_5</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>British</td>
<td>Financial Services</td>
<td>Singapore</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>DM_6</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Spanish</td>
<td>Retail Premium Segment</td>
<td>Austria</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>TM_6.1</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Swiss</td>
<td>Retail Premium Segment</td>
<td>Austria</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>DM_7</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>German</td>
<td>Consumer Products</td>
<td>Germany</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>DM_8</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>British</td>
<td>Financial Services</td>
<td>UK</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>DM_9</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>German</td>
<td>Automotive</td>
<td>Germany</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>DM_10</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Brazilian</td>
<td>Food &amp; Beverage</td>
<td>France</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>DM_11</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Danish</td>
<td>Food &amp; Beverage</td>
<td>Denmark</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>TM_11.1</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Swedish</td>
<td>Food &amp; Beverage</td>
<td>Denmark</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>DM_12</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>German</td>
<td>Consumer Products</td>
<td>Germany</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>TM_12.1</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>French</td>
<td>Consumer Products</td>
<td>Germany</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>DM_13</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Finnish</td>
<td>Facilities Services</td>
<td>France</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Exploring the interaction between diversity and talent practitioners in multinational organizations: Creating a collaboration framework

The respondents represented a total of 10 nationalities; the majority held a British nationality (5 interviewees) and 3 respondents were German. Apart from two, 8 nationalities represented European countries. In line with the diverse set of nationalities, comments were made regarding the intercultural mindset when asked about the own nationality: “I like to think of myself as international, but it’s British, yeah” [DM_5]; “Yes, I'm Brazilian, born and raised in Brazil but I've been, well, I lived many, many years in France.” [DM_10]

Data Analyses

For the analysis of the interview data I used the software program Atlas.ti, a tool that has been developed to enable explorative approach to theory building (Muhr, 1991) and followed a two-step process. In the first step, I started with a round of open coding, in order to explore the themes that emerged from the data. In this round, the mismatch between perceptions of diversity practitioners and talent practitioners about their relationship and collaboration became apparent. The first part of the results section sheds light on the reported misalignment between the functions.

In the second round of coding I focused on the data from diversity practitioners, and extracted elements of collaboration that they expressed as relevant. Simultaneously, I familiarized myself with the literature on collaboration and applied Bedwell et al.’s (2012) conceptualization of collaboration as a sensitizing concept.

According to Bowen (2006), in contrast to definite theoretical concepts, sensitizing concepts provide a direction rather than a concrete prescription of what to look for in the respective data. Bedwell et al. (2012) introduce an overarching definition of collaboration which I considered relevant in order to explore the linkage between the work of GDM and GTM practitioners. They define collaboration as an “evolving process whereby two or more social entities actively and reciprocally engage in joint activities aimed at achieving at least one shared goal” (Bedwell et al., 2012, p. 130). Based on this definition, the authors introduce a collaborative performance framework (Bedwell et al., 2012) consisting of four interdependent elements: (1) inputs, described as individual and entity characteristics; (2) the collaboration process, described as the combination of emergent states and collaborative behaviors; (3) outputs, which are the consequence of the collaborative cycle and feed back into the various elements of the collaboration framework; and (4) contextual features, such as environmental or structural characteristics. The strength of this collaboration conceptualization lies in the fact that it includes multidisciplinary sources of collaboration literature. Bedwell et al. (2012) refer to the implications of their proposed framework for strategic human resource management (HRM) and mention possible HRM strategies which can enhance an organization’s capability to collaborate. These strategies affect all stages of
the employee lifecycle - such as strategic planning, selection and staffing, training and development, performance appraisal as well as reward and compensation. Although talent management is not mentioned explicitly, the activities are in line with the definition of GTM, which focuses on attracting, retaining and developing talented employees (Tarique & Schuler, 2010). Similarly, in line with the definition for GDM, diversity management seeks to “accommodate diverse sets of social and individual backgrounds, interests, beliefs, values and ways of work in organizations” (Özbilgin et al., 2015, p. 11). Therefore, I applied the collaborative performance framework (Bedwell et al., 2012) as a sensitizing concept for the development of a collaboration framework between diversity and talent practitioners. The four elements of Bedwell et al.’s (2012) collaboration framework are recurring in the newly developed model, tailored to the possible collaboration between diversity and talent practitioners. The elements (1) input, (2) collaboration process, and (3) output are mentioned directly in the created framework presented in the second part of the results-sections. The (4) contextual features are addressed implicitly by referring to the relationship between diversity and talent practitioners, as highlighted in the first part of the results section.

Following this two-step approach thus enables me to highlight consistencies as well as contradictions between the different groups of respondents.

Results

In this section I present the results in line with the two-step approach I applied to the data analyses. The first part zooms in on the reported interaction between diversity and talent practitioners and highlights discrepancies between the reported value of collaboration. The second part focuses on the responses from diversity practitioners and distills design specifications for effective collaboration between diversity and talent practitioners.

Collaboration: Problem or opportunity?

During the interviews I asked diversity practitioners to describe their role and its intersections with other areas in the organization. This rather broad question provided room for the respondents to express relevant intersections in the order they preferred, rather than being probed into the direction of a specific answer. The answers of diversity practitioners included:

“But I think what's really important is a lot of our work is integrated with talent management, organizational development, and learning, and staffing as well.” [DM_4]

“So, yes, we are working with talent. Talent is like with trainings and with talent it is dedication, and also with mobility.” [DM_12]
The selected excerpts from two respondents highlight that from the perspective of diversity practitioners, collaboration with other parts of HR is considered to be relevant. Furthermore, the answers suggest that for diversity practitioners, the collaboration with talent management as sub-domain of HR is considered to be important.

However, out of the 13 interviewed diversity practitioners, there was only one respondent who described the collaboration between the diversity and talent units as ideal and with no room for further improvement, as the following excerpt shows:

Dagmar: How do you perceive your cooperation with your colleagues in HR?

DM_7: How do you call it? A symbiotic relationship maybe? It’s really interlinked. […] Any process in HR, I am actively triggering change but I’m also always asked when there is change implicit that we give our point of view in order to make it as inclusive as possible.

Dagmar: Yes, yes and how do your peers and colleagues, how do they react to that? How is it lived on a daily basis?

DM_7: Very positive. Very positive because there is a challenging factor, challenging the quality of what they do, and a joint decision on how do we implement change, adapt according to what we have. […] So discussion under equals I would call it.

Dagmar: Is there anywhere where you think, oh, this is an area where it could go better in terms of cooperation?

DM_7: We’re still talking only HR, correct?

Dagmar: Yes.

DM_7: Actually not, no.

Other diversity practitioners were rather new in their positions and new to the diversity field, and did not experience nor express resistance to implement diversity management in their organizations:

“So, I have been dedicating many of my time last year to engagement and all, what is engagement and meeting engagement, training managers and leaders to engage with employees and selling the benefits and the business cases for that. Now, I’m starting to do exactly the same this year on inclusion and diversity.” [DM_4]

“So what I am in the process of trying to do is really engage the HR function in what can they do to support diversity and inclusion, and the way we see that happening is really by focusing on the inclusivity part.” [DM_8]

In contrast to the one ‘very positive’ diversity practitioner and the two diversity practitioners who started only recently, the other 10 diversity practitioners provided a more critical picture of the relationship with their peers, although to varied degrees. Usually in the first part of the interview, some diversity practitioners referred to the positive collaboration with talent practitioners, especially in comparison to the past or to other organizations:

DM_1: When I started twelve years ago you were fighting back people who were saying why would we be interested in D&I, they didn't get the business case. It has moved on enormously since then and it's very clear in the HR organization what people's responsibilities are, and also I'd have to say, in the line.

