

Getting to Know You:  
The Influence of  
Personality on  
Impressions and  
Performance of  
Demographically  
Different People in  
Organizations

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This paper extends social categorization theory to understand how personality traits related to information sharing may correspond with positive perceptions of demographically different people, thereby enhancing their experience and performance in organizations. We tested our hypotheses in a sample of MBA candidates and a sample of financial services firm officers and found that people who were more demographically different from their coworkers engendered more negative impressions than did more similar coworkers. These impressions were more positive, however, when demographically different people were either more extraverted or higher self-monitors. Further, impressions formed of others mediated the influence of demographic differences on an individual's performance such that the negative effect of being demographically different disappeared when the relationship between impression formation and performance was considered. This suggests that demographically different people may have more control over the impressions others form of them than has been considered in previous research.●

Researchers have long assumed that increased contact between members of different groups will improve intergroup relations because in-group members will learn that out-group members do not fit their negative stereotypes (e.g., Sherif et al., 1954; Barnum, 1997). When demographically different people offer individuating information, they increase others' idiosyncratic knowledge about them. Such idiosyncratic knowledge reduces a perceiver's propensity to assign demographically different people to stereotypic categories (e.g., Miller and Brewer, 1984), which may, in turn, lessen the perceiver's reliance on surface-level demographic differences as bases of categorization. Instead, the perceiver's focus may shift to social categories that emerge from the work environment. As a result, impressions of a demographically different person that, in the absence of individuating information, may be built around common stereotypes are likely to be revised to reflect the new information he or she has presented.

It is unclear, however, whether increased contact between members of different groups has a positive effect on the impressions they form of each other. On the one hand, some research has found that increased contact improved in-group members' impressions of out-group members and reduced intergroup conflict (e.g., Johnson, Johnson, and Maruyama, 1984). On the other hand, following a comprehensive review of research on the contact hypothesis, Hewstone and Brown (1986: xiii) concluded that "all too often interpersonal contact fails to reduce intergroup conflict." Studies have shown, for example, that increased contact between different people did not improve their attitudes toward one another (Merkwan and Smith, 1999), discourage subtle forms of prejudice (Villano, 1999), or reduce the incidence of harassment (Ragins and Scandura, 1995).

One possible reason for these conflicting results is the underlying assumption that contact enhances communication. Increasing the frequency of interaction among a demographically diverse group of coworkers, however, does not necessarily ensure increased information sharing between people

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who are demographically different from one another, nor does it imply that perceivers will find such information appealing. Even if heterogeneous groups choose to engage in frequent discussions, such communication may be unevenly spread across group members, and the nature of their communication may fail to disconfirm negative stereotypes of out-group members. Thus, what is typically labeled "contact" may merely represent increased exposure rather than increased communication that enhances others' impressions of out-group members.

One problem with relying on past research is that an individual's proclivity to share individuating information, in terms of both quantity and quality, is typically operationalized as contact at the group level. Thus, research invoking the contact hypothesis may reflect an ecological fallacy (Robinson, 1950), in that group properties, such as measures of group contact, have been used to draw inferences about individual behaviors, including an increase in the sharing of stereotype-disconfirming information. Further, this approach implies that increased contact at the group level will uniformly enhance in-group members' impressions of out-group members. In contrast, some psychologists have suggested that an individual who is different from the prototype may be rejected from the salient category and placed into a subcategory (i.e., recategorized) without any modification of the group stereotype (e.g., Rothbart and John, 1985). Given this, increased contact may lead in-group members to perceive out-group members as unique individuals (Gaertner et al., 2000), who may be viewed more positively, rather than typical out-group representatives, who may continue to be viewed more negatively. To understand why certain out-group members may be perceived positively while others may not, we must investigate impressions that are formed of individual out-group members and their unique characteristics, particularly with respect to their inclination to reveal individuating and stereotype-disconfirming information, rather than generic impressions of the entire out-group.

Research suggests that the effectiveness of interpersonal contact depends on certain contextual features, such as the presence of equal status memberships, opportunities for self-revealing interactions, egalitarian norms, and a focus on tasks that require cooperative interdependence (for reviews, see Slavin, 1983; Johnson, Johnson, and Maruyama, 1984). While this research has helped to specify how situational factors may influence interaction between demographically different people, remarkably few studies have considered the impact of personal characteristics on such interaction, aside from those that serve as the basis for social categorization. The lack of attention given to the role of individual differences among out-group members in research on demographic diversity and in-group/out-group biases has led to an ironic by-product: researchers often conceptualize "different" people as being virtually interchangeable with one another.

Realistically, however, not all demographically different people are the same, even if their visible characteristics are similar (Jackson et al., 1991; Jehn, Northcraft, and Neale, 1999). Contextual factors, such as group membership or relative sta-

tus, clearly influence how demographically different people are viewed (e.g., Diehl, 1990; Brewer, 1991), but demographically different individuals themselves may also influence how they are viewed. Thus, it is important to investigate the extent to which a target individual's personal characteristics may mitigate the negative consequences of social categorization based on salient demographic differences. Personality research has found that people with certain personality traits are often perceived more positively. For example, people who are more open have been viewed as adapting more quickly and effectively to unexpected change (LePine, Colquitt, and Erez, 2000), while other personality dimensions, such as self-monitoring and conscientiousness, have been shown to influence success in organizations, in terms of performance and promotions (e.g., Barrick and Mount, 1991; Kilduff and Day, 1994; O'Reilly and Chatman, 1994; Mehra, Kilduff, and Brass, 2001).

Demonstrating that certain individual differences influence how demographically different people are perceived may help reconcile the inconsistencies characterizing previous demography research (Williams and O'Reilly, 1998). In particular, it may clarify why some demographically different people are successful in organizations or teams while others fail (e.g., Thomas and Gabarro, 1999; Seidel, Polzer, and Stewart, 2000). It may also help explain why increased contact improves intergroup relations in some cases but not in others (Hewstone and Brown, 1986). Further, it may refocus social identity theorists' attention on understanding not only the perceiver but also the individual being perceived.

## **THE FORMATION OF IMPRESSIONS OF DEMOGRAPHICALLY DIFFERENT PEOPLE**

People form impressions of others in their social environments by interpreting information gathered from observation and interpersonal interaction with the focal individual and similar others (Snyder and Swann, 1978). In general, impressions focus on individual attributes that are relevant to the perceiver (Kelley, 1967; Simon, Hastedt, and Aufderheide, 1997). In organizations, attributes that are associated with the role of an employee in a particular task domain are considered relevant and are, therefore, foundations for impression formation. In interdependent work teams, for example, members form impressions of one another based on the set of valued attributes that are associated with the role of a team member, such that the guiding question for one member who forms an impression of another member becomes, "Does the target appear to have the set of attributes valued in a team member?"

The process of impression formation among team members may also be influenced by the social categories that become salient for perceivers and targets. To define their self-concepts in social situations, people categorize themselves as similar to or different from others based on their membership in a social group, such as a demographic category (Turner et al., 1987). Self-categorization relies on the activation of salient social categories, which function psychologically to influence a person's perception and behavior as well as oth-

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ers' behavior toward that individual (Turner et al., 1987). In organizations, demographic characteristics such as sex, race, and citizenship (e.g., Messick and Mackie, 1989) often emerge as salient social categories because they offer readily apparent bases of distinction among coworkers, which may signal the likelihood that similar people share common backgrounds and experiences and can expect one another to react to situations similarly (e.g., Pfeffer, 1983). Grouping people based on demographic categories occurs even when formal organizational or work group categories already exist. For example, an organizational simulation study showed that, compared with members of demographically homogeneous organizations, members of demographically heterogeneous organizations reported that demographic categories (e.g., race, sex, nationality) were more salient than were organizational categories (e.g., job title, level, division) (Chatman et al., 1998).

In-group and out-group distinctions are drawn around salient social categories, whether these are based on work group boundaries, demographic categories, or some other classification. To maintain high levels of self-esteem, people enhance their evaluations of fellow in-group members and degrade their evaluations of out-group members (e.g., Hogg and Abrams, 1988). As this process permits a person to assume and maintain a positive self-identity (Tajfel and Turner, 1986), he or she may seek to maximize intergroup distinctions and, through the use of negative stereotypes, view out-group members as less attractive (Kramer, 1991). Research has documented that categorizing different others into groups based on salient distinctions can lead people to perceive out-group members as less trustworthy, honest, and cooperative than are members of their in-group (Brewer, 1979; Tajfel, 1982). Thus, in-group members are more likely to enhance their impressions of and cooperate with one another, while forming negative impressions of and distinguishing themselves from out-group members. In a demographically diverse environment, categorizations based on salient demographic distinctions will magnify negative impressions of demographically different people.

