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A Closed Mouth Gonna Get You Nothin': How Conflict is Handled after Diversity and Inclusion Training

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A CLOSED MOUTH GONNA GET YOU NOTHIN':
HOW CONFLICT IS HANDLED AFTER DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION TRAINING

A Thesis Presented

by

ENRICO E. MANALO

Submitted to the Office of Graduate Studies,
University of Massachusetts Boston,
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

August 2018

Conflict Resolution Program

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ABSTRACT

A CLOSED MOUTH GONNA GET YOU NOTHIN': HOW CONFLICT IS HANDLED AFTER DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION TRAINING

August 2018

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Diversity and Inclusion training is often used in organizations to engage with the increasing demographic diversity in the United States. However, many organizations continue to base their trainings and initiatives on a paradigm which was primarily motivated to prevent litigation, rather than to ensure economic opportunity for all. Over time, such Diversity efforts failed in many documented instances to ensure such opportunities and in fact, created a host of unwanted side-effects, such as employee turnover, job dissatisfaction, and misconceptions regarding the soundness of Diversity and Inclusion efforts.

However, a number of organizations have undertaken Diversity and Inclusion efforts in earnest. It is in one of these organizations that this paper examines two sites to answer the following: how do members of organizations which state commitment to

diversity and inclusion handle conflict after having received diversity and inclusion training?

This paper traces the development of Diversity and Inclusion through its earliest antecedents to the present day in order to understand one organization's answers to that question. This paper further argues that antecedents to contemporary Diversity and Inclusion models were based on faulty assumptions, bad faith, and did not receive the necessary institutional support--particularly from leadership--necessary to succeed. Not only do Diversity and Inclusion practices work to minimize prejudice, minimize destructive conflict/create opportunities for productive conflict, it works to break free of the zero-sum thinking of the Black/White Binary Paradigm of race (and other dominant discourses), and supports the Business Case for Diversity. This study has found that for the participants interviewed, when Diversity and Inclusion efforts are successful, conflict is handled productively, and often is not recognized as conflict at all.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS	vi
LIST OF FIGURES AND TABLES.....	x
CHAPTER	Page
1. INTRODUCTION	1
The Present Study	3
PART I. OVERVIEW	
2. FROM EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY TO DIVERSITY	5
Affirmative Action to Assimilation	5
Multiculturalism & the Business Case.....	10
Diversity and Inclusion Training	12
Conflict Management and Resolution	16
3. FROM DIVERSITY TO INCLUSION	18
Dominant Types of Diversity.....	18
Colorblindness	18
The Fragility of the Black/White Binary	23
Conflict Resolution and Multiculturalism	36
4. INCLUSION.....	45
Leadership.....	49
5. METHODS	59

PART II. CASE STUDY

CHAPTER	Page
6. HOW DO INDIVIDUALS HANDLE CONFLICT AFTER RECEIVING DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION TRAINING?	64
Component 1: Fairly Implemented Employment Practices	66
Midwest.....	67
Northeast.....	74
Component 2: Integration of Differences and Inclusion Training	81
Midwest.....	82
Northeast.....	87
Component 3: Inclusion in Decision Making.....	90
Midwest.....	91
Northeast.....	94
7. CONTRIBUTION.....	100
8. OBSERVATIONS	102
Limitations and Suggestions for Future Research	104
9. DISCUSSION	106

CHAPTER	Page
APPENDIX	
A. DEMOGRAPHIC QUESTIONS	109
B. SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW PROTOCOL SCRIPT	110
C. SAMPLE AWARENESS OF RESEARCH E-MAIL	113
D. SAMPLE RECRUITMENT SCRIPT	114
E. INFORMATION SHEET.....	116
F. CONSENT FORM.....	118
BIBLIOGRAPHY	119

LIST OF FIGURES AND TABLES

Figure	Page
1. Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs	14
2. Berry's Acculturation Strategies.....	28
3. Optimal Distinctiveness Theory: Opposing Process Model	39
4. Shore's Inclusion Framework	47
Table	
1. Opposing Drives and Levels of Self-presentation	39
2. Three Domain Approaches to Leadership	52