Later on during the conversation, the same diversity practitioner points out the
positive changes that were brought through a re-organization in 2010, when the talent and diversity functions were merged:

“I think because of the way HR was designed in 2010 and because as I said talent management, talent advisors very much had D&I sitting with them, in their portfolio, it's worked very well. I mean, ok, yes, for the first year everyone was trying to understand the new organization, the new roles. I'm not going to lie to you, it was a bit... we had a few hiccups and people not understanding who was responsible for what, but after a year later, it was all working well and remains so.” [DM_1]

Further in the conversation, the same diversity practitioner raises his concern about the lack of support from the wider organization:

“There are other senior leaders who don’t, or they kind of say the right things because they feel they have to, but maybe their behaviors don’t match that. So, and I do think we’re, if I’m going to bluntly honest, [...] I think personally where we’re missing out at the moment is the sort of first line supervisor level who [are] under enormous pressure to meet operational targets and day-to-day stuff, and some of those really don’t get either why D&I is important and/or just don’t have time to even think about it. And therefore, maybe the behaviors aren’t what you would hope for to create an inclusive environment.” [DM_1]

Another diversity practitioner indicates her appreciation about the positive collaboration with talent management in comparison to the situation in other organizations:

“Historically I would have said that HR are normally the most difficult group to do anything with. They can be the least supportive and put up the most barriers [...] I have to say at [company’s name] that isn’t the case and I am grateful for that. There’s a lot of very engaged people in the talent world who get this and do it without me having to coach them.” [DM_3]

However, despite the positive comments about the collaboration with her talent management peers, the same diversity practitioners acknowledges the challenges she faces in her role:

DM_3: It’s far from perfect but it’s going in the right direction.
Dagmar: Would you have an example?
DM_3: Well, they [the senior leaders] don’t all hit the targets. They don’t all have significant accountability yet baked into what they’re doing, so some of them don’t have accountability in their scorecards. So they can talk about this, they can nod their head, they can say how serious they are but ultimately if failing to hit the targets means nothing, that’s what I would say is where it’s not perfect.

Together, the above quotes from the two diversity practitioners provide a mixed picture of the situation in their respective organizations. On their one hand they are positive about the collaboration with other functions, while on the other hand they are aware that there is room for improvement when they refer to senior leaders in the organizations who ‘nod’ without acting accordingly.

Other diversity practitioners were more direct in expressing their personal frustration and the lack of support from their peers:
"But the reality actually is that I sometimes feel with my role that I actually don’t belong anywhere because I’m kind of like always the leftover. I’m not really part of HR, I’m not really part of talent management and luckily I am not really taking it personally but it’s really something that you have to handle because you are also always forgotten.” [DM_9]

“I have been in [company name] for four years and after a year, a feeling like I got severely beaten up - everything I did and said. I was like, okay, to survive in this job, I need to find some other methods and techniques to use. And I took a time out - the good thing is that nobody really knew what I was doing anyway because they kind of just said, "Go fix it." So I kind of just pulled the plug for a time […]” [DM_11#18]

“No, there isn’t a team as such. I have to work through others. It's very difficult and very frustrating. […] And, you know, in the real world, I would have thought that if we accepted that there's a gap, then a couple of people would get together and try to reduce that gap. But, here, it seems like there is an acknowledgement that there is a gap, but there isn't a response, a sufficient action - from my point of view - that will help to, you know, reduce that. [DM_2]

Some diversity practitioners expressed their discontent about the collaboration with their HR peers despite the fact that most of the diversity practitioners formally reported into the HR function:

“And you know when I struggle with that, specially within the HR - you know the HR, it's funny. That's really confidential, Dagmar what I'm telling you but the HR leadership team, it doesn't give me a lot of energy. It takes away a lot of my energy” [DM_10]

“Of course, there are people that will understand it, of course. But, from my experience, HR is not as strong a partner.” [DM_2]

“But, yes, sometimes you might think that, well, is HR the most challenging group of people?” [DM_13]

Based on the above quotes, the collaboration with other members of the organization does not seem to be self-evident for diversity practitioners. Instead, diversity practitioners seem to express the need to fight (or, like stated in the entry quote of this chapter, to push) for the success and legitimacy of diversity management in their organizations. Thus, the diversity practitioners seem to consider collaboration with their talent peers as both: as problem because it is frustrating, as well as opportunity because there is room for improvement in order to gain more power, legitimacy and ultimately success.

**Perspectives from the talent practitioners**

When asking talent practitioners a similar question about their role and its intersections with other areas in the organization, the answers highlight the need to collaborate with line managers and HR Business Partners, and only when asked more directly do they mention diversity practitioners as collaboration partners. However, when being
probed, the relevance of collaboration between talent management and diversity management was confirmed:

Dagmar: Are there any other, maybe in your, in your center of excellence, any other colleagues that you work with to develop some kind of concepts?

TM_11.1: *We have the, we have the, I mean, of course we have inter-dependencies, I mean, with the compensation and performance person, I have, you know, like the dialogue. So PDP [personal development plans], how do you, how do you cascade goals in the organization? How to get people motivated. Of course, there's money, but there are also lots of other things. So how do you get these kind of, you know, concepts to fly in the organization, focusing on the right things and being simple. Then we have organizational health, I mean, we are divided, you know... you know [name of diversity practitioner]?*

Dagmar: Yea.

TM_11.1: *I mean that’s, we have the diversity. Me and [name of diversity practitioner] we own the diversity.*

A talent practitioner from another organization stated hesitantly, when asked directly about diversity:

TM_12.1: *mmh yea. So we have a team working on diversity. Aahhmm they’re not part of COE talent but we work collaboratively around, ah with them, sorry.*

These examples illustrate that collaboration between diversity management and talent management is considered relevant for both profession groups. However, diversity practitioners place higher relevance on the collaboration within the HR function and especially with talent practitioners than vice versa. When asked more directly about the link between talent management and diversity management, the talent practitioners refer to their colleagues who are responsible for diversity management in their organizations:

“*Yes. So, we have, we have one dedicated person who is called engagement so the engagement director. And he has also started another project for inclusion and diversity." [TM_6.1]*

“*Currently, the past two years, it’s rather recent ahh that this team [diversity team] exists, we, we, or they, they have done a lot of actions around awareness. “ [TM_12.1]*

By referring to their colleagues who are responsible for diversity management, the talent practitioners create a distinction between themselves and their diversity practitioner peers. In terms of social identity theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1979) they are thus labeling diversity practitioners as an out-group, which is not part of their inner circle.

The next conversation excerpt confirms the tensions in collaboration between diversity and talent practitioners:

Dagmar: How would you describe then the collaboration with the diversity team?