People tend to retain information that supports an existing stereotype profile rather than information that is inconsistent with that stereotype (e.g., Allport, 1954; Snyder, Campbell, and Preston, 1982). Employees may be inclined to form less favorable impressions of colleagues who are demographically different from them because they interpret information gathered from observation of and interpersonal interaction with those individuals in ways that confirm negative out-group stereotypes (Kramer, 1991). Conversely, people may view colleagues who occupy similar identity groups, such as those who are similar in sex, race, or nationality, more favorably because information about these individuals will be interpreted in ways that confirm the positive stereotypes associated with their common in-group characteristics (Tajfel and Turner, 1986). As a result, people who are demographically different from others in the organization or work group will be perceived by their colleagues more negatively, on average, and those who are demographically similar to others in the orga-

nization or work group will be perceived by their colleagues more positively, on average. This suggests the following hypothesis:

**Hypothesis 1:** People will be more likely to form positive impressions of demographically similar colleagues and negative impressions of demographically different colleagues.

### **The Moderating Effects of Extraversion and Self-Monitoring**

Personality traits have been shown to influence organizationally relevant behaviors, including interview success, performance, leadership, and boundary spanning (e.g., Caldwell and O'Reilly, 1982; Barrick and Mount, 1991; House, Spangler, and Wyckoff, 1991; Caldwell and Burger, 1998). Allport and Odbert (1936: 26) defined personality traits as "generalized and personalized determining tendencies—consistent and stable modes of an individual's adjustment to his environment." Traits are relatively stable, internal, and causal tendencies (John, 1990). At the core of modern personality research is a hierarchical framework for organizing personality traits at the broadest level, referred to as the Five Factor Model of personality, or the "Big Five" (e.g., Digman, 1990). Here we consider two traits that are likely to influence impression formation: extraversion and self-monitoring.

**Extraversion.** One of the five orthogonal dimensions in the Big Five that is likely to be relevant to impression formation is extraversion, defined as a personal orientation toward other people. Those who are more extraverted tend to be more sociable, talkative, and outgoing, while those who are more introverted tend to be more reserved and shy (John, 1990). Some research has suggested that extraversion may be useful to members of organizations. For example, extraverted people are more likely to perform well in certain jobs, such as sales (e.g., Barrick and Mount, 1991). Personality researchers have described extraversion as an easy-to-judge characteristic because extraverted people tend to provide more individuating information through both verbal and nonverbal cues than do introverted people (Park and Kraus, 1992). Compared with introverted people, who are quiet and withdrawn, extraverted people are more likely to convey effectively characteristics that are otherwise harder to judge, such as skills, knowledge, values, and interests (e.g., Fletcher, 1987; Tullar, 1989).

Being extraverted may be particularly useful for demographically different people in enhancing others' work-related impressions of them and disconfirming their negative stereotypes. Extraverted people communicate and interact more frequently with people in their context, providing others with personal information (John, 1990). As the amount of individuating information provided by a demographically different individual increases, others may become less likely to associate the focal individual with out-group stereotypes based on visible characteristics (Gaertner et al., 2000). Such interaction individuates stereotyped individuals by increasing the exchange of more intimate information (Brewer and Miller, 1988). Conversely, introverted demographically different peo-

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ple may continue to suffer from negative stereotypes because they offer no individuating and potentially disconfirming evidence. As is the case with prior research on the contact hypothesis, this approach assumes that negative stereotypes of demographically different people are generally untrue and that demographically similar people will respond reasonably to disconfirming information about negative stereotypes (e.g., Miller and Brewer, 1984; Stephan and Brigham, 1985). We therefore predict:

**Hypothesis 2a:** Extraversion will moderate the negative effects of being different on the formation of work-related impressions, such that being more extraverted will have a more positive effect on coworkers' impressions of demographically different people than of demographically similar people.

**Self-monitoring.** Demographically different people who can anticipate others' expectations and adjust behaviors accordingly may also enhance others' impressions of them. Those high on self-monitoring "typically strive to be the type of person called for by each situation in which they find themselves and thus are particularly sensitive and responsive to interpersonal and situational specifications of behavioral appropriateness; they use this information to monitor and control the images of self that they project to others in social situations" (Snyder, Berscheid, and Matwychuk, 1988: 972). In any social situation, high self-monitors ask, "Who does this situation want me to be and how can I be that person?" In contrast, low self-monitors ask, "Who am I and how can I be me in this situation?" (Snyder, 1979).

Demographically different people who are high self-monitors may induce coworkers to form more positive impressions of them by being more attuned to the desired identity and more likely to adjust their image to suit coworkers' expectations of appropriate behavior (Snyder, 1987). High self-monitors tend to be more successful in managing relationships across organizational groups; they are better boundary spanners because they are more responsive to informational and social stimuli (Caldwell and O'Reilly, 1982). Similarly, high self-monitors may be better boundary spanners across different identity groups because they are responsive to different expectations that members of one identity group have of another identity group and are "particularly willing and able to tailor and fashion an image" that members of another identity group find appealing (Snyder and Copeland, 1989: 16). Thus, demographically different people who are high self-monitors may be more capable of disconfirming stereotypic images others may have of them. By presenting an image that disconfirms negative out-group stereotypes, a demographically different individual may lead others to recategorize him or her as a fellow in-group member (Brewer and Miller, 1988; Gaertner et al., 2000). In contrast, self-monitoring may provide a less significant advantage for those who are demographically similar to their coworkers because there is a less pronounced need to manage one's image when similar others are, as in-group members, already inclined to form positive impressions of one another. We therefore predict:

**Hypothesis 2b:** Self-monitoring will moderate the negative effects of being different on the formation of work-related impressions, such that being a higher self-monitor will have a more positive effect on coworkers' impressions of demographically different people than of demographically similar people.

### **The Mediating Effects of Impression Formation on Individual Outcomes**

Recent research suggests that the influence of demographic characteristics may dissipate over time as team members gather more information about one another (e.g., Chatman and Flynn, 2001). For example, some studies have shown that the influence of work groups' demographic composition on work processes and outcomes declines over time (e.g., Harrison, Price, and Bell, 1998). Instead, the impressions formed of demographically different people may begin to eclipse the use of more readily apparent demographic differences as proxies for understanding and treating them. The impressions that demographically different people create may determine how well they perform, as well as how satisfied and integrated they are with their work groups.

**Individual performance.** Demographically different employees' performance can be constrained in team environments (e.g., Greenhaus, Parasuraman, and Wormley, 1990). Work team members must often rely on the assistance of others to accomplish critical tasks. As a result, establishing trust, earning others' respect, gaining access to valuable information, and receiving social support become necessary conditions for effective individual performance (e.g., Wageman, 1995). Social categorization based on salient demographic distinctions in work teams is likely to have a negative impact on each of these factors and increase stereotyping, polarization, and anxiety (Steele and Aronson, 1995; Lau and Murnighan, 1998). If, for example, demographically different team members are not considered trustworthy or respectable, which may be the result of an in-group/out-group bias, then demographically similar team members may be reluctant to offer them assistance (Brewer, 1979). A recent study found that demographically diverse teams reported lower levels of cooperation and that more demographically different group members were less effective performers than were those who were more similar to their colleagues (Chatman and Flynn, 2001). Demographically different people can perform effectively in work groups, however, particularly in terms of creative output, when members emphasize common organizational membership as the salient social category (Chatman et al., 1998) and when stereotypic threats are removed (Steele and Aronson, 1995). If others regard the demographically different individual as a fellow in-group member based on common group or organizational membership, then that person's performance can be significantly improved.

The extent to which demographically different team members can obtain assistance from others that improves their performance may be influenced by the impressions that other team members form of them. As demographically different team members are able to enhance these impressions, it is less likely that they will be viewed as out-group

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members and more likely that they will be viewed as in-group members. Demographically similar team members will be more inclined to extend the benefits of in-group membership to a recategorized, but demographically different, team member. Thus, as others' impressions of demographically different individuals improve, they may receive increased cooperation and support from coworkers (e.g., Wagner, Lampen, and Syllwasschy, 1986) and reduce the cognitive and motivational disruptions caused by stereotype threats, allowing them to perform more effectively (Steele, 1997). This implies that impression formation mediates the relationship between demographic differences and performance, such that others' impressions will influence the performance of demographically different team members above and beyond the influence of their demographic characteristics, as predicted in the following hypothesis:

**Hypothesis 3:** Work-related impressions will mediate the effect on performance of being demographically different, such that the direct effect of demographic dissimilarity on a person's performance will weaken or disappear after the favorableness of coworkers' impressions of that person are considered.