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

In the wake of the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (otherwise known as Title VII), American businesses began to implement training and initiatives in preparation for an integrated workforce (Anand & Winters, 2008; Bezrukova, Jehn, & Spell, 2012). Though compliance with the law is a strong foundation for creating and sustaining systemic change, diversity scholarship strongly suggests that compliance with the law is not enough. One reason being that compliance with the law does not necessarily address underlying attitudes held by individuals. At the time of writing, deep divisions along the lines of gender, ethnicity, race, and class in American society have been evident in contemporary events. In recent years, these divisions have sparked the emergence of activist movements such as Occupy Wall Street and Black Lives Matter. It would appear that in the wake of the 2016 election of President Trump, the divisions in American society are growing deeper and more public.

The U.S. is undoubtedly a diverse country, but as is increasingly obvious, it is not a united one. For example, a Pew Research survey of registered voters conducted in March of 2016, found that in response to the question, “Compared with 50 years ago, life in America for people like you is . . .” 54% of white voters answered “worse” while 58% of black voters answered “better” (2016, p. 22). Interestingly, the same survey found that

in general, the voting public views diversity as having a positive impact on the U.S. as a place to live (Pew Research Center, 2016, p. 29). If it can be assumed that this view of diversity is generally common, then it could also reasonably be assumed that neighborhoods and municipalities are more integrated today than in the past. However, according to Kramer & Hogue, “segregation has decreased moderately” since 1970 (2009, p. 179). Nevertheless, the country has become more diverse and as a result the pool of potential employees has become more diverse as well. In response, organizations have turned to diversity and inclusion training and initiatives to address the demographic differences of their constituent members in an effort to minimize or mitigate conflict in the workplace, reduce turnover, and to best capitalize on differences in experience and perspective (Menendez, 2014).

Conflict is a given in organizational life just as it is in social life, and given that conflict often arises from difference, it is easy to see why organizations have an interest in managing or resolving conflict between diverse individuals and groups. Diversity initiatives of many kinds are common in U.S. organizations. Examples of such initiatives include transparency in hiring practices, creating scholarships or partnerships with universities in the interest of recruiting underrepresented minority group members, diversity days, offering ESL classes, offering classes on cultural sensitivity, and using suppliers that are also committed to diversity and inclusion. Among those efforts, organizations also use diversity training; according to Harvard Business Review, “nearly half of midsize companies use it, as do nearly all the Fortune 500 (Dobbin & Kalev, 2016, p. 3).” Diversity and inclusion training is often implemented to raise awareness of the experiences of members of non-dominant groups (Anand & Winters, 2008; Kalev,

Dobbin, & Kelly, 2006). It is also often implicit that such training will lead to better conflict management and conflict resolution within the organization, mitigating costly litigation among other negative outcomes (Dobbin & Kalev, 2016). However, we are left with this question: in organizations that state a commitment to diversity and inclusion, how do people handle conflict after having received training related to diversity and inclusion?

The Present Study: how do members of organizations which state commitment to diversity and inclusion handle conflict after having received diversity and inclusion training?

Though there are still organizations that implement diversity and inclusion practices and training primarily in the interest of compliance with the law to avoid litigation, there are organizations that are deeply committed to diversity and inclusion. Positive business outcomes and positive effects on the societies that such organizations are embedded in are two possible reasons for such commitment. Though these organizations are diverse in nature, it stands to reason that one commonality is that an interest in the efficacy of diversity and inclusion interventions, trainings, and practices exists. Feedback is crucial to the further development and refinement of diversity and inclusion training as a remedy for inequality of all types within specific organizational contexts, but also for the development of the academic fields of diversity and conflict resolution. Twelve years ago Kalev, Dobbin & Kelly argued that “Current prescriptions are not based in evidence (2006, p. 591).” Ten years later, Dobbin and Kalev argued in *The Harvard Business Review* that “Despite a few new bells and whistles, courtesy of big

data, companies are basically doubling down on the same approaches they've used since the 1960s" (2016, p. 53). The various literatures suggest that while there are links between academic theory and organizational practice, there may be ways to more closely bridge the two. It is my hope that by studying cases where diversity and inclusion efforts are undertaken earnestly, more effective diversity and inclusion efforts can be implemented in the future.