TM_12.1: *ah good, I mean, ahhhm, I think they have a big ahhh task aahhhm, I guess they went with awareness, but, I think they need to, really change gear at the moment, and really go into vision and strategy. So we have a strategy, which right now was more at the awareness level.*
Exploring the interaction between diversity and talent practitioners in multinational organizations: Creating a collaboration framework

Dagmar: mmhhh  
*TM_12.1:* But ahhh so that we can support them better aahhmmm, but its, its tricky because ah yes, we can push for, I mean currently our push is around women, women in leadership. 

Dagmar: mmhh, mhh  
*TM_12.1:* ahhmm and ahh you, you can’t start, so in the leadership world, what I don’t want to do is anything special for women, meaning that I don’t want to separate them even more. You know like, I don’t believe that we need a special program for women, because I think it needs to be, I think it needs to be done in a, in a way that it is not using the same arms as the, you know, as the male dominated culture.  

Dagmar: yeah, yeah.  
*TM_12.1:* So I am struggling with that. We have a bit of movements like that, where we have, you know, mentoring only women, and I’m, struggling, ahhmm, I kind of disagree with that, but it’s not the view of everyone, it’s kind of like yes, they understand, and then at the same time there is a sense of, yea, but we need to do something. So, yeah.

The above excerpt highlights that there seems to be a discrepancy between the positive statement about the “good” collaboration with diversity practitioners, and the implicit opinion about the collaboration with the diversity peers. According to the talent practitioner, her diversity peers should move faster by ‘changing gear’, and she does not “believe” in dedicated women’s programs. Thus, despite the comment about the positive collaboration in the beginning, the talent practitioner does not seem to buy into diversity strategy as promoted by her peers who are responsible for diversity management. In a similar vein, a talent practitioner from another organization states:

*TM_11.1:* Because there I think, and now I'm very much into diversity but I love the subject. But it's, I think what very many companies do in their work with diversity is that they say, well, it's very good, you know, we have these people and we, you know, located them. And then they come out with requirements for, you know, for promotions that are lighter, you know, some like, you know, you don't need to go anywhere in the world.

Dagmar: Yes.  
*TM_11.1:* You know, you do great or whatever. So they try to take away, I mean, but in the end of the day we know what the requirements are.  

Dagmar: Yes.  
*TM_11.1:* If you haven't been a general manager out in the world you can't be in the executive committee. So we have to bring in, you know, women and non-Danes and tell them if you don't do this you're not going to go there.

Evidently, even though the talent practitioners say that they ‘love’ diversity and that they have a ‘good’ collaboration with their diversity peers, they implicitly criticize and disagree with the work performed by their peers. The talent practitioners disapprove the work of their diversity peers in a subtle and indirect form, and by doing so they undermine the work of their peers and exhibit power over them. Both statements disapprove of gender equality programs targeted towards advancing the promotion of women, which seems to be advocated by their diversity peers. In the diversity management literature, Van den Brink and
Stobbe (2014) describe the ‘support paradox’ as an explanation for the backlash effect of gender equality programs, specifically the unwarranted doubts that beneficiaries of these programs experience in regards to their qualifications. In their study of a gender equality program in Dutch universities, the authors depict that equality programs are simultaneously considered to be necessary and harmful (Van den Brink & Stobbe, 2014). Linking those findings back to this study, it seems that the talent practitioners advocate the ideal of meritocracy and the norm that women leaders should advance their careers on their own, without the support of formalized equality programs. Thus, they seem to be unaware of the perils of believing in a meritocratic system that contribute to the continued overrepresentation of white men in organizations as outlined in diversity management research (Castilla & Benard, 2010; Van den Brink & Stobbe, 2014).

When asked about the challenges that talent practitioners face with regards to collaboration, they intuitively referred to other collaboration partners rather than diversity practitioners:

*TM_11.1: Where business partners take, you know, very much, you know, the side of their part of the business and not the HR side.*

Dagmar: Yes.

*TM_11.1: So they are like, they are very critical towards new things. If the managers in their team, so they're not standing up for, you know, from an HR point of view, these kind of issues you get all the time. So it's very much their concepts that they can sell into the organization. And that's not the way it should be, I think, I mean, they should be, you know, this is the way we did, please implement from my side. Of course ((inaudible)) I don't give a shit about what you're saying, this has got to be done."

While the diversity practitioners highlighted the need for collaboration with their talent peers, the talent practitioners place more emphasis on the collaboration with HR business partners - and the challenge they face of not being directly connected to the business leaders. In other words, the need for effective collaboration between diversity management and talent management seems to be a non-issue for talent practitioners.

To summarize, the responses about the relevance of collaboration from the diversity and talent practitioners stand in contrast to each other. The diversity practitioners emphasize the need for effective collaboration with their talent peers and express their frustration and lack of support and buy-in they experience within the organizations. The talent practitioners do not seem to assign the same importance to the collaboration with their diversity peers, indirectly by not mentioning diversity or by implicitly criticizing it.
Creating a collaboration framework

Despite the mismatch in perceptions about the relevance of collaboration between the diversity and talent functions, the positive statements from diversity practitioners about the collaboration with their talent peers seem to offer a more positive picture, in which the tensions can be reduced, at least to an extent. By referring to former states where things weren’t ‘as good as they are now’, the diversity practitioners’ responses suggest that effective collaboration between diversity and talent practitioners can be developed over time. Therefore, the responses of the diversity practitioners served as the foundation to develop a collaboration framework, reflecting their perceptions and ambitions regarding the elements that characterize effective collaboration with talent practitioners. In line with Bedwell et al.’s (2012) collaborative performance framework, which served as a sensitizing concept for the development of the collaboration framework, the struggles in the relationship between diversity and talent practitioners as depicted in the above section create the context in which the collaboration between the functions is established. Figure 3.1 represents the collaboration framework, which I will elaborate in the following sections.

Inputs for effective collaboration

In line with the collaborative performance framework (Bedwell et al., 2012), I first explore relevant inputs that affect the collaboration between diversity and talent practitioners. The data shows that individual as well as organizational characteristics contribute to the collaboration between diversity and talent practitioners.

Organization of diversity management. In order to position the hierarchical relevance of diversity management in the overall organization, I asked respondents about their title, reporting line, and team size. Table 3.2 provides an overview for each respondent. In order to ensure anonymity of the respondents and their organizations, the order is not in line with the overview presented in table 3.1.

