On Melting Pots and Salad Bowls: 
Are Identity-Blind or Identity-Conscious Diversity Ideologies More Effective? 

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Diversity is a reality of social life in many organizations and societies. As a result, facilitating harmonious intergroup relations and positive individual outcomes in diverse settings is of critical importance. Different ideological beliefs regarding the most effective way to think about, approach, and manage diversity exist and can be broadly classified as either identity-blind diversity ideologies, which focus on minimizing differences, or identity-conscious diversity ideologies, which focus on acknowledging differences. In spite of much research in the organizational sciences, as well as in developmental, counseling, cultural, and social psychology, the existing literature does not provide clear conclusions regarding the effectiveness of identity-blind and identity-conscious ideologies. We seek to advance understanding by drawing finer-grained distinctions among diversity ideology types and by considering a wide array of effectiveness indicators. To this end, we build theory regarding the effectiveness of one identity-conscious ideology—multiculturalism—and three identity-blind ideologies—colorblindness, meritocracy, and assimilation—for improving intergroup relations (i.e., reducing prejudice, stereotyping, and discrimination and increasing diversity policy support) and facilitating positive individual outcomes (i.e., increasing well-being in general and engagement and performance at work and school). The results of a meta-analysis challenge existing conclusions regarding the effectiveness of identity-conscious and identity-blind ideologies, demonstrate that different identity-blind ideologies vary in effectiveness, and indicate that the effectiveness of any diversity ideology depends on how effectiveness is defined (e.g., stereotyping versus discrimination versus well-being). Implications for theory, practice, and future research are discussed.