One of the underlying assumptions of diversity and inclusion training is a reduction in destructive conflict along the many lines of identity such as a race, gender, culture, or age. If current models are in fact effective in these types of reduction or allow people to engage in conflict along those lines productively—and perhaps also allow those who engage in such conflict to value those differences—then understanding in greater detail how this occurs seems worthy of study. If current models are *not* effective, then the “why” of that too, is worthy of understanding. It may be that some models are effective in some contexts and not others and learning about how context affects efficacy would also be invaluable in the conception of the next generation of diversity and inclusion training approaches.

CHAPTER 2

FROM EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY TO DIVERSITY

Affirmative Action to Assimilation

“Diversity” in contemporary America has been something of a buzzword in both organizational settings and in society at large for the past few decades. Often, “diversity” connotes “tolerance” of differences in culture, ethnicity, religion, sexual preference, and gender identity. However, it has also become a word that may in fact activate bias (Bregman, 2012; Dobbin & Kalev, 2016) and connote division, even among those who claim “tolerance”. In addition to activating bias, “diversity” efforts, initiatives, and in particular, interventions may be perceived as accusations of racism or even anti-White discrimination. According to one person contacted in the process of conducting the research for this thesis, diversity efforts have been renamed “Organizational Equity and Inclusion” (OE&I) training due to negative reactions to the terms, “diversity training” and “diversity”. All of these practices, though enacted to establish equal opportunity for all, have been seen by some as discriminatory in practice (Dobbin & Kalev, 2016; Legault, Gutsell, & Inzlicht, 2011; Pierce, 2003, p. 54). It must be noted at that these feelings of anti-White discrimination are perceived by White people, but not by Black people (Norton & Sommers, 2011, p. 215).

In response to the Civil Rights movement, the federal government enacted Title VII in 1964, building on President Kennedy's Executive Order 10925, which mandated that federal contractors end discrimination by taking "affirmative action" (Kelly & Dobbin, 1998, p. 961). Where Title VII made discriminatory hiring practices illegal, "Executive Orders 10925 and 11245 encouraged employers to take positive steps to end discrimination, including active programs to hire, train, and promote people from disadvantaged groups" (Kelly & Dobbin, 1998, p. 963). These efforts are often referred to as Affirmative Action (AA). In response to Title VII and AA, organizations became concerned with compliance, as violating the law could then result in costly litigation (Kelly & Dobbin, 1998, p. 964).

This landmark legislation spawned an era of training [within organizations] in the late 1960s and 1970s, largely in response to the barrage of discrimination suits that were filed with the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC). If the EEOC or state agencies found "probable cause" for discrimination, one of the remedies was typically a court-ordered mandate for the organization to train all employees in antidiscriminatory behavior. (Anand & Winters, 2008, p. 357)

It should be noted that while programs to ensure compliance were quickly adopted, Executive Orders 10925 and 11245 failed to define compliance or even offer guidelines for establishing compliance. Further, Title VII failed to define the concept of "discrimination" or establish the criteria constituting discrimination (Kelly & Dobbin, 1998, pp. 963–964). As Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) or AA enforcement could be initiated on *probable cause* of discrimination, "most training during this era was

primarily the imparting of knowledge with recitations on the law and company policies, a litany of do's and don'ts and maybe a couple of case studies for the participants to ponder (Anand & Winters, 2008).” To attempt compliance with the law and to minimize litigation, organizations enlisted EEO and AA specialists and consultants to design programs informing hiring and promotion practices that had transparency and justification for choices made in those areas by upper management (Kelly & Dobbin, 1998). In short, because the law was ambiguous, there was no clear and concrete way to ensure compliance and so organizations depended on EEO and AA specialists to create programs and even whole departments internally that would minimize chances of EEO inspections finding probable cause for discrimination.