**Satisfaction and social integration.** Demographically different people tend to provide negative accounts of their experiences in organizations. For example, demographically different team members have been found to be less satisfied with team processes and products than were demographically similar team members (Kirchmeyer, 1995). Further, demographically different team members reported lower levels of psychological attachment and were more likely to leave the organization (Wharton and Baron, 1987; Greenhaus, Parasuraman, and Wormley, 1990; Jackson et al., 1991; Tsui, Egan, and O'Reilly, 1992). Not all demographically different people, however, have negative experiences (e.g., Wharton and Baron, 1991; Thomas and Gabarro, 1999). Therefore, some intervening factors may positively influence demographically different people's experiences in organizations, particularly in work team environments.

If demographically different team members are able to enhance others' impressions of them, they may have better experiences in work teams. As we proposed above, demographically similar team members are inclined to recategorize a demographically different team member as a fellow in-group member if their impressions of that individual improve. Consequently, demographically different people's ideas and perspectives would more likely be respected and viewed as legitimate and valuable. Earning respect and acceptance from one's coworkers will likely result in enhanced satisfaction and a sense of fitting in with the organizational culture (e.g., Tsui, Egan, and O'Reilly, 1992). Thus, impression formation may mediate the relationship between demographic diversity and satisfaction and social integration; that is, when coworkers form positive impressions of a demographically different colleague, that person will be more satisfied and feel that he or she fits in with the organizational culture, negating the otherwise negative influence of demographic diversity on satisfaction and feelings of fit. Thus, we hypothesize:



**Hypothesis 4:** Work-related impressions will mediate the effect on satisfaction and social integration of being demographically different, such that the direct effect of demographic dissimilarity on an individual's satisfaction and social integration will weaken or disappear after the favorableness of coworkers' impressions of that person are considered.

## **METHOD**

### **Samples**

We tested our hypotheses with data from two samples. The first sample consisted of 119 Master's of Business Administration (MBA) candidates, representing half of the first-year class enrolled in a two-year full-time MBA program at a major American university. Participants' mean age was 28.60 years, and they had an average of 5.31 years of full-time work experience. Thirty-six percent were not U.S. citizens, 22 percent were non-white, and 32 percent were women. The second sample consisted of 245 officers from 10 business units of the North American division of a large U.S. financial services firm, which employs over 80,000 people and operates in more than 90 countries. The size of the business units ranged from 9 to 58 officers ( $x = 28.32$ ,  $s.d. = 13.91$ ). Participants' mean age was 42.81 years, and their average tenure with the company was 11.24 years. Nine percent were not U.S. citizens, 12 percent were non-white, and 23 percent were women.

### **Procedure 1: MBA Student Teams**

The MBA students were required to complete a semester-long consulting project in teams of five, which, with an associated presentation and a paper describing the team process, accounted for 37.5 percent of their final course grade. During the first two weeks of classes, students assembled their own teams. For the remainder of the semester, each of these teams identified and addressed a critical organizational behavior problem facing a real organization of their choosing. At the end of the fifteen-week semester, teams submitted a report of their analysis along with recommendations, both orally and in written form.

At the end of the semester, each student also submitted a short paper (3–5 pages) that described his or her team experience. These papers were content coded, as described below, by two independent judges (different from the judges who graded the team projects) who were blind to the hypotheses. Team members were further required to record their impressions of each team member, including themselves, across a variety of dimensions. Participants submitted these impressions during the final class meeting (response rate = 100 percent). Finally, demographic data were collected from the school's archives.

### **Procedure 2: The Financial Services Firm Business Units**

The participating business units in the financial services firm conducted work in global finance. Their activities included sales and trading, loan structuring, credit analysis, and advising corporate clients on investments. Ninety-one percent of the officers in this sample were vice presidents or occupied a

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position of higher rank. This meant that most respondents had substantial managerial and budget responsibility. Of the total sample ( $N = 245$ ), 141 officers, who were in four of the ten business units we studied, participated in a firm-sponsored pilot cross-evaluation program designed to encourage cooperation among employees by documenting coworkers' impressions of one another. Each of these officers had multiple direct reports, as this was a requirement for participating in the 360-degree feedback program. We selected the remaining six business units by matching them, as closely as possible, with the four pilot-program units in terms of size, structure, and types of tasks in which members engaged. The pilot program included training to teach the required skills and logic behind recording impressions of others, as well as collecting 360-degree ratings of all participants by between 10 and 20 supervisors, peers, and subordinates (average number of raters per employee = 14.15,  $s.d. = 4.85$ ). This pilot program generated more detailed impression-information data, generated by a cross section of coworkers, for this portion of the sample. The addition of the six matched business units provided a larger sample as well as a check on the possibility that simply participating in the pilot program influenced our results.

Individuals participating in the cross-evaluation pilot program had limited input into the selection of their raters. Supervisors and human resource representatives chose the final set of raters according to four criteria: raters (1) had significant interaction with the focal individual; (2) represented areas both within and outside his or her business unit; (3) represented multiple job levels (e.g., peers, subordinates, managers, matrix bosses); and (4) represented all relevant job families, functions, and geographies. The list of raters was confidential in that individuals did not know who actually rated them (aside from their direct supervisor) and received only aggregated feedback at the end of each cross-evaluation cycle. Individuals from the matched business units were rated on various dimensions by their direct supervisor, as described below.

We obtained personnel data from the year prior to the present study, including compensation, traditional performance appraisals, and demographic information from the company's archives. Upon gaining access to the firm and before the first round of the cross-evaluation pilot program, we distributed and collected questionnaires, which we used to assess individual differences and social integration. Finally, we collected the cross-evaluation data described above for each participant from human resource representatives for each business unit enrolled in the cross-evaluation program.

## **Independent Variables**

*Individual-level demographic differences among team members.* For both samples, we calculated relational demography scores to reflect citizenship, race, and sex differences between individuals and their coworkers. In the MBA student sample, the relational demography score described a focal individual in relation to his or her teammates, while in the financial services firm, the relational demography score

described a focal individual in relation to everyone in his or her business unit. Following others (e.g., Tsui, Egan, and O'Reilly, 1992), we calculated three relational demography variables using the following formula:

$$[1/n\sum(x_i - x_j)^2]^{1/2}$$

where  $x_i$  = the focal individual's score on the dimension (e.g., 0 = male, 1 = female),  $x_j$  = each other person's score on that dimension, and  $n$  = the number of relevant others. Differences between individuals (i.e.,  $x_i - x_j$  in the formula above) were based on comparing each individual's citizenship, race, and sex with those of every other individual in the team or unit. So, for example, a person from the United States is different from one from the U.K., and a person from the U.K. is different from one from South Africa. A relational measure ranging from 0 to 1 was derived for each demographic dimension based on these calculations.

Social categorization theory focused us on visible differences, *per se*, rather than on the specific content of those differences, which has been the focus in some prior research (e.g., Riordan and Shore, 1997). In this sense, individual demographic differences are best interpreted, at least in relational demography terms, as an amalgamation (e.g., Wayne and Liden, 1995; Chatman et al., 1998). Therefore, we averaged the three individual relational scores to create an overall measure of relational demography for both the MBA sample ( $x = 0.55$ , s.d. = .15) and the financial services firm sample ( $x = 0.40$ , s.d. = .17). The higher the overall relational demography score, the more demographically different the subject is from relevant others in terms of citizenship, race, and sex.

**Individual differences.** We collected personality data from both samples. The MBA students completed questionnaires at the beginning of the semester (response rate = 98 percent), and respondents from the financial services firm completed questionnaires shortly after we gained access to the firm, prior to the implementation of the cross-evaluation program (response rate = 89 percent).

*Extraversion.* In both samples, we measured extraversion using self-reports of seven items drawn from the Big Five Inventory (BFI), which is both reliable and valid (e.g., John, Donahue, and Kentle, 1991). Each of these items (e.g., is talkative) was rated on a 7-point Likert-type scale ranging from "very uncharacteristic" to "very characteristic." The items were then averaged to create an overall score for extraversion ( $x_{\text{MBA students}} = 4.48$ , s.d. = 1.12;  $x_{\text{financial services officers}} = 5.14$ , s.d. = 0.99). The coefficient alpha reliability estimates of the extraversion scales in the MBA student and financial services firm samples were .88 and .84, respectively.

*Self-monitoring.* Self-monitoring was assessed using self-reports of Snyder's (1974) 25-item Self-Monitoring Scale (SMS). This scale consists of 25 self-descriptive statements that capture such elements of self-presentation as concern with social appropriateness, attention to social cues, ability to

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control expressive behavior, and situation-to-situation shifts in expressive self-presentation (Snyder, 1974). Those who are skilled at controlling their expressive behavior should have high scores on the SMS, and those who exercise little expressive self-control should have low scores. The SMS scales appear to be both reliable and valid (Snyder, 1987).<sup>1</sup> Each of the items (e.g., I'm not always the person I appear to be) was rated on a 7-point Likert-type scale ranging from "very uncharacteristic" to "very characteristic." We then averaged the items to create an overall score for self-monitoring. Only members of the MBA student teams completed the scale ( $x = 3.87$ ,  $s.d. = .52$ ). The coefficient alpha reliability in this sample was .71.