Out of the 13 respondents, five held a director title, three carried a ‘head of’ title, two respondents held a manager title and two a consultant title, and one respondent was classified as assistant. The maturity level of GDM in the organizations ranged from just started, all the way up to well established and awarded organizations in the diversity area; while all respondents mentioned that they came from another business area into the diversity field, especially those with a director title have been in the field longer - and some have been awarded for their diversity work by external committees, such as the highest state representative or the World Health Organization.
Figure 3.1. The collaboration framework between global diversity and global talent practitioners

Source: Developed by the author

Note. Dotted line boxes represent inputs and outputs; solid line boxes represent elements of the collaboration process
### Table 3.2. Overview diversity practitioners’ title, reporting line and team size

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Reports to</th>
<th>Global Diversity Team Size</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Director of Diversity and Inclusive Leadership</td>
<td>Talent Partner</td>
<td>No information</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Director of Diversity Initiative</td>
<td>VP Group D&amp;I</td>
<td>2 direct reports</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Corporate Director HR Global Diversity &amp; Inclusion</td>
<td>HR Board Member</td>
<td>5 direct reports</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Director Global Engagement</td>
<td>Executive VP HR</td>
<td>No direct reports</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Associate Director D&amp;I</td>
<td>HR VP Global Function</td>
<td>No direct reports</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Global Head Diversity &amp; Inclusion</td>
<td>Global Head of Leadership and Talent</td>
<td>No direct reports</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Head Group Diversity &amp; Inclusion</td>
<td>Board Members</td>
<td>4 direct reports</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Global Head of diversity, Inclusion &amp; Collaboration</td>
<td>Executive HR (CHRO)</td>
<td>No direct reports</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Human Resource Manager Diversity</td>
<td>VP Talent Management</td>
<td>No direct reports</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Global Project Manager</td>
<td>Global Head of D&amp;I</td>
<td>One out of 7 Project Managers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>OD Consultant</td>
<td>Director of Cultural Change, D&amp;I, Engagement</td>
<td>No direct reports</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Global D&amp;I Consultant</td>
<td>VP D&amp;I and Global Talent</td>
<td>One out of 7 Consultants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Assistant HR Manager Projects &amp; Events</td>
<td>Senior VP HR Group Function D&amp;I</td>
<td>No direct reports</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
All respondents spent the majority of their working time on the topic of diversity, apart from respondent 4, who simultaneously carried the responsibility for the employee engagement initiative. Respondents who did not carry diversity as part of their title provided explanations as to why this was the case:

Dagmar: And what is your job title?
DM_8: I’m actually an organizational development consultant which is leading on diversity and inclusion.

Dagmar: Okay, and is D&I part of your title or is it the content, let’s say?
DM_8: Well, we’ve been given a lead but it could change at any time so my main title is ‘Organization Development Consultant’ but diversity and inclusion is in my title because I’m leading on it at the moment, but of course that could change, as could anybody’s really, to be honest.

“Actually I was a kind of being lucky in a way because she [her manager] got the topic on her plate and I was already reporting to her as an assistant HR manager for, yes, I was called on the normal HR work like recruiting et cetera. And then she got Diversity and Inclusion on, yes, on her plate in 2011, I think. And then I was, yes, there was an upcoming event, what should we do, how should we structure things. And I was supporting her in that topic and, yes, this is how I got into it and then I stayed with this one and skipped that one, the other responsibilities.” [DM_12]

Apart from the explanations about the title, these excerpts also provide insights how diversity practitioners were nominated into their current positions. In the presented cases, the diversity practitioners took the topic of diversity initially on as an additional part of their existing responsibilities. This indicates that they did not possess experience or formal education in the area of diversity management prior to their appointment - a factor that has been reported in previous study samples analyzing diversity practitioners (e.g. Tatli, 2011).

The organizational structure in which diversity management is embedded is reflected through the reporting line. Most managers of the respondents carried a VP title or were part of the executive board, indicating that top managers hold the responsibility for diversity management in the studied multinational organizations. Furthermore, four of the top managers were also directly responsible for talent management, indicated by the word ‘talent’ in their title. This overarching responsibility for diversity management as well as talent management suggests that many organizations chose to bundle these functions formally together, which might affect the collaboration between the peers who are responsible for diversity management and talent management respectively, given the hierarchical proximity to the same top manager.

Looking into the size of the diversity management teams shows that most diversity practitioners do not manage a team. When asked about their team size, respondents explained:
Exploring the interaction between diversity and talent practitioners in multinational organizations: Creating a collaboration framework

Dagmar: I see. And do you have a team to support you with that?

DM_6: Not at the moment, no. I also started to do, to write some job descriptions and I don’t think I will need so much a team.

Dagmar: And how big is your diversity team?

DM_10: I have nobody to myself. So I have no, I am the team. It's funny because very often, I talk about diversity team but the diversity team, well, it's not myself. Now, it's me and my chief diversity officer who's starting from next Monday on. But it's, to be honest, it is, there are so many people who have all their jobs and who are team lead diversity activities because we have the councils. You know there are quite a lot of people involved on D&I activities but doing that of their jobs or because it's also part of their role, you know descriptions. But I don't have, I'm not, I have nobody reporting to me.

Dagmar: Ok, ok. Do you have a team?

DM_1: No, I wish!

Evidently, the relatively small team size and the regretted absence of direct reports indicates low direct power within the organizations and subsequently the need for diversity specialists to collaborate with other members of the organization in order to achieve success in their role. In addition to the organizational aspects of the global diversity management function, diversity practitioners expressed relevant personal characteristics for the satisfaction and success in their roles, which I consider a relevant input for the collaboration with other parts of the HR function.

Diversity Practitioners’ Characteristics. The second relevant factor that contributes to collaborative performance includes individual characteristics of the practitioners (Bedwell et al., 2012). Throughout the conversations, diversity practitioners mentioned three relevant traits that support success in their roles. The first relevant trait was mentioned when responding to the question of why they chose to work in the area of diversity management:

“Before [entering the first diversity position], I’ve always been personally interested in this space, giving people chances, letting people, you know, the fact that people have been excluded for many different reasons […] through no fault of their own, I suppose. I was very much into the whole justice. My own values were about justice, fairness, you know, letting people do what they want to do.” [DM_2#8]

Hmm. I think it’s just a perfect fit with my personal life. So my personal life is completely structured around the different diversity dimensions and settings. So […] somebody who is absolutely convinced about the concept working – and the other part is I’m really in favor of cultural change, company culture and being the change agents in order to design our company culture according to our vision how it should look like in the future. [DM_7]

These excerpts provide insights into the value set and into the personal life situations of the respondents. Justice, fairness, equality and personal relevance of diversity seem to fuel the passion for furthering diversity. One respondent, reflects on the required passion when she states:
“It’s sort of a role that you need a passion for and it had never been a subject of particular, not that I don’t care for it but it’s almost like it was never really something that was at the top of my list.” [DM_8#8]

Out of the 13 diversity practitioners, this respondent was the only one who actively distanced herself from being passionate about diversity. All other diversity practitioners referred to diversity as being a relevant element in their personal values.

A second trait, which was mentioned by the respondents concerns patience, a trait that seems to affect the collaboration with other members of the organization, as the next quotes highlight:

“You have to have patience, you have to be very self-driven because you have to work on your own projects, you have to give you motivation by yourself. No one is giving you that.” [DM_9#40]

“I mean, what I miss I’ll tell you is the speed because when you are sales, you know, things happen much faster, and you see results much faster.” [DM_6#52]

Paired with the need for patience, the above quotes reflect the need for self-motivation and that managing diversity does not deliver fast results.

A third relevant characteristic for successful collaboration is described in the next series of quotes, highlighting the relevance of networking:

“So it’s, yes, well I mean I’m with the organization for so long now that I have a good network so that also helps me very often to get actually relevant business information.” [DM_9#34]

“I’m more a person who prefers to network inside the organization more than creating teams, you know.” [DM_6]

Engaging in networking enables the respondents to build alliances in the absence of hierarchical power, and has been recognized as relevant social capital for diversity practitioners (Özbilgin et al., 2015). So far, the mentioned individual characteristics represent positive experiences and traits.

