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CHAPTER 1

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

Modern business challenges call into question the status quo and confront employees with new workplace realities (Cascio, 2003). The most prominent challenges concern the shift towards complex and flexible career patterns, the increasing demographic diversity of the workforce, and continuous organizational change (Cascio, 2003). In these uncertain times, supervisors represent an important reference point for employees, facilitate employees' sense-making of the work environment, and ensure that employees' attitudes and behaviors benefit the organization (Morgeson, DeRue, & Karam, 2010; Smircich & Morgan, 1982). Given these important functions, it is surprising that our knowledge about how supervisors link employees and the organization lacks a comprehensive theoretical underpinning (c.f., Coyle-Shapiro & Shore, 2007). For instance, it is unclear how leadership operates at different levels in team contexts or which boundary conditions may influence supervisors' effectiveness in these changing times.

To address these issues, this dissertation aims to explore the role of leader attributes in modern business contexts. Inspired by contingency theories of leadership (Fiedler, 1967), I draw from the idea that leadership and situational characteristics need to be considered jointly. I put this assumption into a new perspective and elaborate how supervisors' behaviors, characteristics, and the interaction of both can be interpreted in general terms of alignment between the supervisor and the organizational requirements. Then, I combine these considerations with the business challenges mentioned above and describe how and, if appropriate, when supervisors fulfill their roles in contemporary organizational career management, nationality diversity management, and the implementation of organizational change.

Across all these topics, my research is inspired by the guiding question how employees' shared versus individual perception of the supervisor and the organizational

environment relate to outcomes of organizational interest. Thus, I will provide a multilevel excursus on individual- and group-level perceptions first.

Subsequently, I will describe shifts in organizational career development, nationality diversity management, and organizational change as important business challenges and highlight why supervisors are needed as sense-makers more than ever. I will then discuss the implications of supervisors' alignment with the organizational context in terms of behaviors, characteristics and the interplay of both and elaborate on the role of organizational perceptions and climates. Finally, I will give an outlook the structure of the dissertation, which integrates these practical and theoretical perspectives in a series of field studies.

A Multilevel Perspective on Organizational Perceptions

A reoccurring theme across all the studies included in my dissertation is that employees' perceptions can have different implications at different levels. Before presenting the research, which I have conducted, I would like to clarify the conceptual differences between individual and group-level perceptions.

From Individual-Level Perceptions to Emergent Group-Level Climates

Employees form a multitude of organizational perceptions, for instance, about their supervisors (e.g., "My supervisor provides me with challenging assignments"), the general mode of treating employees (e.g., "Employees here are treated fairly regardless of their cultural background"), or general opinions about the organization (e.g., "Most of the programs that are supposed to solve problems around here will not do much good"). These perceptions serve to make sense of the organizational environment and inform employees in more or less abstract representations about "the way things are done around here" (Schneider & Reichers, 1990, p. 22). James and James (1989) argued that individual perceptions, labeled psychological climate, represent an overall, gestalt-like valuation of the work environment. Thus, employees do not merely take notice of their work environment but interpret and assign

psychological meaning to it (L. R. James et al., 2008). Interestingly, although rooted in individual perceptions, a group of employees may share climate perceptions, such that a higher-order *organizational* climate develops. In contrast to psychological climate, organizational climate is a collective phenomenon and constitutes a descriptive attribute of the organization (L. R. James, James, & Ashe, 1990; Kuenzi & Schminke, 2009).

In a multilevel terminology, organizational climate constitutes a shared group-level phenomenon (Kozlowski & Klein, 2000), which emerges via fuzzy composition processes. Defining this process, Bliese (2000 p., 369) suggests that "the aggregation of lower-level constructs into higher-level variables is likely to create an aggregate level variable that is simultaneously related to and different from its lower-level counterpart." In this vein, an intriguing feature of higher-level climates is that they are apt to have unique, contextual effects beyond the individual-level characteristic or perception that underlies them (Firebaugh, 1978; Raudenbush & Bryk, 2002).

As specific climates can develop, which pertain to particular aspects of the work environment (Schneider, 1975), the concept may be useful to address specific modern business challenges, such as organizational career development, diversity management, and organizational change, because climates fulfill important sense-making functions.