## Dependent Variables

*Impression formation.* Impressions of others are focused on attributes that are relevant to the perceiver or are valued within the task domain (Kelley, 1967). Based on a review of the literature focusing on small-group dynamics (e.g., Levine and Moreland, 1991), we identified three attributes of individuals that are highly valued in interdependent task domains: (1) cooperativeness, (2) leadership ability, and (3) ability to achieve assigned tasks. Though these may not be the only valued attributes, they are likely representative of the most important attributes in such domains. All MBA students were asked to rate themselves as well as the other members of their team on each attribute using a 9-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 = "extremely low" to 9 = "extremely high." We used the single-item within-group interrater reliability equation:

$$r_{WG(1)} = 1 - (s_{x_i}^2 / \sigma_{EU}^2)$$

suggested by James, Demaree, and Wolf (1984), to assess the reliability of these ratings for each dimension ( $r_{WG}$  for cooperativeness = .84,  $r_{WG}$  for leadership ability = .76, and  $r_{WG}$  for ability to achieve assigned tasks = .78). We averaged responses from a focal individual's teammates to create a single score for each dimension. These three scores were averaged ( $\alpha = .89$ ) to create an overall measure of work-related impressions ( $x = 7.46$ ,  $s.d. = .97$ ).

In the financial services firm, we combined two different impressions for the two different parts of the sample. First, for employees in business units participating in the cross-evaluation pilot program, three attributes were identified by firm leaders as highly valued in this specific task domain: (1) customer orientation, (2) analytical skills, and (3) deal management skills. Participants in the firm's cross-evaluation program were rated on these dimensions by their supervisor, peers, and subordinates on a 4-point Likert-type scale ranging from 0 = "unsatisfactory" to 3 = "exceptional."  $R_{WG}$  values, calculated as in the MBA student sample above, for impressions of financial services firm employees reflected high interrater agreement ( $r_{WG}$  for customer orientation = .91,  $r_{WG}$  for analytical skills = .91, and  $r_{WG}$  for deal management skills = .92). We averaged ratings for each dimension and averaged

<sup>1</sup> There is an ongoing debate about whether the 25-item or 18-item SMS is more valid (see Gangestad and Snyder, 2000). Following John, Cheek, and Kohnen's (1996: 763) recommendation, we administered the original 25-item SMS (not the abbreviated 18-item SMS-R) in order to minimize the potential overlap between extraversion and self-monitoring.

these scores again ( $\alpha = .76$ ) to create one impression rating. For employees in business units that did not participate in the cross-evaluation pilot program, direct supervisors relied on these same three criteria to develop a single overall impression of each employee using a 3-point Likert-type scale, with 3 indicating a highly favorable impression and 1 indicating an unfavorable impression on these three criteria. These two different indicators of impression formation were standardized separately and then combined. The impression formation variable ranged from  $-2.65$  to  $3.41$  for the participants from the business units ( $x = 0$ ;  $s.d. = 1$ ).

*Individual performance.* In both samples, we used performance measures that were independent from ratings of work-related impressions and, instead, reflected as closely as possible the objective quality of individuals' effectiveness in accomplishing work objectives. We used individuals' class performance to represent MBA students' performance. It was derived from the students' final class grades, based exclusively on their individual performance (team-related components of the grade were excluded for this analysis), and was weighted on four criteria: midterm examination (20 percent), final examination (27.5 percent), team evaluation paper (5 percent), and class participation (10 percent). Independent judges assessed all aspects of the individual class performance variable.

In the financial services firm sample, the human resources department tracked the revenue that each individual brought into the firm and translated such achievement into rewards for the individual in the form of direct compensation. Compensation levels were derived almost entirely from revenue achievement. While the focal individual's manager ultimately had to consent to and assign levels of compensation, the algorithm for determining it was based on objective achievement of the individual revenue targets (e.g., quota attainment). We therefore used total compensation as an indicator of performance in this sample. Total compensation was calculated as the sum of salary and bonus earned by an individual in one fiscal year ( $x = \$224,580$ ,  $s.d. = \$145,171$ ).

*Satisfaction and social integration.* In the MBA sample, satisfaction was measured from the team evaluation papers submitted at the end of the semester. All personal names and gender-, race-, or nationality-specific references were removed from the team evaluation papers. We assigned each student a two-digit identification number that was used in place of pronouns. The first character in the identification number represented the team (1–24), and the second character represented the individual (A–E). For example, if the fifth team included Mary, Steve, Amy, Jason, and Sue, then these members would be referred to as 5A, 5B, 5C, 5D, and 5E. Thus, the statement "Mary asked Steve to share his thoughts with the rest of the team" would have been altered to read "5A asked 5B to share 5B's thoughts with the rest of the team." These papers were content coded by two independent judges (different people from the judges who rated performance as described above) who were blind to the research and the hypotheses (interrater agreement = .86). We assessed satisfaction with the team process, defined as

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"the collection of both positive and negative feelings and beliefs that people have about their team experience," using a 7-point Likert-type scale ( $x = 5.35$ ,  $s.d. = 1.19$ ).

We used a self-report measure of social integration for officers in the financial services firm. Participants in this sample were asked, "To what extent do you feel that you 'fit in' with your business unit's culture?" Participants responded by indicating the extent they fit in on a scale of 1 (not at all) to 5 (completely). Responses ranged from 1 to 5 ( $x = 3.62$ ,  $s.d. = .94$ ).

## **Control Variables**

We included several control variables in the regression analyses to rule out various alternative explanations for our results. In all analyses, we included dichotomous citizenship, race, and sex variables to control for the possibility that demographic patterns affected one nationality, race, or sex more than others. Further, in equations with performance, satisfaction, and social integration as dependent variables, we controlled for conscientiousness because this personality trait may be related to all such outcomes (John, 1990). Conscientiousness was calculated using the standard BFI scale, as described under "Extraversion" above. In the analyses of the financial services firm sample, we also controlled for participation in the cross-evaluation program, the manager's appraisal from the prior year (in the model predicting impression formation), and prior year compensation (in the model predicting compensation) to isolate the incremental effects of the independent variables in our regressions. Further, we controlled for the size of business units in the model predicting total compensation because changes to compensation levels were managed at the business-unit level and, therefore, potentially were affected by the number of other employees warranting compensation changes. Finally, since tenure with the firm is likely to affect fit with the culture, we controlled for tenure (in years) in the model predicting social integration.

## **RESULTS**

Tables 1 and 2 report the descriptive statistics and correlations among the variables for the MBA student and financial services firm samples, respectively.

We used hierarchical regression to examine the effects of relational demography, personality, and their interactions on impression formation and individual outcomes. We entered control variables on the first step, relational demography on the second step, individual difference variables on the third step, and the interaction of relational demography and the individual difference variables on the fourth, and final, step. We used slope analyses (e.g., Schoonhoven, 1981) to test for the moderating effects outlined in hypothesis 2. To test the mediation hypotheses (H3 and H4), we used the following regression analyses: (1) the dependent variable regressed on the independent variable, (2) the mediator regressed on the independent variable, and (3) the dependent variable regressed on the independent variable simultaneously with the mediator variable. According to Baron and Kenny (1986),

Table 1

| Means, Standard Deviations, and Correlations among Study Variables (MBA Student Sample) |                  |      |        |        |         |        |         |        |       |        |      |
|---|------------------|------|--------|--------|---------|--------|---------|--------|-------|--------|------|
| Variable  | Mean             | S.D. | 1      | 2      | 3       | 4      | 5       | 6      | 7     | 8      | 9    |
| 1. Citizenship<br>0 = U.S.<br>1 = non-U.S.  | 63.90%<br>36.10% |      |        |        |         |        |         |        |       |        |      |
| 2. Race<br>0 = white<br>1 = non-white   | 78.20%<br>21.80% |      | -.19** |        |         |        |         |        |       |        |      |
| 3. Sex<br>0 = male<br>1 = female  | 68.10%<br>31.90% |      | -.07   | .21**  |         |        |         |        |       |        |      |
| 4. Conscientiousness  | 4.84             | 0.89 | .18*   | -.14   | .12     |        |         |        |       |        |      |
| 5. Relational<br>demography   | 0.55             | 0.15 | .12    | .48*** | .40***  | -.06   |         |        |       |        |      |
| 6. Extraversion   | 4.48             | 1.12 | .02    | -.15   | .04     | .18**  | .01     |        |       |        |      |
| 7. Self-monitoring  | 3.87             | 0.52 | -.21** | .10    | -.08    | -.20** | -.05    | .42*** |       |        |      |
| 8. Impression formation   | 7.46             | 0.97 | -.18*  | -.10   | -.26*** | .01    | -.32*** | -.03   | .21** |        |      |
| 9. Individual class<br>performance  | 53.63            | 2.79 | -.15*  | .02    | .19**   | .08    | -.10    | .03    | .22** | .25*** |      |
| 10. Satisfaction  | 5.35             | 1.19 | .00    | .01    | -.11    | .04    | -.19**  | .10    | .02   | .41*** | .15* |
| * $p \leq .10$ ; ** $p \leq .05$ ; *** $p \leq .01$ .                                   |                  |      |        |        |         |        |         |        |       |        |      |