Though EEO and AA were created with the intention of correcting demographic imbalances in the workplace and, therefore, creating positive economic mobility in disadvantaged groups, diversity efforts were co-opted as management practices (Kelly & Dobbin, 1998). This was due in part to political pressure, such as Reagan's curbing of EEO and AA legislation through deregulation (Anand & Winters, 2008), which motivated EEO and AA compliance specialists to justify their positions within their respective organizations (Kelly & Dobbin, 1998).

Individual specialists learned of new rationales from management consultants, management journals, professional networks, and business associations, and articulated these rationales when defending their programs to executives. It was thus that affirmative action offices and practices became diversity management departments and programs. (Kelly & Dobbin, 1998, p. 981)

In this context, trainers often approached diversity training and interventions from a “blame and shame” perspective that focused on compliance and mandatory diversity training or re-training, often emphasizing the threat of litigation (Anand & Winters, 2008; Bregman, 2012; Kelly & Dobbin, 1998; Roosevelt Thomas, 1990).

The focus on compliance-based workplace training shifted in the 1980’s, as the deregulation of EEO and AA enforcement in the Reagan era lessened EEO and AA oversight and subsequently training programs (Anand & Winters, 2008; Kelly & Dobbin, 1998). By this time, the concept of “corporate culture” had entered the management lexicon. As corporate cultures are populated by individuals from regional and national cultures, the norms of corporate culture reflect dominant regional and national norms. In the 1980’s, there was an underlying assumption that individuals would conform to those dominant regional and national norms (Hornsey & Hogg, 2000). In this case, that minorities and women would enter corporate cultures that were predominantly white and male and so needed to gain competency to function within such cultures. That is, that minorities and women would need to assimilate. This assimilationist model is still present in the field of diversity as we know it today (Hornsey & Hogg, 2000), which emerged in the late 1980’s with the release of *Workforce 2000* (Anand & Winters, 2008).

Workforce 2000 (a report on demographic trends that would shape the workforce in the last years of the 20th century) introduced to the general public the idea that the familiar homogeneity of the workplace was changing—that in the future white men would no longer be the dominant identity group in the workplace (Ghorashi & Sabelis, 2013; Oswick & Noon, 2014; Paluck, 2006). “‘*Workforce 2000*’ created a major shift in

thinking about the future composition of the workforce and is credited with putting the term ‘workforce diversity’ into the business lexicon and creating an important rationale for the diversity industry (Anand & Winters, 2008, p. 358).”

With these shifts in the social and political context, training to address issues around workplace discrimination in regard to women and minorities went through numerous permutations. With deregulation, one major change outside of training, was that human resource departments (which in many cases had merged with, or were concurrently run by EEO/AA departments or positions) began implementing non-union systems for addressing a range of grievances including discrimination and sexual harassment before such complaints reached the courts (Kelly & Dobbin, 1998). It could be argued that these non-union systems further entrenched dominant norms, reinforcing the assimilationist position. In addition to grievance systems, a range of other types of diversity programs have been introduced (Jansen, Otten, & van der Zee, 2015)—the most common types (including AA plans) being “diversity committees and taskforces, diversity managers, diversity training, diversity evaluations for managers, networking programs, and mentoring programs” (Kalev et al., 2006, p. 590). Though deregulation also meant that compliance was no longer of primary importance for organizations, many trainings, hiring, and promotion practices continued to be founded on the compliance-based paradigm (Anand & Winters, 2008; Kelly & Dobbin, 1998). However, despite the focus on compliance, economic mobility remained a major issue.

Multiculturalism & the Business Case

[A]ffirmative action is an artificial, transitional intervention intended to give managers a chance to correct an imbalance, an injustice, a mistake. Once the numbers mistake has been corrected, I don't think affirmative action alone can cope with the remaining long-term task of creating a work setting geared to the upward mobility of all kinds of people, including white males. It is difficult for affirmative action to influence upward mobility even in the short run, primarily because it is perceived to conflict with the meritocracy we favor. (Roosevelt Thomas, 1990, p. 6).