As climates are *shared* assumption about what behaviors are considered "typical" for the organization, they provide informative guidelines to employees. Employees develop a common schema for workplace behaviors, which result in collective attitudes and behaviors (Ostroff, Kinicki, & Tamkins, 2003). Simply put, employees are prone to adopt behaviors and attitudes, which (apparently) "everybody else" in their environment displays as well (DeCelles, Tesluk, & Taxman, 2013; Mathieu & Kohler, 1990).

Moreover, climates are interpreted as manifestations of the underlying values and beliefs, which the organization endorses (Ostroff et al., 2003). In this regard, organizational

climates signal to employees what they can expect from the organization (cf., Purdie-Vaughns, Steele, Davies, Dittmann, & Crosby, 2008; Walumbwa, Wu, & Orwa, 2008). Thus, next to guiding behaviors, organizational climates may serve as evaluation criteria for future decisions, such as whether the organization is an attractive employer (Purdie-Vaughns et al., 2008).

My dissertation reflects these multilevel considerations, in that I consider the effects of organizational perceptions at multiple levels and especially focus on antecedents and consequences of group-level perceptions within the context of modern work settings.

Business Challenges in Modern Work Settings

Maintaining an adaptable, competitive workforce is essential for organizations in order to survive in today's dynamic business environments. However, organizations need to overcome considerable challenges in this regard as modern work settings comprise several characteristics that are prone to alienate employees from the organization (Cascio, 2003). In times of downsizing and flat hierarchies, organizations cannot guarantee stable, predictable career paths anymore (Voelpel, Sauer, & Biemann, 2012), such that career considerations may drive employees towards different employers. Additionally, increasing diversity in the workforce bears the potential of tensions and frictions between minority and majority members (Van Knippenberg, De Dreu, & Homan, 2004). Finally, organizations frequently engage in change projects to stay competitive in dynamic, fast-paced business environments (Voelpel, Leibold, & Habtay, 2004). However, change projects bear the risk to instigate uncertainty and endanger trust in the organization (Morgan & Zeffane, 2003).

As a consequence of these business challenges, employees need points of orientation to make sense of what goals the organization pursues and what implications may result for them. In this regard, supervisors can serve as important organizational agents who facilitate employees' sense-making for the benefit of the organization across all three domains.

Shifts in Organizational Career Development

Increasingly harsh and dynamic competition requires organization to be flexible (Beer, Voelpel, Leibold, & Tekie, 2005). This need for flexibility has substantial implications for the employment relationship. The trend towards flat organizations constrains the possibilities for upward promotions (Lips-Wiersma & Hall, 2007; Newell & Dopson, 1996). Moreover, organizations cannot guarantee stable, life-long employment anymore in times of frequent organizational downsizing and restructuring projects (Currie, Tempest, & Starkey, 2006)

In light of these instable work settings, perspectives on the career concept have changed tremendously. Whereas the traditional view on career development was greatly determined by predefined organizational career paths, employees take an active role in their own career management (King, 2004). Employees are considered independent entrepreneurs of their own careers, who strive for employability and promotability, which allows them to seize unforeseen career opportunities (De Pater, Van Vianen, Bechtoldt, & Klehe, 2009; Savickas et al., 2009; Thijssen, Van der Heijden, & Rocco, 2008). To this end, employees may engage in different career strategies, which may aim at career advancement within, but also outside the current organization (Gould & Penley, 1984; Nabi, 2000; Sturges, Conway, Guest, & Liefoghe, 2005).

In fact, the independence of boundaryless careers from a specific employer was proclaimed as a radical shift away from traditional career paths (Arthur & Rousseau, 2001; Hall, 1996) and has challenged the relevance of organizational career development altogether. Some have questioned whether organizational career development is still needed when employees take care of their careers themselves (Capelli, 1999). Others have even warned that career support may backfire, such that employees' increased career potential may

motivate them to seize career opportunities at a different organization (Ito & Brotheridge, 2005).