Table 2

| Means, Standard Deviations, and Correlations among Study Variables (Financial Services Firm Sample) |                  |            |         |         |        |         |        |       |       |  |
|---|------------------|------------|---------|---------|--------|---------|--------|-------|-------|--|
| Variable  | Mean             | S.D.       | 1       | 2       | 3      | 4       |        |       |       |  |
| 1. Citizenship<br>0 = U.S.<br>1 = non-U.S.  | 91.00%<br>9.00%  |            |         |         |        |         |        |       |       |  |
| 2. Race<br>0 = white<br>1 = non-white   | 88.63%<br>12.37% |            | .18***  |         |        |         |        |       |       |  |
| 3. Sex<br>0 = male<br>1 = female  | 77.11%<br>22.89% |            | -.06    | .05     |        |         |        |       |       |  |
| 4. Relational demography  | 0.40             | 0.17       | .53***  | .56***  | .37*** |         |        |       |       |  |
| 5. Extraversion   | 5.14             | 0.99       | .03     | -.15**  | .06    | .01     |        |       |       |  |
| 6. Conscientiousness  | 5.67             | 0.75       | -.04    | -.02    | .16**  | .06     |        |       |       |  |
| 7. Impression formation   | 0.00             | 1.00       | .02     | .04     | -.03   | -.08    |        |       |       |  |
| 8. Manager's impression (prior year)  | 2.41             | 0.53       | -.01    | -.11    | -.06   | -.05    |        |       |       |  |
| 9. Participation in cross-evaluation<br>0 = member of control group<br>1 = participant              | 47.20%<br>52.80% |            | .04     | .08     | -.10   | .06     |        |       |       |  |
| 10. Size of business unit   | 33.33            | 15.77      | -.08    | -.04    | -.11   | -.15**  |        |       |       |  |
| 11. Compensation (prior year)   | 107,884.97       | 112,629.92 | -.04    | -.04    | -.11   | -.05    |        |       |       |  |
| 12. Tenure (years)  | 10.20            | 7.58       | -.16*** | -.07    | -.04   | -.21*** |        |       |       |  |
| 13. Compensation (current year)   | 224,579.89       | 145,171.49 | .09     | -.07    | -.08   | -.05    |        |       |       |  |
| 14. Fit with culture  | 3.62             | 0.94       | -.11    | -.14    | -.03   | -.23*** |        |       |       |  |
| Variable  | 5                | 6          | 7       | 8       | 9      | 10      | 11     | 12    | 13    |  |
| 6. Conscientiousness  | .30***           |            |         |         |        |         |        |       |       |  |
| 7. Impression formation   | .06              | -.06       |         |         |        |         |        |       |       |  |
| 8. Manager's impression (prior year)  | .14**            | -.05       | .41***  |         |        |         |        |       |       |  |
| 9. Participation in cross-evaluation<br>0 = member of control group<br>1 = participant              | -.03             | -.17***    | .00     | -.01    |        |         |        |       |       |  |
| 10. Size of business unit   | .06              | -.14**     | -.08    | .12     | .44*** |         |        |       |       |  |
| 11. Compensation (prior year)   | .07              | .01        | .30***  | .25***  | -.04   | -.19*** |        |       |       |  |
| 12. Tenure (years)  | -.17***          | .02        | .03     | -.17*** | .14**  | -.01    | .07    |       |       |  |
| 13. Compensation (current year)   | -.03             | -.05       | .33***  | .26***  | -.00   | -.16*** | .79*** | .14** |       |  |
| 14. Fit with culture  | .37***           | .18**      | .24***  | .27***  | -.07   | -.09    | .23*** | .04   | .29** |  |
| * $p \leq .10$ ; ** $p \leq .05$ ; *** $p \leq .01$ .   |                  |            |         |         |        |         |        |       |       |  |

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mediation is demonstrated to the extent that the mediator (impression formation) relates to the dependent variable (performance, compensation, satisfaction, social integration) over and above the effect of the independent variable (relational demography). If a variable is truly a mediator, the level of significance for the coefficient of the independent variable should decrease, while no change should occur in the significance of the mediator variable, when the two variables are entered simultaneously.

Negative Impressions

Equation 1 in tables 3 (MBA sample) and 4 (financial firm sample) shows the test of hypothesis 1, that people are more likely to form negative impressions of demographically different others. Results from both samples support hypothesis 1, since coworkers formed more negative impressions of target individuals who were more demographically different from other members of their MBA team (table 3,  $\beta = -.24, p < .05$ ) or their business unit (table 4,  $\beta = -.23, p < .05$ ).

**Moderating effects of extraversion and self-monitoring.** To test the interaction hypotheses (H2a and H2b), we first determined whether the interaction coefficient was significant in the regression equation, and, if it was, we tested the pattern of the interaction using a slope analysis (e.g., Schoonhoven, 1981). The slopes of two equations (e.g., one for people who are relatively similar to others versus relatively different) are considered significantly different when the

Table 3  
Hierarchical Equations Predicting Impression Formation and Individual Outcomes (MBA Student Sample)

|  | Impression<br>Formation<br>(H1) | Impression<br>Formation<br>(H2) |         | Individual<br>Performance<br>(H3) |         |         | Satisfaction<br>(H4) |         |         |
|--|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|---------|-----------------------------------|---------|---------|----------------------|---------|---------|
|  | 1                               | 2                               | 3       | 4                                 | 5       | 6*      | 7                    | 8       | 9*      |
| Citizenship                                | -.22**                          | -.22**                          | -.22**  | -.16*                             | -.16*   | -.16*   | .00                  | .00     | .00     |
| Race                                       | -.08                            | -.08                            | -.08    | -.04                              | -.04    | -.04    | .04                  | .04     | .04     |
| Sex  | -.25***                         | -.25***                         | -.25*** | .18*                              | .18*    | .18*    | -.12                 | -.12    | -.12    |
| Conscientiousness                          | —                               | —                               | —       | -.08                              | .08     | .08     | .06                  | .06     | .06     |
| Contribution to R <sup>2</sup>             | .11                             | .11                             | .11     | .06                               | .06     | .06     | .02                  | .02     | .02     |
| Relational demography                      | -.24**                          | -.24**                          | -.24**  | -.21**                            | —       | -.14    | -.24**               | —       | -.14    |
| Contribution to R <sup>2</sup>             | .04                             | .04                             | .04     | .03                               | —       | —       | .03                  | —       | —       |
| Extraversion                               | —                               | -.02                            | —       | —                                 | —       | —       | —                    | —       | —       |
| Self-monitoring                            | —                               | —                               | .16**   | —                                 | —       | —       | —                    | —       | —       |
| Contribution to R <sup>2</sup>             | —                               | .00                             | .02     | —                                 | —       | —       | —                    | —       | —       |
| Relational demography x<br>Extraversion    | —                               | 1.95***                         | —       | —                                 | —       | —       | —                    | —       | —       |
| Relational demography x<br>Self-monitoring | —                               | —                               | 1.92**  | —                                 | —       | —       | —                    | —       | —       |
| Contribution to R <sup>2</sup>             | —                               | .10                             | .03     | —                                 | —       | —       | —                    | —       | —       |
| Impression formation                       | —                               | —                               | —       | —                                 | .29***  | .27***  | —                    | .43***  | .41***  |
| Contribution to R <sup>2</sup>             | —                               | —                               | —       | —                                 | .08     | .10     | —                    | .16     | .18     |
| R <sup>2</sup>                             | .15                             | .25                             | .20     | .09                               | .14     | .16     | .05                  | .18     | .20     |
| Overall F-ratio                            | 4.65***                         | 6.04***                         | 4.58*** | 2.14*                             | 3.56*** | 3.25*** | 1.17                 | 4.72*** | 4.21*** |
| D.f.                                       | 4, 109                          | 6, 107                          | 6, 107  | 5, 108                            | 5, 108  | 6, 107  | 5, 110               | 5, 108  | 6, 107  |

\*  $p \leq .10$ ; \*\*  $p \leq .05$ ; \*\*\*  $p \leq .01$ ; entries represent standardized coefficients.  
\* The relational demography variable and the impression formation variable are entered simultaneously in these equations. This represents the third step in testing for mediation effects according to the guidelines set by Baron and Kenny (1986).