By 1990, numerous studies had shown that women and minorities were not reaching upper-level positions (Anand & Winters, 2008, p. 359). Roosevelt Thomas is credited by some as paving the way for the next wave of thinking about diversity by moving the discussion from a legal and moral perspective to a business perspective (Anand & Winters, 2008, p. 359; Kelly & Dobbin, 1998, p. 973). In Roosevelt Thomas' view, the paradigm of diversity had to pivot from compliance to business survival in order to effectively realize the goals implicit in EEO and AA legislation (Anand & Winters, 2008; 1990). Once diverse individuals were hired, several questions remained: how can organizations capitalize on the differences between individuals? How those individuals might demonstrate their value within their professional roles? How might they advance on their own merits? Roosevelt Thomas expressed the approach to answering these questions as "managing diversity" (Anand & Winters, 2008; Roosevelt Thomas, 1990), others as "multiculturalism" (Kelly & Dobbin, 1998), "the business case

for diversity” (Herring, 2009; Robinson, Pfeffer, & Buccigrossi, 2003), the “integration-and-learning perspective on diversity” (Ely & Thomas, 2001), and “the learning-and-effectiveness paradigm” (Shore et al., 2011). In Roosevelt Thomas’ words, the business case for diversity means “getting from employees, first, everything we have a right to expect, and, second – if we do it well – everything they have to give (1990, p. 10).”

By emphasizing the “business case” for diversity, Roosevelt Thomas addressed one of the outcomes of early EEO/AA training, namely that “the training did not resonate well with the dominant group [because] the content made little connection to how the recommended changes in behavior would improve business results (Anand & Winters, 2008, p. 357).” For those on the receiving end of training, it was typical to first be introduced to the compliance rationales that were the basis of EEO/AA before moving on to the “valuing and respecting differences” rationale that was the basis of diversity management. At the time, training length was widely variable, lasting anywhere from an hour to four hours a day and typically, were done once per group of employees, though some implemented “refresher courses” (Anand & Winters, 2008). “This served to confuse learners, who mostly left this type of training believing that diversity was nothing more than a new euphemism for affirmative action” (Anand & Winters, 2008, p. 359). Further, while training was a platform for organizations to take action against discrimination, some researchers found that training modified employee behavior no more than one or two days (Dobbin & Kalev, 2016).

Diversity and Inclusion Training

Ferdman and Brody cite three general categories of motivators for diversity and inclusion training: the moral imperative, legal and social pressures, and business success and competitiveness (1996, p. 284). Consideration of such motivators is important as intention may inform execution; when training is implemented as a reactive measure, as is the case when motivated by legal and social pressures (Ferdman & Brody, 1996), the focus then rests on compliance with the law or in line with social norms and mores. While it may be that in medicine, “an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of the cure”, in diversity and inclusion training this tends to be expressed as informing and educating individuals on what *not* to do (Ferdman & Brody, 1996). Such trainings tend to further be motivated by the wish to avoid costly litigation, which then may carry over into training—perhaps implicitly—that the cost of discriminating against others is that the organization will pay the price (Dobbin & Kalev, 2016). This is an inherently negative message and works to assign guilt or blame—neither of which are generally associated with the idea of inclusion in relation to diversity or otherwise.

Whatever the motivation may be for a particular intervention through training in a given organizational context, the underlying goal is to modify behavior. In Dale Carnegie’s *How to Win Friends and Influence People* he relates an anecdote attributed to Ralph Waldo Emerson. To paraphrase, Emerson wanted to move a calf indoors and was unsuccessfully attempting to do so by pushing the calf. Upon seeing this, the housemaid approached the calf, allowing it to suckle on her finger as she gently led it inside (Carnegie, 1937). The story (though perhaps apocryphal) illustrates something that will

ring true for many: motivating others by imposition of the will of another may often be less effective than motivating others by identifying what they want or need.