These concerns may be overstated as the traditional intraorganizational career continuous to be an appealing concept for employees and organization alike (Biemann, Zacher, & Feldman, 2012; Chudzikowski, 2012; Rodrigues & Guest, 2010). However, there is evidence that career patterns become more complex (Sullivan & Baruch, 2009). Chudzikowski (2012) compared career experiences over a span of 15 years of university alumni who graduated in 1970 vs. in 1990. She found support that the 1990 cohort engaged more frequently in both intra- and interorganizational career transitions. Whereas the older cohort followed the more traditional pattern of upward promotions, the more recent cohort experienced more cross-functional or lateral career transitions. Taken together, organizational career management is still necessary but it needs to accommodate for the complexity of modern careers (Lips-Wiersma & Hall, 2007).

For this purpose, organizations need to provide flexible forms a career development, which are integrated in daily work, rather than rigid, predefined career paths (Lips-Wiersma & Hall, 2007; McDonald & Hite, 2005). In this regard, supervisors can greatly contribute to contemporary organizational career development by offering mentoring (McDonald & Hite, 2005). Due to their direct influence on employees daily work experiences, supervisors' career mentoring can facilitate intraorganizational developmental experiences and informal learning activities, such that employees' personal and organizational career development complement each other (Powell, Hubschman, & Doran, 2001; Sturges et al., 2005). Moreover, supervisor and employees interact closely, such that supervisors may be better informed about the idiosyncratic career concerns of employees. Therefore, they may be able to personalize career support through psycho-social mentoring in order to facilitate that employees achieve their career goals (Hite & McDonald, 2008). While mentoring has been found to have beneficial

effects on dyadic mentoring relationships (Allen, Eby, Poteet, Lentz, & Lima, 2004), previous research has not yet explored the usefulness of mentoring in team contexts, in which supervisors work with several employees. As the team context constitute a salient frame of reference, it is important to understand how mentoring experiences affect employees' responses at the individual and the group level. In this regard, supervisors may facilitate twofold sense-making processes: First, supervisors assist the development of employees' personal career development. Moreover, they also present the organization as an attractive employer who offers ample developmental opportunities. In sum, supervisors can contribute to employees' promotability, while they simultaneously increase the likelihood that employees will stay (Sturges, Guest, Conway, & Davey, 2002).

Nationality Diversity Management

Cascio (2003) identified demographic changes as another impactful business trend, which will lead to increasing demographic diversity of the workforce. This dissertation will consider nationality diversity in particular, which is expected to increase considerably in many Western societies in the next years (Arends-Tóth & Van De Vijver, 2003; McKay, Avery, & Morris, 2008; Zick, Wagner, Van Dick, & Petzel, 2001). Moreover, the latest report of the World Economic Forum acknowledges the importance of successful nationality diversity management, by stating that Germany's competitiveness will depend on its ability to integrate minorities at work (World Economic Forum, 2014).

The effect of diversity on team outcomes is not universal, but depends on specific team processes that are activated. The categorization-elaboration model (CEM) describes different team processes, which can either result in favorable or detrimental diversity effects in teams (Van Knippenberg et al., 2004).

From an informational resource perspective, diversity is apt to foster team performance. Diverse team members often hold different perspectives, which can contribute

to develop effective work strategies and solutions (Milliken & Martins, 1996), if team members succeed in integrating the various sources of information (Van Knippenberg et al., 2004). Thus, when team members elaborate information and develop adequate communication patterns, they can work together effectively (Greer, Homan, De Hoogh, & Den Hartog, 2012; Homan, Van Knippenberg, Van Kleef, & De Dreu, 2007; Kearney & Gebert, 2009).

On the other hand, social categorization theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1986) and the similarity-attraction paradigm (D. Byrne, 1971) provide a theoretical basis to explain why diversity can be challenging in teams. According to social categorization theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1986), self-concepts are largely defined by membership in a group, to which the focal individual feels attached. In order to maintain and enhance self-esteem, individuals tend to favor ingroup members, whereas they tend to evaluate outgroup members in a less favorable way. Moreover, according to the similarity-attraction paradigm (D. Byrne, 1971), individuals feel more attracted to others who are similar to themselves in terms of attitudes as well as demographic characteristics. Conversely, when team members are dissimilar to others, they feel less accepted (Thomas, 1999) and less committed to their work group (Riordan & Shore, 1997; Tsui, Egan, & O'Reilly, 1992). As a consequence, diversity can trigger unfavorable team processes, such as subgroup perceptions, tensions and conflicts (Ely & Thomas, 2001; Homan, Greer, Jehn, & Koning, 2010; Jehn, Northcraft, & Neale, 1999), which can impair work group functioning and performance.