Table 4

**Hierarchical Equations Predicting Impression Formation and Individual Outcomes (Financial Services Firm Sample)**

|                                      | Impression Formation |           | Total Compensation (H3) |          |          | Social Integration (H4) |         |         |
|--------------------------------------|----------------------|-----------|-------------------------|----------|----------|-------------------------|---------|---------|
|                                      | (H1)<br>1            | (H2)<br>2 | 3                       | 4        | 5*       | 6                       | 7       | 8*      |
| Citizenship                          | .02                  | -.01      | .13***                  | .13***   | .13***   | -.09                    | -.10    | -.10    |
| Race                                 | .06                  | .09       | -.02                    | -.02     | -.02     | -.11                    | -.11    | -.11    |
| Sex                                  | -.04                 | -.07      | .04                     | .04      | .04      | -.04                    | -.03    | -.03    |
| Prior year impression                | .41***               | .40***    | —                       | —        | —        | —                       | —       | —       |
| Participation in evaluation program  | .12                  | -.06      | .04                     | .04      | .04      | -.07                    | -.07    | -.07    |
| Prior year compensation              | —                    | —         | .83***                  | .83***   | .83***   | —                       | —       | —       |
| Unit size                            | —                    | —         | -.04                    | -.04     | -.04     | —                       | —       | —       |
| Tenure                               | —                    | —         | —                       | —        | —        | .02                     | .01     | .01     |
| Conscientiousness                    | —                    | —         | -.05                    | -.05     | -.05     | .16**                   | .15**   | .15**   |
| Contribution to R <sup>2</sup>       | .17                  | .17       | .70                     | .70      | .71      | .06                     | .06     | .06     |
| Relational demography                | -.23**               | -.27***   | -.09*                   | —        | -.06     | -.27**                  | —       | -.18*   |
| Contribution to R <sup>2</sup>       | .02                  | .02       | .71                     | —        | .00      | .03                     | —       | .03     |
| Extraversion                         | —                    | .00       | —                       | —        | —        | —                       | —       | —       |
| Contribution to R <sup>2</sup>       | —                    | .00       | —                       | —        | —        | —                       | —       | —       |
| Relational demography x Extraversion | —                    | .56*      | —                       | —        | —        | —                       | —       | —       |
| Contribution to R <sup>2</sup>       | —                    | .01       | —                       | —        | —        | —                       | —       | —       |
| Impression formation                 | —                    | —         | —                       | .11***   | .11***   | —                       | .29***  | .27***  |
| Contribution to R <sup>2</sup>       | —                    | —         | —                       | .02      | .01      | —                       | .08     | .07     |
| R <sup>2</sup>                       | .19                  | .20       | .71                     | .72      | .72      | .09                     | .15     | .16     |
| Overall F-ratio                      | 9.29***              | 6.38***   | 63.42***                | 65.95*** | 58.72*** | 2.36**                  | 4.03*** | 3.82*** |
| D.f.                                 | 6, 238               | 8, 203    | 8, 207                  | 8, 207   | 9, 206   | 7, 169                  | 7, 164  | 8, 163  |

\*  $p \leq .10$ ; \*\*  $p \leq .05$ ; \*\*\*  $p \leq .01$ ; entries represent standardized coefficients.

\* The relational demography variable and the impression formation variable are entered simultaneously in these equations. This represents the third step in testing for mediation effects according to the guidelines set by Baron and Kenny (1986).

coefficient of the interaction term is significant. By analyzing the slopes, we could identify whether the form of the interaction was consistent with our predictions.

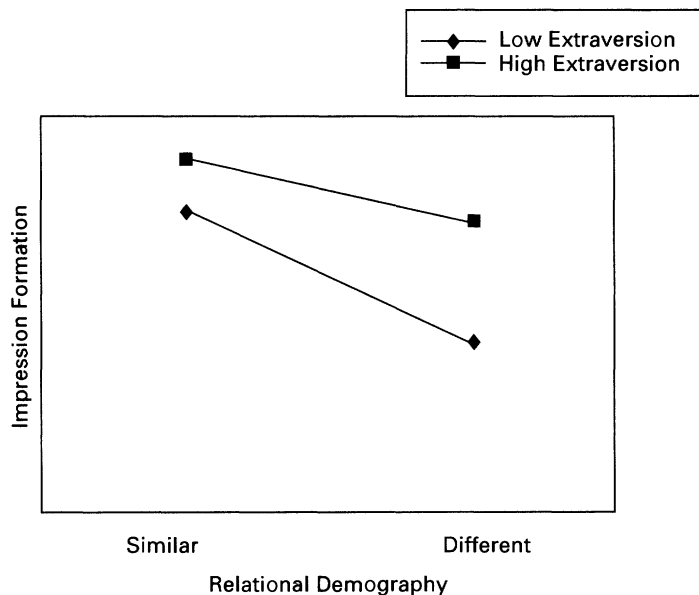
In hypotheses 2a and 2b, we predicted that extraversion and self-monitoring would moderate the effects of relational demography on impression formation. Results shown in tables 3 and 4 indicate three significant positive interactions of personality and relational demography. The significant interaction term for extraversion and relational demography on impression formation in the MBA student teams (table 3, equation 2,  $\beta = 1.95$ ,  $p < .01$ ) and the modestly significant interaction term in the financial services firm (table 4, equation 2,  $\beta = .56$ ,  $p < .10$ ) suggests that being extraverted had a more positive effect on the impressions formed of demographically different people than of demographically similar people. The interaction of self-monitoring and relational demography was tested only in the MBA student sample, and results in table 3, equation 3, show a significant positive interaction of self-monitoring and relational demography ( $\beta = 1.92$ ,  $p < .05$ ) in the equation predicting impression formation, offering further support for hypothesis 2.

To specify the effects of greater extraversion and self-monitoring on impression formation for different versus similar people, we calculated the contribution of greater extraversion

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or self-monitoring at both high and low levels of demographic differences. First, we considered the moderating effect of extraversion in the financial services firm sample, using the following equation (Schoonhoven, 1981):  $y = b_1x_1 + b_3x_1x_2$ , where  $b_1$  = the unstandardized coefficient for relational demography,  $x_1$  = the relational demography score,  $b_3$  = the unstandardized coefficient of the interaction of extraversion and relational demography, and  $x_2$  = the score for extraversion. We calculated the predicted impression score,  $y$ , for the four different combinations of high and low relational demography and high and low extraversion according to this slope equation. Comparing the results of those four predicted  $y$  scores, we found that an increase in relational demography from .23 (one standard deviation below the mean) to .57 (one standard deviation above the mean) corresponded to a lesser negative effect on the predicted impression when the person was more extraverted (change in impression =  $-.31$ ) than when the person was less extraverted (change =  $-.68$ ). Figure 1 provides a graphical representation of this interaction term.

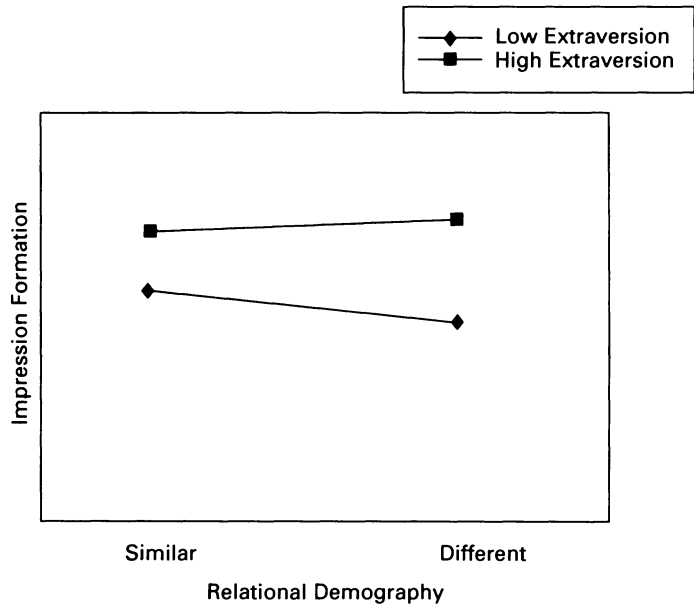
**Figure 1. The moderating effect of extraversion (Study 2).**