Maslow's oft cited hierarchy, as outlined in his paper *A Theory of Human Motivation* (1943) endures (though often with some modification) as a framework for understanding how motivation is based upon the satisfaction of needs. Though the hierarchy is generally oriented toward the individual, it is also useful when considering the organization—particularly if one is to broadly consider the organization as an “organism” as Maslow makes reference to in his original paper (1943). The hierarchy of needs (in its classical form) moves from the physiological to self-actualization, requiring each rung of needs to be met before moving to the next higher rung. The logic here is that until the lower level of needs are met, one is not able to pay attention to the next higher level—when you are starving, for example, you will not have much attention to spare for self-realization needs. Within this framework, one may see the bases for Ferdman and Brody's motivators for diversity training.

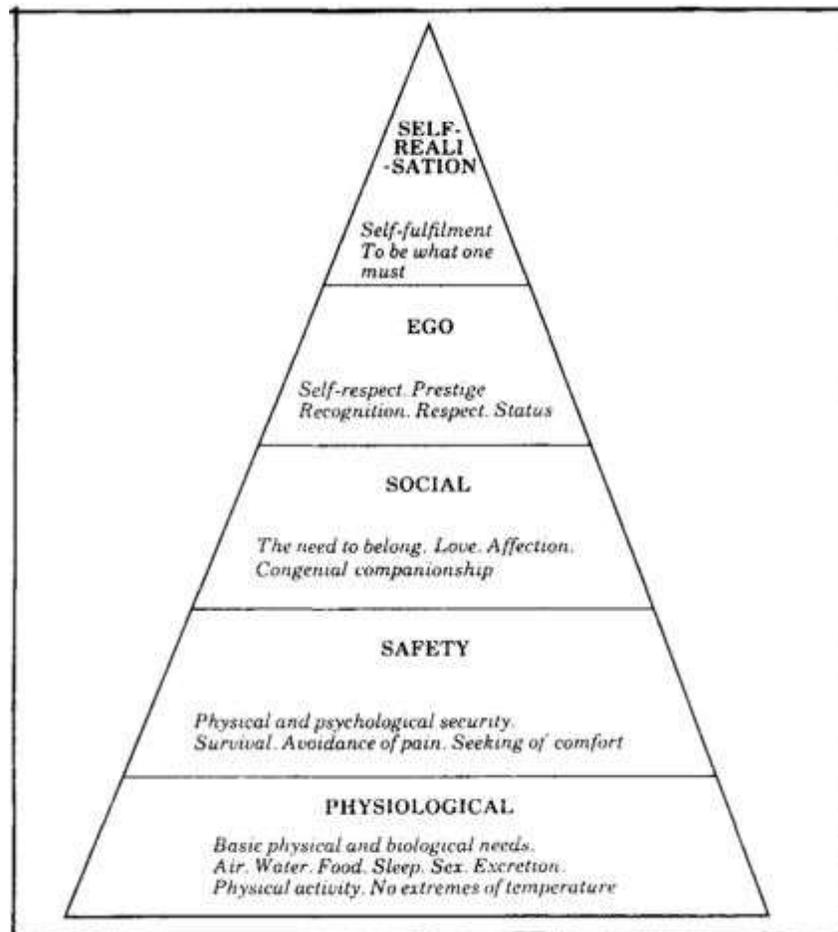


Figure 1: Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, *Construction Conflict Management and Resolution*, 1992, p. 40

Legal and social pressures (as motivators) may be seen as falling onto the hierarchical rungs of safety needs and then social needs (belonging) respectively, as legal pressures are threats to the well-being of the organization and as legally embattled organizations may be perceived as violating social norms, which could both be costly for a given organization. Thus, the motivator may be seen as a reactive (Ferdman & Brody, 1996) wish to avoid negative outcomes by preventing wrongdoing. This however, is a negative frame that tends to result in strategies that emphasize punishment for individuals or organizations.

The moral imperative as a motivator for diversity training however, falls on the highest rung of the hierarchy of needs: self-realization. For this motivator to be effective, all other needs must first be met. If this motivator is used in an organization where other needs have *not* been met, it is likely that it will not resonate with individuals as other needs would take priority. The business success and competitiveness motivator on the other hand, falls on the rung of safety needs as generating income is a means to ensure survival, security, avoidance of pain, and allows for the seeking of comfort. To successfully compete with other organizations (or out-compete them), businesses must be proactive rather than reactive. In this positive framing, compliance is then a by-product of competition, rather than a goal. If successful, the business success and competitiveness motivator then opens a path for the satisfaction of social needs. If social needs and self-realization needs can be satisfied, the moral imperative can then be put into play as a motivator to continue successful diversity and inclusion efforts as part of an organization's self-realization.