However, the respondents also referred to more negative aspects on how their work personally affects them, highlighted in previous quotes. Diversity practitioners voiced their frustration, often by referring to metaphors such as feeling ‘pain’, or ‘beaten up’. Yet, the diversity practitioners also provide suggestions as to how to handle challenging situations, such as not taking things personally or taking time out and benefiting from the lack of attention by considering it as freedom.

To summarize, the formal organization of the global diversity management department and the personal characteristics of the diversity practitioners are considered to represent relevant input criteria for the collaboration process between diversity and talent.
practitioners. With regards to the formal organization of the global diversity management department, the title, reporting line and team size of the diversity practitioners indicates that the positioning and legitimization of the diversity department varies in the studied organizations - and that there are differences in the maturity level of the diversity functions. With regards to personal characteristics, the interviewees revealed the relevance of personal values such as justice, fairness, equality, the need for patience and the interest in networking as relevant characteristics affecting the collaboration with other members of the organization.

The collaboration process

In this section I will present a conceptualization of a collaboration process between diversity practitioners and talent practitioners that I developed based on the interviews with the diversity practitioners. Given the explorative stage of identifying and analyzing the collaboration between diversity and talent practitioners, one key contribution of this study lies in developing a collaboration process, which outlines the particular activities that diversity practitioners referred to as relevant for effective collaboration with their talent practitioner peers. Analyzing the responses from the diversity practitioners yielded four distinct yet interrelated elements of collaboration: (1) Establishing conversations, (2) getting into the talent processes, (3) ‘winning them over,’ and (4) transferring ownership. In the section below, I will elaborate on all four elements, highlighting the existence as well as the regretted absence of these activities from the perspectives of the diversity practitioners.

Establishing conversations. The first step in the collaboration process refers to establishing conversations with ‘them’, referring to colleagues in the same organization who work in the area of GTM. When the diversity practitioners described collaborating with talent management, they referred to the need of having conversations with their peers:

“So what we do is the following, we sit together, the moment we sit together in kind of brainstorming sessions and we try to revise different issues and say, look, what we are doing now and how should it look like, you know…” [DM_6#17_97]

On a negative stance, respondents mentioned that the absence of conversations hampers the collaboration:

“We are not around the same table necessarily from the beginning onwards.” [DM_13#25_298]

At this stage, the diversity practitioners did not specify the content of these conversations. More clarity was provided when they described to what degree and in which occasions they would cooperate with talent management, which was presented as a different activity, reflected in the second step of the collaboration model.
**Getting into the talent processes.** The second stage of the collaboration model involves getting into the talent management’s processes, meaning to blend diversity aspects into the talent management activities. In this step, the respondents provided concrete examples on talent processes that they co-create with their talent practitioner peers:

“We are doing right now, a deep dive, a diversity and inclusion deep dive into our talent acquisition processes and into our talent management processes. You see, so I'm also working with them you know, to improve our, always, it is to improve our processes from a D&I perspective.” [DM_10#28_245]

“Then you see a strong difference also in terms of our evaluation process. I see in the way we discuss the performance and the potential of our people has a different setup. We do it via roundtable discussions, including more people into the decision. We do also decisions on recruitments with several-layer interviews. So different people, we looked at also the profiles of the interviewers, are different so that you have the chance for the candidate to pass through different profiles and then get the most, let’s put it, the most objective profile decision.” [DM_7#17]

The above quotes reflect the content that diversity and talent practitioners develop in collaboration, for example ensuring that the talent process are considerate of implicit and explicit biases. Furthermore, they provide insights which talent processes diversity and talent practitioners co-create - such as recruiting, performance reviews or development activities. However, getting into the processes seems difficult and requires time and persistence, which echoes the previously described personal characteristic of patience:

“Yes, the challenges are definitely for me to get into the HR processes.” [DM_11#23_67]

“I've accomplished many, many different things in two years and a half but it's only now that I'm really being able to do this real deep dive with these different teams, talent acquisition and talent management.”[DM_10#38_255]

Once the diversity practitioners managed to get into the talent processes, the next step in the collaboration framework is to ‘win them over’, as one respondent put it.

‘Winning them over’.

“You know, you have to win them over, not influence them, win them over. And then you may be lucky, you may get some mention. [DM_2#27_22]

In the above quote the diversity practitioner distinguishes between influencing and ‘winning them over’, indicating that influencing is more passive than ‘winning.’ ‘Winning them over’ results in actions from the talent practitioners, such as addressing diversity management topics in the talent processes they are responsible for. The quoted diversity practitioner refers to the talent practitioners as ‘them’, and thereby clearly distances herself from her peers. In the second part of the statement, ‘you may be lucky’, the pronoun ‘you’ does not refer to me as the interviewer, but rather suggests a general statement that might be
generally true for anybody in the same situation, i.e. for all diversity practitioners. Yates and Hiles (2010) refer to this form of ‘you’ as a ‘fourth person’ type, that is a rather indeterminate form of the pronoun ‘you’, which does not address a specific person, but adapts to its context instead. Thus, the statement ‘you may be lucky’ refers to an external locus of control (Rotter, 1966) and stresses the dependency on factors which do not seem to lie in the area of direct influence for the diversity practitioner.

This third step in the collaboration framework includes a variety of activities, which the diversity practitioners highlighted when describing what they were currently working on, such as creating awareness, training their peers, or establishing accountability.

**Creating awareness.** Activities performed by the diversity practitioners that are aimed to create awareness, address the unconscious mind as well as conscious decisions to change existing behaviors:

“People usually, they are not aware that there is a need to think about D&I. You know why would I do things differently? What's wrong? You know I had done this all my life, why should I do things differently? So it's me pushing and pushing.” [DM_10#38_255]

Engaging in awareness building is a behavior that diversity practitioners utilize in order to minimize implicit and explicit bias, which is targeted to their peers working in HR, as well as for other members of the organization.

**Training peers.** Initiatives to develop and deliver trainings are also targeted to peers working in HR, as well as to managers working in the business - and might be one possible instrument to realize the previously mentioned activity, i.e. creating awareness.

“We make sure that line managers and particularly HR who are running the assessment panels for that, are trained up in diversity issues, you know, how do you assess someone coming from a different culture?” [DM_1#16_377]

“Like we have a piece of review process every year and there, the four years I've been here three different people have owned that process. That means I have to start from scratch every time. And now we're going to have fifth, fourth person coming in hopefully this year. Now I'm going to have start all over, right?” [DM_11#24_68]

The above quote from the diversity practitioner who has to retrain new colleagues frequently addresses a challenge for the diversity practitioners. Given high turnover and the need to establish collaborative relationships with the talent peers requires repetition of efforts, which do not seem to pay back in immediate outputs.

**Establishing accountability.** Similar to the previously mentioned activities which are relevant to ‘winning them over’, creating responsibility within the group of HR peers is considered to be a top priority, even before extending the activities beyond the HR function:

“Well, it will be everyone but this year, my target audience in terms of getting HR to be responsible is this year.” [DM_8#31]
Nesting responsibility in the talent management unit implies to shift from pushing information towards a more balanced form of collaboration, which is manifested in pro-active behavior from talent practitioners, as the next excerpt highlights:

“So I think there is more, in the, in the past, I would say that we had to reach out to people a lot, meaning we have to, you know, try to push a little bit more. But now, it's more of a pull as well, I mean, push and pull because I think people are very much interested and also they see the value in D&I and the activities and the tools that we have.” [DM_4#17_149]

This quote highlights the evolution of the collaboration between diversity and talent practitioners, highlighting that the current collaboration is perceived to be more effective than in the past.