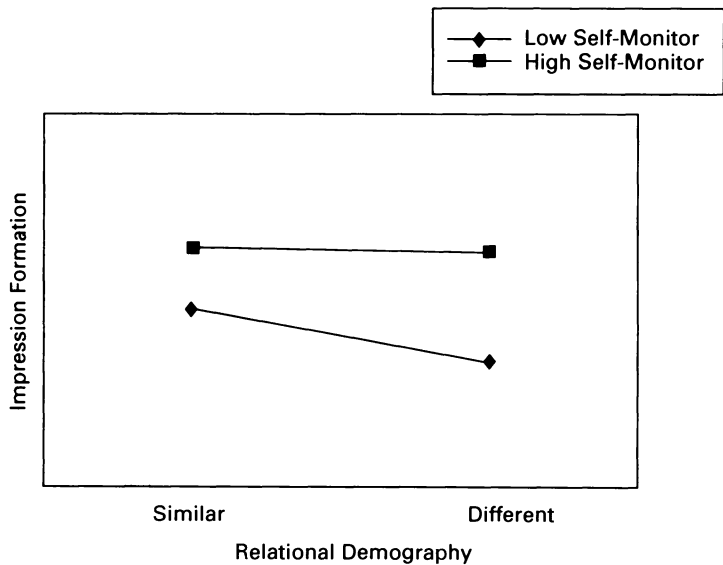
We used the same analysis for the extraversion and relational demography interaction term in the MBA student sample (equation 2). When we plugged in values for high and low relational demography (0.40 and 0.70, respectively) and high and low extraversion (5.60 and 3.36, respectively) and compared the resulting predicted  $y$  scores, we found not only a difference in the effect of relational difference on predicted impressions but also a different direction for this effect. An increase in relational difference in the MBA student data led to a positive effect on impression formation for different people who were highly extraverted (change in  $y$  score =  $+1.82$ ) compared with a more negative effect on impressions of different people who were less extraverted (change =  $-4.55$ ). The same analysis for the interaction of self-monitoring and

relational demography (equation 3) yielded changes in impression associated with higher relational demography scores of  $-.42$  for high self-monitors compared with a more negative change of  $-4.19$  for low self-monitors. Impression formation of demographically different others was, therefore, influenced by whether the individual was more extraverted or a higher self-monitor, supporting our predictions in hypotheses 2a and 2b. Figures 2 and 3 display the contrasting slopes of the interactions described above.

**Figure 2. The moderating effect of extraversion (Study 1).**



**Figure 3. The moderating effect of self-monitoring (Study 1).**

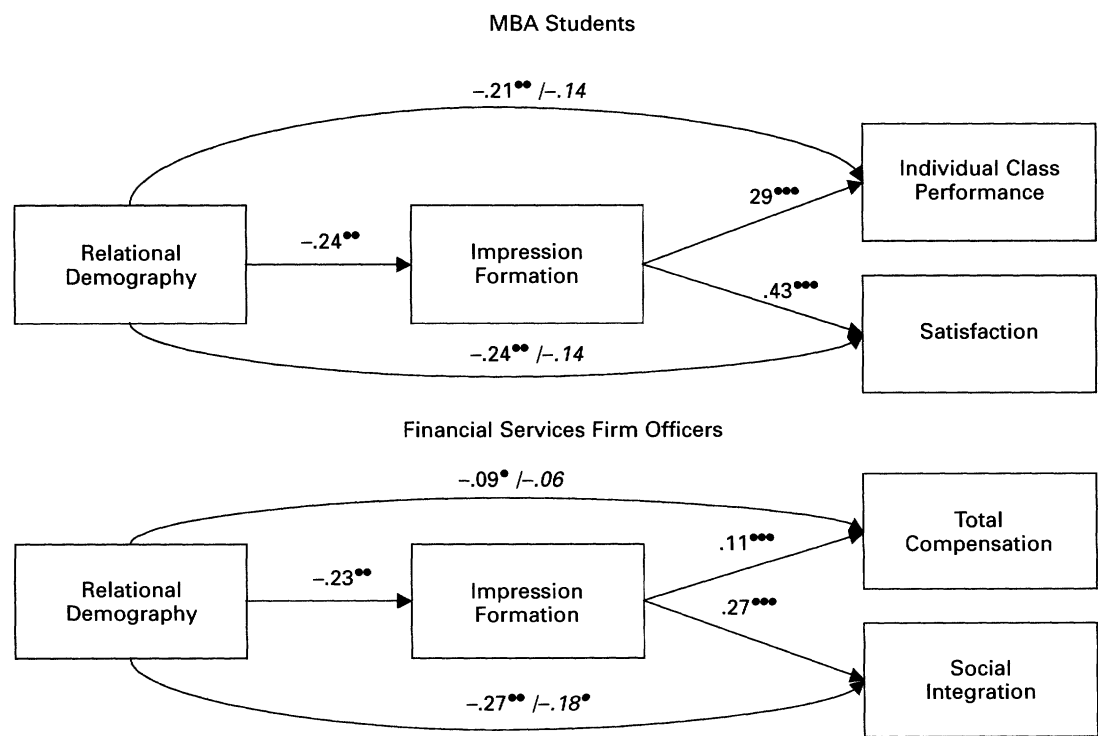


Mediating Effects of Impression Formation

**Individual performance.** As expected, being demographically different had a significant negative effect on an individual's class performance (table 3, equation 4,  $\beta = -.21, p \leq .05$ ), while the impression formed of a target individual had a significant positive effect (equation 5,  $\beta = .29, p \leq .01$ ) on his or her class performance. Hypothesis 3, that impression formation would mediate the relationship between demographic differences and individual performance, such that the direct effect of demography would weaken or disappear after impression formation was considered, was also supported, because the relationship between relational demography and impression formation lost significance (table 3, equation 6,  $\beta = -.14, n.s.$ ) when the impression formation variable was entered simultaneously, while the strength of the relationship between impression formation and individual class performance remained intact. Figure 4 provides a summary of all mediating effects.

Hypothesis 3 was also supported in the financial services firm sample. As expected, relational demography had a marginally significant negative effect on total compensation (table 4, equation 3,  $\beta = -.09, p \leq .10$ ), and impression formation had a significant positive effect (equation 4,  $\beta = .11, p \leq .01$ ) on total compensation. Further, impression formation mediat-

Figure 4. The main and mediating effects of demography on individual outcomes.\*



$\bullet p < .10$ ;  $^{**} p < .05$ ;  $^{***} p < .01$ , one-tailed tests.

\* Numbers above the arrows represent standardized betas. Betas in italics are based on regressions including the mediator.

ed the relationship between demographic differences and total compensation such that the direct effect of demography weakened or disappeared after impression formation was considered. Specifically, the relationship between relational demography and impression formation lost significance (table 4, equation 5,  $\beta = -.06$ , n.s.) when the impression formation variable was entered simultaneously, while the strength of the relationship between impression formation and total compensation remained intact.

**Satisfaction and social integration.** As expected, in the MBA student sample, relational demography had a significant negative effect on satisfaction (table 3, equation 7,  $\beta = -.24$ ,  $p \leq .05$ ), and impression formation had a significant positive effect (equation 8,  $\beta = .43$ ,  $p \leq .01$ ) on satisfaction, when each independent variable's effects on the dependent variable were examined independently. Similarly, in the financial services firm sample, impression formation had a significant positive effect (table 3, equation 6,  $\beta = .29$ ;  $p < .01$ ) on social integration, and relational demography had a significant negative effect on social integration (equation 7,  $\beta = -.23$ ,  $p \leq .05$ ).

Hypothesis 4, that impression formation would mediate the relationship between demographic differences and satisfaction and social integration such that the direct effect of relational demography would weaken or disappear after impression formation was considered, was supported in the MBA student sample because the relationship between relational demography and satisfaction lost significance (table 3, equation 9,  $\beta = -.14$ , n.s.) when the impression formation variable was entered simultaneously, while the strength of the relationship between impression formation and individual performance remained intact. Further, in the financial services firm sample, the direct effect of relational demography on social integration decreased in significance (table 4, equation 8,  $\beta = -.18$ ,  $p < .10$ ) when the impression formation variable was entered simultaneously, while the strength of the relationship between impression formation and social integration remained intact. Given that the significance of the demography coefficient did not diminish completely, we would label the latter result "partial mediation" (James and Brett, 1984).

## DISCUSSION

Our goal in this study was to highlight how demographically different people may shape the impressions that coworkers form about them and how these impressions, in turn, may determine their success in a demographically diverse team. Specifically, being more extraverted or a higher self-monitor moderated the impact of visible demographic characteristics in work teams such that demographically different people who were predisposed to share information, particularly more situationally appropriate information, were perceived more positively than were others. Further, we focused on understanding how impressions of demographically different people were formed, because these impressions, rather than the demographic characteristics themselves, affect their experience in organizations. We found a similar pattern of results across two very different samples.

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Our first hypothesis was supported in both samples. People who were more demographically different from their colleagues were likely to engender more negative impressions than were those who were more demographically similar. Support for this hypothesis is consistent with findings from previous research showing that members of organizations who are demographically different are more likely to incur negative consequences.