Thus, the CEM proposes that the effects of diversity on team outcomes are contingent upon the specific team processes that emerge. As supervisors have important influence on team processes (Zaccaro, Rittman, & Marks, 2001), they can contribute to the successful management of diversity. In particular, they can shape whether employees experience the positive or the negative aspects of diversity through their personal approach towards diversity

(Van Knippenberg, Van Ginkel, & Homan, 2013). Supervisors need to recognize the unique contributions of each member, instead of reinforcing demographic subgroups in diverse teams (Greer et al., 2012). In the latter case, equivocal situations can emerge, which lead to a tense, unfavorable diversity climate (Ely & Thomas, 2001).

Furthermore, when supervisors exclusively focus on preventing performance losses, they may miss out on the potential performance gains associated with diversity (Van Knippenberg, Homan, & Van Ginkel, 2013). In contrast, when supervisors establish a favorable view on diversity and encourage information elaboration, team members are able to capitalize on diverse knowledge within the team, which leads to performance gains (Homan et al., 2007). Thus, how supervisors make sense of diversity in teams can have important consequences for diversity climates and performance.

Organizational Change

Nowadays, constant change has become a matter of organizational survival (Beer et al., 2005). The decline of previously proud market leaders across a variety of different branches (e.g., IBM, Kodak, Nokia) demonstrates that size and prestige alone do not guarantee long-term success anymore. Like the ostensibly invulnerable Titanic, large corporations find themselves in a sea of icebergs, represented by agile competitors from all over the world, which are ready to hit their core competencies. Thus, organizations need to reinvent themselves continuously in order to maintain flexibility and efficient processes, which enable them to meet dynamic, competitive market demands.

While the necessity of change is widely uncontested, its implementation frequently falls short to meet expectations. Cameron and Green (2009) presented a number consulting firm reports, which illustrate that many change projects derail in terms of costs and time, or fail to fulfill their original purpose. Alarmingly, Beer and Nohira (2000) estimated that up to 70% of change initiatives turn out to be unsuccessful. In light of these concerning number,

research and practitioners agree that careful task planning on its own is not enough. In addition, organizations need to ensure that employees support change (Herscovitch & Meyer, 2002). Indeed, change projects oftentimes undermine trust in management and instigate anxiety, uncertainty and confusion (Bordia, Hobman, Jones, Gallois, & Callan, 2004; McKinsey & Company, 2006; Morgan & Zeffane, 2003). Thus, effective change management should clarify the underlying purposes and strive for transparency in order to foster favorable employee responses toward change. In this regard, participation, procedural justice and top management communication have been proposed as important tools in change management (c.f., By, 2005; Mento, Jones, & Dirndorfer, 2002). "However, the unfortunate reality is that, in spite of what we think we know about change management, many, if not most, significant organizational change initiatives fail to meet expectations" (Herold, Fedor, & Caldwell, 2007, p. 942). Possibly, even if management *believes* that adequate actions were taken, employees may feel quite different about it. For instance, Reichers, Wanous and Austin (1997) reported a case in which management closed down the executive cafeteria in order to bring managers and employees closer together. However, as managers often sat at separate tables in the common cafeteria, employees suspected even more that they wanted to distance themselves from the rest of the workforce. In another case, management introduced a new structure of intraorganizational cooperation, accompanied by broad communication initiatives and vision workshops (Balogun, 2003). Despite these textbook procedures, employees had tremendous difficulties to understand what exactly management expected them to do within the new structure. As a consequence, cooperation and efficiency suffered for several years. These findings may reflect that most recommendations for change concentrate on setting the stage, while the implementation has received less attention. In this vein, models of change process devote comparatively few steps to the implementation process (for a comparison of different models, see By, 2005; Mento et al., 2002).