Altogether, the three steps of creating awareness, training peers and establishing accountability represent the core of the diversity practitioners’ work tasks, and are a direct consequence of being co-creators of talent processes. However, the final step reflects a desire of the diversity practitioners to disconnect from their talent peers by moving ownership.

**Transferring ownership.** Transferring ownership marks the fourth element in the collaboration framework. Essentially, this step implies to move accountabilities for diversity topics from the diversity practitioners to the talent practitioners, which may be manifested in pro-active behaviors by talent practitioners:

“Now, we have a framework you know for women's development program, that's new. And I must say you know, she [VP Leadership Development] took the initiative to do that. So without, I didn't have to push for it or to ask for it you know.” [DM_10#29_246]

While the above quote describes an actual situation, provided by the respondent as an example for effective collaboration, other diversity practitioners referred to this collaboration phase more as an ambition, rather than considering it to be reality:

“I think really, my objective, well, and in an ideal world, there'll be no need for a D&I expert you know anymore in the organization because it's so embedded into people's ((inaudible)) but that's really an ideal world, maybe in 100 years time, that would be the case.” [DM_10]

“Recruiting for example, I'm having to go to my peer […]. So in an ideal world I should not be running the numbers and going to her and saying we're trending in the wrong direction for female hiring of partners. She should have been all over that and she should have been telling me that that's what she has observed and this is what she's doing about it, whereas I'm having to come up with the solutions. So in an ideal world you'd want all the functions doing that naturally.” [DM_3#22_349]

Evidently, these quotes highlight that the ‘ideal world’ - to which the respondents refer to - represents a utopia that is far from the reality the diversity practitioners currently experience in their organizations. Interestingly, the first and the second quote in this section
come from the same diversity practitioner. This indicates that despite the experience of some successes, as reflected in the first quote, the overall ambition of transferring ownership is far from reality. The lack of perceived ownership reported by the diversity practitioners also links back to their characteristic of patience and self-motivation, which were established as relevant inputs to the collaboration model.

In summary, the presented collaboration framework - developed on the basis of Bedwell et al.'s (2012) collaborative performance framework which acted as a sensitizing concept for the present study - builds on interviews with 13 diversity practitioners working in global diversity functions in international organizations. It constitutes a model from the diversity practitioners’ perspectives that highlights four consecutive steps required to effectively collaborate with the global talent management department. The benefits and outcomes of effective collaboration are reflected in the final stage of the collaboration framework.

**Outputs**

In the collaborative performance framework, outputs are defined as “individual and/or collective collaborative outcome(s), which can encompass a tangible product, an idea, shared understanding, personal growth or viability and satisfaction” (Bedwell et al., 2012, p. 137).

**Shared understanding.** In line with the above definition, diversity practitioners provide examples as to how diversity aspects are integrated in a shared understanding of career concepts, such as:

“[…] we have one concept that has been established even before but adapted in the meantime, which is called 2-2-2 [triple two]. We say for people moving up into managerial positions, we really focus on passing through two different countries, two different business units and two different functions. That's the triple two, three times combination of two concept. […] So different roles, different functions, different business units to really provide this round and general view of things which also broadens your mind and opens up for inclusive behavior.” [DM_7#18_417]

This example highlights how the integration of diversity and talent management results in a shared understanding of relevant experiences in order to move into senior management.

**Tangible outcomes.** Further responses from diversity practitioners high-lighted concrete, measurable results as a consequence of effective collaboration:

*So we’re working in a consolidated approach to try to get a framework that is consistent in order to measure the impact of our program. So this is ongoing.*” [DM_4#36]

The fact that the described project is ongoing reflects that while the relevance of tangible outcomes has been recognized by the diversity and talent management units, the
outcomes of having one consolidated approach with agreed variables has not yet been established to its fullest potential.

**Personal growth.** While two previously described outputs, shared understanding and tangible outcomes, are outputs affecting the entire organization, the responses from the diversity practitioners also revealed a third, more personal output:

“And it's little step by step and because that's building our company better company, it makes me really feel good.” [DM_13 #42]

*I mean I'm totally passionate about it [diversity management] and it gives me great, you know, it brings me great meaning to actually be in this function because we basically make a difference in the company in terms of creating a more gender balance, organization to create a reflective leadership pipeline.* [DM_4#4]

The above statements reflect that the diversity practitioners experience personal satisfaction as a result of creating change. Their ambition to contribute to a ‘better company’ reflects an ideological desire, and is in line with the described inputs that refer to a value set addressing equality and fairness. Working for the greater good is the material that fuels their passion, and observing small changes results in energy and self-motivation, which feeds back into the collaboration cycle.

However, on a more negative note, diversity practitioners also referred to the lack of output and change which is not happening despite the implementation of diversity in HR processes:

DM_2: *Here's a lot of transformation, which, you know, whenever that happens, you know, diversity always gets hit. Sometimes, it really shoots up in the agenda and, other times, it actually goes further down in the agenda.*

Dagmar: Yes, absolutely. And how do you feel it now at this point in time?

DM_2: *I think it's the latter. But, you see, it's a bit strange because we have diversity on the global business scorecard, but I don't know what we're doing to make this, to deliver against that.*

The above quote is in line with the earlier statements from other diversity practitioners, stating that things are far from ideal and that change is not happening to the extent that diversity practitioners would like to see. This form of subtle and overt resistance feeds back to the collaboration process, and creates frustration for the diversity practitioners. Furthermore, it seems to create embarrassment, introduced by statements that point out the confidentiality and secretive nature of the situation such as “I'm not going to lie to you” [DM_1] or “That's really confidential” [DM_10] or by explicitly expressed transparency:

“I'm very transparent with you and I hope that you use this information in a confidential way in your research.” [DM_13]

To conclude, the outputs of the collaboration framework affect the entire organization on the basis of shared understandings (e.g. through creating novel career systems) and
assessments of aligned measurements, as well as more personal outcomes, reported by the diversity practitioners. The outputs (or lack thereof) feed back to the collaboration cycle, and thus enhance or impede future collaboration between diversity and talent practitioners.

**Discussion**

Global diversity management and global talent management are two functions in multinational organizations that aim to establish globally relevant strategies to be implemented in local contexts. However, literature exploring the roles of and interlinks between global diversity practitioners - as well as global talent practitioners - is scarce. Furthermore, the diversity and talent management literature depict a conceptual mismatch and lack of alignment. While the claims to integrate talent and diversity management have been raised in the diversity management literature since more than a decade, the talent management literature remains largely silent on the relevance of diversity for talent management. Triggered by this gap in literature, this study analyzes the relationship between global diversity and global talent practitioners and presents a lens on how diversity and talent management are practiced in multinational organizations.

**Facing the struggles of diversity practitioners**

In the first part of the analysis I explored the interaction and relationship between global diversity and global talent practitioners. The results indicate that the respondents’ discourses about the relevance of collaboration between diversity and talent practitioners are as unbalanced in practice as they are in literature.