Results of the tests of hypotheses 2a and 2b showed that extraversion and self-monitoring moderated the relationship between relational demography and impression formation. We argued that people who are more different from relevant others are more likely to benefit, by enhancing others' impressions of them, from being extraverted or high self-monitors than are people who are more similar to their colleagues. Demographically different people who are more extraverted or higher self-monitors may provide more information or more desirable information, respectively, that disconfirms negative stereotypes held by demographically similar people. Taken together, these findings suggest that certain individual differences can interact with demographic differences to increase the likelihood that in-group members will recategorize out-group members as fellow in-group members, or at least refrain from imposing negative out-group stereotypes on a particular out-group member.

We also examined the mediating effects of impression formation on important individual outcomes (hypotheses 3 and 4). Initially, we found a negative relationship between being demographically different and these outcomes. Additional analyses, however, revealed that demographically different people performed better, regardless of how different they were from their work group, when others' impressions of them were more positive. Further, regardless of the extent to which they were demographically different from others, when others' impressions of them were more favorable, individuals were more satisfied and reported higher levels of social integration. These results suggest that performance, satisfaction, and social integration were influenced more by the impressions formed of demographically different people than by the demographic differences themselves. These results further suggest that previous research may have overemphasized the direct relationship between demographic heterogeneity and important individual outcomes. Rather, such heterogeneity may influence others' perceptions, which, in turn, may affect work processes and outcomes. This distinction is important because it suggests that research and practice should focus on how team members form impressions of different others to predict and understand behavior and outcomes rather than focusing on the mere presence of demographic diversity. Although people who were more different from their coworkers tended to be less satisfied, poorer performers, and were paid less than were those who were more similar, these outcomes could have been markedly improved if others' impressions of them were more favorable. Such impressions could have been improved if targets had provided individuating, task-relevant information to their colleagues.

Recent research has found a direct relationship between self-monitoring and performance (Mehra, Kilduff, and Brass, 2001), suggesting an alternative causal ordering than we suggest here. Specifically, self-monitoring may lead to better performance, which in turn may lead to better impression formation. Even if self-monitoring were related to performance (which, in additional analyses we conducted using our samples, it was not), this possible scenario would not explain why demographically different people are affected by personality more than are demographically similar people. Nonetheless, future research should examine the causal relationships among these constructs in continued longitudinal studies.

We did not directly assess the presence of an in-group/out-group bias or various negative stereotypes, nor did we directly assess the salience of the characteristics that were our focus. We were reluctant to prime respondents to think about themselves or others in terms of their visible demographic characteristics (our independent variable). Given the number of studies that have demonstrated the prevalence of such biases and stereotypes in diverse group settings (Milliken and Martins, 1996; Pelled, 1996), it is reasonable to assume the salience of these characteristics and the existence of such biases. Nevertheless, future research should develop and employ unobtrusive measures of salience and in-group/out-group biases that further test the logic underlying our hypotheses and eliminate some alternative explanations for our results. For example, extraverted people may simply be more likable, and therefore others' impressions of them improved because more extraverted people shared information, not because the specific information they shared disconfirmed others' negative stereotypes.

Our measure of impression formation might be more directly assessed in future research. In particular, past research and management practice has considered the assessments we used to be measures of performance (e.g., Arvey and Murphy, 1998). Thus, one potential weakness of our study is that there is less distance than would be desired between our independent (impression formation) and dependent (performance) variables (e.g., Staw, 1984). Though important, this concern is at least partially mitigated by our focus on how others viewed demographically different and similar individuals on the team on a common set of dimensions. By controlling for previous performance, we attempted to capture the subjective impressions that may be influenced more by demographic diversity than by actual performance. Nonetheless, future research might develop more direct ways of assessing impressions, such as gathering qualitative impressions of others over time (e.g., Wiggins and Pincus, 1992; Gifford, 1994).

We used personality traits as proxies for, rather than direct measures of, the quantity and quality of information being shared. Subsequent studies, however, may include more explicit methods and measures to assess the quantity and quality of communication at the dyad level and detect the type of information to which perceivers attend. Further, we focused on differences between demographic categories and how they affect others' perceptions. We did not distinguish

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the content of the particular characteristics (e.g., male versus female), nor did we address the specific stereotypes that may be associated with each state of a demographic characteristic. Future research could take into account category-specific stereotypes and their impact on both impression formation and subsequent interaction with coworkers. Finally, this study focused on traits related to information sharing, but other traits, particularly those that are generally deemed to be universally attractive and yet are not associated with the out-group stereotype, should be investigated. For example, a predisposition to express positive emotion may also increase the attractiveness of a demographically different person and the likelihood of recategorization.

It may be worth considering not only how individual differences among out-group members shape in-group members' perceptions of them but also how individual differences among in-group members shape their perceptions of out-group members. For example, openness, which is a dimension of the Big-Five personality taxonomy, refers to whether a person is open to new experiences, has broad interests, and is imaginative (John, 1990). An open person may be more willing to receive stereotype-disconfirming information from out-group members than are those who score low on this dimension. It may also be worth examining the utility of having an extraverted or high self-monitoring disposition in intergroup contact situations, rather than in the intragroup contact situations on which we focused. The impact of having an extraverted or high self-monitoring disposition may be diluted in intergroup contact situations if people are less open to stereotype-disconfirming information than they are in intragroup contact situations (e.g., Gaertner et al., 1990).

By focusing on observers rather than actors, previous studies have depicted demographically different people, or out-group members in general, as passive. We have suggested that individual demographically different people, or out-group members, can actively influence the impressions that others form about them depending on the focal individual's proclivity to share information. Such behavior likely comes more naturally to extraverted than to introverted people and to high than to low self-monitors, but altering behavior is easier than influencing traits. Given this, future research should assess how extensively individuals who are low on these characteristics can modify their behavior to increase the quantity and quality of information they provide to others.

It might also be useful to determine the authenticity of the information a target provides. High self-monitors may sacrifice consistency to present the most desired social identity for the context, and, given the correlation found between self-monitoring and extraversion in this study and others (e.g., Snyder, 1987), it may be that extraverts do the same. Future research might identify the consequences of presenting more and less authentic information to observers on longer-term evaluations (for the MBA sample) or cross-context evaluations of targets (e.g., outside of work for the financial services firm sample). Finally, although we have focused here on the important role of the target individual in shaping others' perceptions of him- or herself, future research might



adopt a more interactionist approach, in which both parties' perspectives are taken into consideration. For example, research on interpersonal communication, particularly that which relates to the speaker-listener model (e.g., Baron et al., 1997), may help shed light on how information sharing influences perceptions of people in demographically diverse work teams.

Our focus on personality characteristics may potentially make it difficult to derive practical applications, because such characteristics are stable traits that cannot be continually adjusted to fit the immediate situation. Further, it may not be feasible to switch people in and out of work groups based on their personality. Past research has found, however, that the relationship between personality traits and behavior may increase in some situations and decrease in others (e.g., Wright and Mischel, 1987). Thus, organizations may be able to manipulate powerful situational characteristics that elicit desired behavior. For example, organizations that rely on diverse teams to accomplish critical tasks may wish to encourage people who are demographically different from their coworkers to speak up in meetings even if they are not extraverted, or managers may create specific opportunities for team members to disclose individuating information to one another. By focusing on how situations influence information sharing, and not merely contact, practitioners can effectively apply the findings from this study.

One could interpret our findings as though we were somehow "blaming the victim" or that our results place responsibility with the target for the impressions that others form of him or her. It is true that this link can be viewed as a unique, and potentially unfair, burden on those who are demographically different from other members of their work group. Another way to think about these findings is that our results present people with an additional option for decreasing the negative stereotypes that will likely cloud dissimilar others' impressions of them. Prior research has shown that managing the context, for example, by focusing on common fate and interdependence among members of the group, could influence in-group/out-group categorizations. The present study suggests that targets can also provide information about themselves that precludes the formation of, or replaces, stereotypic impressions among dissimilar others. Future research might investigate how these two approaches, managing the context versus managing others' impressions, may interact.

Given that organizations are increasingly developing work teams to perform important tasks, the need to effectively manage the rise in labor force diversity becomes critical. Our study suggests that a significant constraint and an equally significant opportunity exist with respect to demographic diversity in work teams. On the one hand, such diversity will increase the probability of an in-group/out-group bias emerging, which precipitates negative impressions of and consequences for demographically different people. On the other hand, there appear to be ways of increasing the chances that, regardless of this diversity, the problems associated with an in-group/out-group bias are mitigated and demograph-

ically different people are enabled to succeed. By recognizing that not all demographically different people are the same, demography researchers and managers alike may identify avenues for increasing such success. As this study illustrates, understanding how different people are perceived differently may help mitigate the negative consequences that are associated with being demographically different in organizations.

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