Supervisors are indispensable assets during this crucial phase of change management. As illustrated by the anecdotes, employees may find it difficult to decipher the intentions of change initiatives and derive implications for their daily work. Thus, supervisors who act on behalf of the organization can facilitate these crucial sense-making processes (Balogun, 2003). First, supervisors may serve as a point of reference, which represents what organization stands for and may reinstate confidence toward management. In this regard, Hill et al. (2012) found that leadership competencies of the *immediate* supervisors positively influence employees' commitment to change. Notably, perceived *top management* communication adequacy acted as a mediator in this relationship. This empirical finding demonstrates that direct supervisors are crucial to effectively foster employees' comprehension of the underlying purposes of change. Moreover, supervisors may translate an abstract change vision into specific work activities and encourage that these new procedures are adopted in daily work routines. Thereby, supervisors ensure that the "new way of doing things" is integrated sustainably and avoid that change initiatives fizzle out without any impact (cf., Voelpel et al., 2004). Taken together, supervisors can contribute greatly to the success of change projects.

Alignment between Supervisor Attributes and Organizational Context

As illustrated above, supervisors are crucial for sustainable organizational success in modern business settings. Despite supervisors' important role in linking employees to the organization, this intermediary process is not well understood (Coyle-Shapiro & Shore, 2007). In this regard, it is still unclear when supervisor behaviors operate at the individual level, at the group level, or at both levels (D. V. Day, Gronn, & Salas, 2006). Moreover, as supervisors are needed to connect employees to the organization and its goals, it is important to understand what factors enable them to fulfill this task successfully, and under which conditions their effectiveness will be limited. In order to provide a structured approach to

these important questions, I reconsider the relevance of the contingency approach to leadership. The core assumption of this leadership theory is that situational factors determine whether specific leadership behaviors will be successful (Fiedler, 1967; Hersey & Blanchard, 1977; Vroom & Yetton, 1973). However, the traditional approach to contingency factors is limited in several ways. First, this line of research focused predominantly on leadership styles (e.g., person vs. task orientation: Fiedler, 1967; House, 1971) without considering other leader attributes such as personal characteristics and attitudes. Second, the majority of the research focused on task characteristics, such as task structure (Fiedler, 1967) and informational and quality requirements (Vroom & Yetton, 1973), but did not address other aspects of the organizational context (as an exception, Hersey & Blanchard [1977] considered team members' maturity levels). This dissertation strives to expand the original contingency idea that leadership style and situational characteristics need to be considered in concert to a more general principle of alignment. Specifically, I propose that the extent to which supervisor attributes match the organizational context will affect how supervisors influence employees' sense-making and related outcomes, which are relevant for the organization. I will elaborate how alignment can be construed in terms of supervisor behaviors, characteristics and the interplay of both, and discuss the implications for supervisors' contributions for the different business challenges.

Supervisor Behaviors

My first argument is that leader behaviors may vary in the degree to which they are considered idiosyncratic for the supervisor or are aligned with other organizational aspects, which go beyond the unique relationship with the supervisor. The distinction between idiosyncratic supervisor behaviors (e.g., directed at the unique relationship between the supervisor and the employee), and supervisor behaviors with a broader focus (e.g., directed to more general aspects of the organization) may have important implications for the level at

which supervisor behaviors operate in team contexts. In particular, I propose that idiosyncratic behaviors will operate predominantly at the individual level, whereas behaviors with a broader focus will have additional, contextual effects at the group level.

This distinction can meaningfully inform how supervisors mentoring behaviors contribute to organizational career development. In this regard, I distinguish the mechanisms of psycho-social mentoring and career mentoring at multiple levels in team contexts. Psycho-social mentoring is a dyadic behavior in nature, which strives to establish a trustful and intimate interpersonal relationship between the employee and the supervisor (Allen et al., 2004; Kram, 1985). As these efforts signal supervisors' personal interest and genuine concern for the employee, psycho-social mentoring is likely to be interpreted as an idiosyncratic supervisor behavior. Thus, within a team context, the individual mentoring experience should be the primary driver of psycho-social mentoring effects. In contrast, career mentoring includes behaviors such as sponsorship and access to career and developmental opportunities, such that career mentoring directs employees focus towards the organization in general (Noe, 1988; Ragins & McFarlin, 1990). That is, through career mentoring, employees make a variety of organizational experiences, which go beyond the unique relationship with their supervisor, and shape how employees perceive the organization in general (Baranik, Roling, & Eby, 2010). Thus, career mentoring may create a contextual group-level effect, which goes beyond the personal career mentoring perception at the individual level.