Most global diversity practitioners’ express struggles for legitimacy and power to achieve success in the wider organization. The lack of support is confirmed through the statements of the talent practitioners, for whom the collaboration with diversity practitioners seems to be a non-issue. When asked more directly about the collaboration with their diversity peers, they seemingly suggest interest and passion for the topic of diversity. Yet, talent practitioners subtly criticize the work of their peers and thus do not seem to buy-in the work of their peers.

The malfunctioning relationship between diversity and talent practitioners calls for a critical reflection from a power perspective. Considering a common sense approach to power, I regard power of organizational actors as the ability to get things done, even in situations of resistance (Fleming & Spicer, 2008; Hardy & Clegg, 2013; Weber, 1978). For diversity practitioners, holding power would thus imply that they are in a position to achieve the identified goals towards increased diversity and inclusion of all employees, despite opposing forces within the organization. Yet, the picture that the diversity practitioners paint suggests
that they do not possess the power they would consider relevant to achieve their professional ambitions. Factors such as the team size, i.e. the regretted absence or justification about their relatively small team sizes suggest a lack of legitimacy for resources – whereas possessing scarce resources is a legitimate medium to confer power (Hardy & Clegg, 2013). Although some of the diversity practitioners hold a relatively high position in the hierarchy and directly report to the management board or the level below, the lack of manpower behind them might be considered as window dressing (Marques, 2010). This means that a suggested commitment towards diversity within the organization is not realized through the allocation of sufficient resources in order to create sustainable change.

Furthermore, the diversity practitioners’ characteristics, outlined as inputs in the collaboration framework (see figure 3.1 on p. 90), suggest that resilience to follow the personal value sets of fairness and equality, patience and networking skills form relevant capabilities in order to create effective collaboration relationships within the organization. Linking these characteristic to the power lens provides insights into the challenging situation that the diversity practitioners are facing in their roles: first, the need to be self-driven and resilient suggest that other members in the organization do little to drive the diversity agenda forward, and might display subtle or overt forms of resistance against diversity initiatives. Second, the need for patience suggests that others do not express the same sense of urgency to address diversity issues, especially in times of high workload and pressure to ensure business growth. Third, networking skills seem to be relevant in order to ‘win others over’, which suggests that others express little innate interest to commit to the diversity agenda. Together, the resistance, lack of urgency and interest that the diversity practitioners encounter in the collaboration with their peers creates frustration about the lack of power they seem to possess.

However, some diversity practitioners paint a more positive picture about the collaboration with their peers, and provide examples of improvements and successes over time. Thus, the ‘struggles’ they are facing simultaneously enable them to play the political game that is needed to secure more legitimacy for the topic of diversity within their organizations. According to Fleming and Spicer (2008), the concept of struggle “provides a term for thinking about power and resistance as an interconnected dynamic” (p. 305). Applying this concept to the situation of the diversity practitioners reflects the interplay between power and resistance, i.e. the fact that “power and resistance are often indistinguishable” (Fleming & Spicer, 2008, p. 305). Thus, on the one hand, the diversity practitioners experience resistance and a lack of power to drive the diversity agenda. On the other hand, being formally responsible for diversity within the organization enables them to
exert resistance against the prevailing power structures: through ‘pushing’ the diversity topic into the organization they gradually create alliances that support them in their work.

Together, the results suggest that the diversity practitioners consider collaboration with their talent peers as a double-edged sword: it presents a problem because it is frustrating, while it also presents an opportunity because there is room for improvement in order to resist the inequality that currently prevails in organizations.

**Effective collaboration between diversity and talent practitioners**

In the second part of the analysis I focus on the elements that the diversity practitioners mentioned as relevant for establishing and sustaining an effective collaboration with talent practitioners in specific, and related HR units in general. Linking the collaboration framework back to the concept of struggle and power in organizations (Fleming & Spicer, 2008) the developed model can therefore act as a tool for diversity practitioners to assess and develop the collaboration with their peers in order to gain more power and legitimacy within their organizations.

The results indicate that from the perspective of the diversity practitioners, there are four relevant process steps, which constitute effective collaboration. While the first two steps, ‘establishing conversations’ and ‘getting into the talent process’, require more push from the diversity practitioners, the latter two steps (i.e. ‘winning them over’ and ‘transferring ownership’) represent more pull mechanisms from their cooperation partners.

Marks, Mathieu, and Zaccaro (2001) integrate a temporally based categorization system for team processes - and distinguish between transition phase processes and action phase processes. They define transition phases as “periods of time when teams focus primarily on evaluation and/or planning activities to guide their accomplishment of a team goal or objective” (Marks et al., 2001, p. 364). The subsequent action phases are focused on “periods of time when teams conduct activities leading directly to goal accomplishment” (Marks et al., 2001, p. 366). Although the authors focus on team processes, the proposed taxonomy is applicable for collaboration processes between organizational entities that go beyond team structures (Bedwell et al., 2012) and may also explain the distinction between push and pull mechanisms in the presented collaboration framework between diversity practitioners and talent practitioners. The data revealed that the two latter steps occurred to a lesser extent, and diversity practitioners described them more often as an ideal situation rather than reality. Linking this to temporality of team processes, the prevalence of push mechanisms indicates that the collaboration between global diversity and talent units stands at its beginning, and that it might intensify over time.
Furthermore, the developed collaboration framework is nested in relevant inputs and outputs, which influence the collaboration process. As such, the proposed collaboration framework is in line with the IMIO (input–mediator-output-input) model for team collaboration (Ilgen, Hollenbeck, Johnson, & Jundt, 2005), and considers a cyclical notion. Thus, the collaboration between diversity practitioners and talent practitioners is not static, but rather dynamic in nature. This is relevant, given that both fields - GDM and GTM – have emerged relatively recent, and more context specific research is advocated in GDM literature (Özbilgin et al., 2015) as well as GTM literature (Vaiman et al., 2012).

Implications, Limitations and Conclusions

The contributions of the present study are twofold: first, I explored the relationship between diversity and talent practitioner in large, European organizations. The results highlight that similar to the misalignment between diversity and talent management literature, a collaborative relationship between diversity and talent practitioners is not self-evident in organizations. Instead, it requires hard work, or ‘push’ from the diversity practitioners to ‘win their peers over’ towards realizing an integrated diversity-talent agenda. Based on the interview data from 13 diversity practitioners and 3 talent practitioners, I therefore explored the spoken and unspoken perceptions of diversity and talent practitioners about each other’s work - in line with a recently mentioned evergreen as part of a call for conference papers: “What people do not say is no less interesting than what they do say” (Ybema, Sabelis, Sims, & Izak, 2016).

What remained unsaid from the talent practitioners implies the unspoken disapproval of the diversity practitioners’ work in the studied organization. What remained unsaid from the diversity practitioners implies an ongoing battle for power, legitimacy and acknowledgement – on organizational level to achieve company wide impact, as well as on personal level to achieve satisfaction and to avoid frustration.

The second contribution of this study builds on the spoken words, highlighting what constitutes effective collaboration between diversity and talent practitioners in order to reduce the divide and misalignment between the functions. In accordance with the multidisciplinary and broad definition of collaboration (Bedwell et al., 2012), the present study considers collaboration as evolving processes whereby diversity practitioners and talent practitioners actively and reciprocally engage in joint activities aimed at achieving shared goals. Interviewed independently, representatives of both groups, diversity practitioners as well as talent practitioners, agreed on the relevance of collaboration - although to a different extent. Therefore, the developed collaboration framework between global diversity practitioners and global talent practitioners provides insights on the design specifications that
constitute effective collaboration in order to achieve intended outcomes, and how these can be assessed and improved over time.