Chapter 2 presents a study, which corroborates this reasoning. Psycho-social mentoring, which is a more dyadic, idiosyncratic behavior, unfolded its favorable effects on employees' promotability and intentions to stay only at the individual level within teams, whereas career mentoring, which is aligned with broader aspects of the organization, had predominantly group-level effects on these outcomes.

Supervisor Characteristics

A second reading of the alignment principle concerns the match between supervisor characteristics and the specific requirements of the work group. The functional approach takes a pragmatic perspective on leadership and states that effective leaders need to manage any possible team needs, which may arise (McGrath, 1962). In particular, supervisors need to ensure that the team develops favorable team processes, which are instrumental for team effectiveness (Zaccaro et al., 2001). That is, supervisors can effectively manage teams, when their characteristics enable them to address the team's needs adequately and are aligned with the particular challenges, which the team has to handle. To illustrate this notion, I will consider two work group attributes, team diversity and task interdependence, which require an active management of team processes.

First, team diversity can lead to negative or positive consequences depending on whether unfavorable team processes (e.g., conflicts) or favorable team processes (e.g., elaboration of information) prevail.

Second, previous research demonstrated that task interdependence moderates how important supervisors and team processes are for team success (Burke et al., 2006; Joshi & Roh, 2009; Somech, Desivilya, & Lidogoster, 2009; Van Der Vegt & Janssen, 2003). When task interdependence is low, team members can individually perform their jobs, such that interactions with others are not necessarily needed to accomplish the team task. In contrast, in interdependent teams effective coordination and smooth cooperation are prerequisites for performance.

From an alignment perspective, supervisors should be effective in such settings when their characteristics enable them to establish favorable team processes in interdependent, diverse teams. The study reported in Chapter 3 serves to exemplify this proposition by considering the importance of supervisors' cultural intelligence in interdependent teams with

high nationality diversity with regard to diversity climate and team performance. Under this condition, the supervisor characteristic of cultural intelligence is aligned with the team's needs in several ways: First, diversity often creates equivocal situations, which are prone to alienate majority and minority team members alike (Ely & Thomas, 2001). As cultural intelligent supervisors possess the skills to communicate effectively across different nationalities (Imai & Gelfand, 2010), they are able to make sense of and dissolve ambiguities. Thereby, they contribute to a favorable and fair diversity climate. Second, Van Knippenberg et al. (2013) suggested that supervisors' beliefs about diversity will influence how they try to manage diversity in teams. Culturally intelligent supervisors are likely to recognize the potential that nationality diversity brings to the team. Therefore, they will encourage team members to cooperate and effectively utilize the various perspectives represented in nationally diverse teams, which benefit team performance (c.f., Greer et al., 2012). Conversely, when the team is less nationally diverse, supervisor's cultural intelligence is less needed. As illustrated by the study in Chapter 3, the resulting misalignment might even be detrimental for the teams' outcomes.

Moreover, other team constellations do not require supervisors to be culturally intelligent. For instance, cultural intelligence may be misaligned with other types of diversity, such as gender or age. The findings reported in Chapter 3 support the reasoning that supervisor characteristics need to be aligned with team requirements. In addition, I explored whether fair diversity climate mediated the interactive effect of nationality diversity, cultural intelligence, and task interdependence on team performance, but this mediation effect was not significant.

Interaction of Characteristics and Behaviors

Whereas the previous section focused on the alignment of supervisors' characteristics with regard to the workgroup needs, supervisors' personal attitude towards the organization

can also represent a form of (mis)alignment. In this regard, I consider the interactive effect of supervisor characteristics and behaviors, and their implications for employees' responses.

The employee-organization relationship can be interpreted within a social exchange framework (Coyle-Shapiro & Conway, 2004). Basically, an employee will be motivated to invest effort to the organizational benefit to the extent to which the organization (over-/under)fulfills its obligations towards the employee (Eisenberger, Armeli, Rexwinkel, Lynch, & Rhoades, 2001). As the organization itself represents an abstract social system, the exchange relationship is realized by organizational officials who represent the organization (Levinson, 1965). In this regard, supervisors constitute important exchange partners who shape the employment relationship (Liden, Bauer, & Erdogan, 2004). When the supervisor and the organization are perceived as a unity, employees tend to generalize their personal experiences with their supervisor to the organization; a process labeled anthropomorphization or personification of the organization (Eisenberger, Stinglhamber, Vandenberghe, Sucharski, & Rhoades, 2002; Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002; Sluss & Ashforth, 2008).