Theoretically, the collaboration framework offers a conceptual lens that integrates the domains of both global diversity management and global talent management – it becomes the spoken medium that can be negotiated, neglected or improved. In the present study, the focus has been on the interaction between individual diversity and talent practitioners within the same organization. Future research could address the macro level of analysis, i.e. by analyzing the level of collaboration between diversity and talent management on the country level. Stemming from legal regulations addressing equal opportunities for historically marginalized groups, diversity management has a long history in governmental and non-governmental institutions, such as ministries or the United Nations. Linking these activities to the emerging macro perspective of global talent management (e.g. Khilji, Tarique, & Schuler, 2015), would enable the evaluation and assessment of the collaboration between diversity practitioners and talent practitioners on the country level. This macro perspective would explore the collaboration between the two fields beyond the establishment and implementation of human resource management activities, as requested in the global talent management literature (Khilji et al., 2015).

Future research should also consider longitudinal study designs, in order to gain more insights into the dynamic nature of the collaboration between the fields, and how it is evolving over time. In the present study, some respondents mentioned that they were currently reviewing the talent processes; applying a longitudinal study design would therefore enable the impact of the collaboration to be evaluated - observing whether it changes the composition of the talent pipeline and ultimately increases the diversity of higher leadership echelons. In order to assess the level of collaboration, the model would benefit from the identification of testable relationships - which could then be measured and analyzed in form of quantitative studies.

In addition to theoretical relevance, the present study bears potential for practical application. In line with more general models of collaboration (Bedwell et al., 2012; Marks et al., 2001; Patel, Pettitt, & Wilson, 2012), the developed framework for collaboration provides a concrete description of relevant factors that diversity practitioners, as well as talent practitioners, can utilize to reflect on their current level of collaboration. Thus, this framework can become a tool to identify positive characteristics of their collaboration and also pinpoint room for improvement. Furthermore, as this framework has been inductively developed on the basis of input from diversity practitioners, is offers an outside-in perspective for talent practitioners as to how their work is perceived by others in the organization. Given that talent management is a relatively young field of research, as well as
in practice (Collings et al., 2015; Thunnissen, Boselie, & Fruytier, 2013), the present paper offers a new perspective on global talent management, which might enable talent practitioners to increase the successful application of global talent management initiatives throughout the organization.

As with every study, the present study is not free of limitations. The first limitation of this study stems from the imbalance of respondents working on diversity management and talent management. An equal number of diversity practitioners and talent practitioners would have enabled me to develop a similar framework of collaboration from the talent practitioners’ perspective, which I could then have directly compared with the framework that emerged from the diversity practitioners’ perceptions. Nevertheless, the fact that I was not able to recruit a higher number of talent practitioners - despite the willingness to connect me with their peers expressed by the diversity practitioners - reveals an imbalanced interest in each others’ working areas and a more implicit lack of collaboration between the units.

The second limitation stems from the high diversity of the sample. The diversity practitioners represented a high variety of industry sectors, and countries in which their organizations were based. Furthermore, their responses reflected a different level of maturity with regards to global diversity management. While some organizations were at the start of establishing GDM initiatives, others reported a long-standing history within the organization. A sample that would have represented a more consistent maturity level and industry sector would have allowed for broader generalization. Instead, the present study is characterized by its exploratory nature. Diversity practitioners, as well as talent practitioners, should consider their organizational context before applying the framework. This is in line with Stahl et al. (2012) who have derived six principles of effective global talent management, and emphasized that there is little benefit for organizations to mimic best practices without also considering their specific context.

In conclusion, the present study provides a first attempt at creating a common understanding of what effective collaboration between diversity and talent practitioners in multinational organizations constitutes in order to diminish the divide between the diversity management and talent management functions. Exploring the relevance of the framework for their own organization could be a first step for diversity and talent practitioners to reflect on their relationship and on the level and effectiveness of their collaboration; and to create a shared understanding of desired outputs. Thus, the present study provides a concrete framework as to how GDM and GTM initiatives can be integrated successfully in practice as well as in theory, and serves as a meaningful starting point for future research and analysis of the interdependencies that exist between diversity and talent management.
References


Appendix A

Semi-structured interview guide – Diversity Management Practitioners

- Is it ok to record the conversation? This recording will be deleted once transcribed, and your answers will be anonymized for the research
- Structure: a few demographic questions, and then we move into the main part of the conversation

General overview
- What is your job title, industry sector?
- How is your role embedded in the organizational structure?
- To whom do you report?
- How big is the diversity team?
- Since when are you in this position (in the respective organization)?
- How long do you work in this field?
- Why did you start in this field?
- Your nationality?

Key questions
For the remaining interview, I would like to focus on 2 areas, as mentioned in my previous e-mail: (1) How is diversity management organized; (2) the intersection with other departments

1. Can you recall any situation that would describe best how diversity management is approached and organized in your company?
2. How do you perceive your role and its intersections with other areas in your organization? Can you recall any situation that would describe it best?
3. To what extent do changes in the company’s financial situation affect your work on diversity management?

Link between global diversity management and global talent management
- In your perspective, which areas of the organization link closely to your diversity management function?
- How are these links manifested in your organization? [Work towards an answer on TM without probing it directly]
- How would you describe your relationship to the talent manager?
What makes it a good (or not so good) collaboration? Why?

What are your two biggest challenges in your role?

Closing

Thank you very much for the interesting conversation. Before we close, I have two final questions:

Would you be interested in connecting me with your colleague working Talent Management? I would be very interested in learning more about their perspective. Of course, your answers will be treated confidentially and it would also be great if you would not share too much with them what we discussed in this interview.

I propose not to mention the company name in my research. What is the best way to refer to your organization?
Appendix B
Semi-structured interview guide – Talent Management Practitioners

- Is it ok to record the conversation? This recording will be deleted once transcribed, and your answers will be anonymized for the research
- Structure: a few demographic questions, and then we move into the main part of the conversation

General overview
- What is your job title, industry sector?
- How is your role embedded in the organizational structure?
- To whom do you report?
- How big is the Talent team?
- Since when are you in this position (in the respective organization)?
- How long do you work in this field? (HR / Talent Management)
- Why did you start in this field?
- Your nationality?

Key questions
For the remaining interview, I would like to focus on 2 areas, as mentioned in my previous e-mail: (1) How is talent management organized; (2) the intersection with other departments
1. Can you recall any situation that would describe best how talent management is approached and organized in your company?
2. How do you perceive your role and its intersections with other areas in your organization? Can you recall any situation that would describe it best?
3. To what extent do changes in the company’s financial situation affect your work on talent management?

Link between diversity management and talent management
- In your perspective, which areas of the organization link closely to your talent management?
- How are these links manifested in your organization? [Work towards an answer on DM without probing it directly]
- How would you describe your relationship to the diversity manager?
- What makes it a good (or not so good) collaboration? Why?
- What are your two biggest challenges in your role?

Closing
- Thank you very much for the interesting conversation.
- I propose not to mention the company name in my research. What is the best way to refer to your organization?