However, when there is a misalignment between the organization and the supervisor, these generalization tendencies are set off (Eisenberger et al., 2002; Eisenberger et al., 2010; Koivisto, Lipponen, & Platow, 2013). Under these circumstances, employees do not consider their supervisors as organizational agents (Sluss & Ashforth, 2008), such that they have limited influence on how employees perceive the organization (Sluss et al., 2012). In line with this reasoning, several studies showed that supervisor support only affects perceived organizational support when supervisors themselves identify with and are perceived to embody the organization (Eisenberger et al., 2002; Eisenberger et al., 2010). Similarly, supervisory interactional fairness is unrelated to how threatening employees perceive the organization during change when supervisors seem to be nonrepresentative for the organization (Koivisto et al., 2013).

In Chapter 4, I will explore the implications for supervisors' (mis)alignment with the organization in the context of organizational change. In particular, I will consider the interplay between supervisors' cynicism about change and contingent reward behavior. My central proposition is that supervisors' cynicism about change will indicate the level of (mis)alignment between the supervisor and the organizations. When supervisors' cynicism is low, contingent reward leadership helps to restore trust and provides orientation about what employees are supposed to do. Thus, this leader behavior is apt to attenuate employees' cynicism about change and increase their in-role performance (Podsakoff, Bommer, Podsakoff, & MacKenzie, 2006). Importantly, however, high supervisors' cynicism about change sheds a new light on the exchange relationship that employees maintain with their supervisor and with the organization. When supervisors are cynical about change, employees may perceive the organization and the supervisor as distinct entities. As employees may not equate a cynical supervisor with the organization, a favorable relationship with the supervisor, established by contingent reward, will leave their own cynicism about change unaffected. Moreover, Wayne and colleagues (2002, p. 593) noted that employees are motivated to reciprocate favorable supervisor behaviors "in terms of behaviors valued by the supervisor." Under conditions of estrangement between the supervisor and the organization, employees may not consider performance as an adequate way to respond to favorable supervisor treatment (Erdogan & Enders, 2007). My empirical study generally supported these ideas. Moreover, employees' cynicism about change at the group-level mediated the interactive effect of supervisors' cynicism about change and contingent reward on employees' performance, whereas individual-level cynicism was unrelated to performance. This finding indicates that cynicism *climate* may have relevant implications for organizations.

Outline of the Dissertation

The research presented here aims to advance our understanding about supervisors' role in managing the challenges of modern work settings. The dissertation was based on the cooperation with a partner company, at which I collected questionnaire data from employees and their supervisors. For each field study, data were collected in separate surveys, such that the data does not overlap in the studies reported here. When appropriate and feasible, I complemented these data with objective information obtained from company records.

Chapters 2 through 4 present different field studies, which address the topic of organizational career development, diversity management, and organizational change, respectively, and reflect the theoretical reasoning about how supervisors link employees to the organization. Table 1 summarizes the topics addressed by each chapter. As the chapters were written as articles for the submission to scientific journals, they can be read independently of each other. Furthermore, I had the chance to collaborate with several researchers who contributed valuable input to my research. In order to acknowledge the co-authors' contributions, I use the plural form "we" instead of "I" in the empirical chapters.

Chapter 5 concludes the dissertation and provides an integrative discussion of its theoretical and practical contributions. I will also address the limitations of my work and sketch avenues for future research.

Table 1.1: Overview of topics covered in the empirical chapters

	Chapter 1	Chapter 2	Chapter 3
<i>Employees' Organizational Perceptions</i>			
Group-level Climates	X	X	X
Individual-level Perceptions	X		X
<i>Business Challenge</i>			
Career Development	X		
Diversity Management		X	
Organizational Change			X
<i>Supervisor Attributes</i>			
Behavior	X		
Characteristic		X	
Interaction: Behavior X Characteristic			X
<i>Alignment</i>			
Behavior is Dyadic vs. Aligned with Organization	X		
Alignment with Work Group Requirements		X	
Alignment with Organizational Strategy			X