That said, this does not at all excuse leadership from making ethical choices until the bottom line is taken care of. To set the stage for the business success and competitiveness motivator—as a safety need—first, physiological needs must be satisfied. In other words, for business success and competitiveness to be possible, it behooves employers to ensure in no uncertain terms that realistic compensation is afforded to employees at all levels such that their physiological and biological well-being is a given. In the absence of this surety, the sustainability of “the bottom line” is at best tenuous as employee turnover—a cost “as high as 200-250 percent of annual pay” (Nishii, 2013, p. 1768)—is likely.

Conflict Management and Resolution

In order for diversity training of any stripe to succeed, addressing conflict that may arise due to individual differences is necessary. In general linguistic terms, in English the word “conflict” has any number of negative associations and is often conflated with competition (Deutsch, 1969)—in particular, competition for limited resources, which results in zero-sum thinking and behaviors (Nadler, 2004; Pruitt & Kim, 2004). Rahim offers the following definition of conflict: “Conflict is defined as an interactive process manifested in incompatibility, disagreement, or difference within or between social entities (i.e., individual, group, organization, etc.)” (1992, p. 370). While one of the concerns in relation to demographic diversity within societies and within organizations is that of greater chances of conflict (Herring, 2009), it must be noted that conflict may also be constructive, productive, and generative (Deutsch, 1969).

The value of competency in conflict management and conflict resolution is that these skills may be applied across differences of any salient social category, as the aim is to address the underlying causes of conflict rather than the differences. Additionally, productive or successfully managed conflict can contribute to trust, which is crucial to the success of the achievement of common goals among interdependent actors, as in an organization (Brewer, 1991; Leonardelli, Pickett, & Brewer, 2010; Nadler, 2004; Nishii, 2013; Pruitt & Kim, 2004; Tajfel & Turner, 1986). This resiliency is generative as it may allow those interdependent actors to find ways of satisfying individual and group needs. To draw an analogy, conflict competency is aimed at treating the disease rather than the

symptoms. To effectively address conflicts arising from heterogeneity, those differences—perceived or otherwise—must be made sense of.

If conflict can be managed as part of day-to-day operations, then the diverse perspectives of diverse individuals and their approaches to task completion can be incorporated into better understanding the achievement of goals, such as product development and problem solving. Productive conflict can lead to innovation and therefore, an increase in organizational competitiveness (Nishii, 2013, p. 1756). When conflict is productive, rather than destructive, job satisfaction may actually increase (Nishii, 2013, p. 1755) rather than decrease as actors can “work things out” and reclarify perspectives, roles, and approaches to work rather than leading to destructive conflict (Ely & Thomas, 2001, p. 257). This may also yield the effect of reducing turnover as unit-level satisfaction is a predictor of turnover (Nishii, 2013, p. 1755).

As the academic field of Conflict Resolution is still emerging, the literature draws from many more established fields of academic study, such as social psychology, sociology, anthropology, and law to name but a few. Because conflict is so deeply and fundamentally entwined within the human experience and due to the qualitative nature of this research, it would not make sense to present the relevant conflict resolution theories in a standalone section. To successfully account for how conflict is handled by individuals after having received diversity and inclusion training, I have found it necessary to interweave relevant conflict theories and ideas throughout the narrative.

CHAPTER 3

FROM DIVERSITY TO INCLUSION

Dominant Types of Diversity

As of 2008, the most widely used types of diversity initiatives in organizations were “colorblindness” and “multiculturalism” (Meeussen, Otten, & Phalet, 2014), with some researchers finding colorblindness to be the dominant approach in American organizations (Stevens, Plaut, & Sanchez-Burks, 2008). “Assimilation” is another widely used approach to diversity, though in my view this is a subtype of “colorblindness” as I will explain in this section. “*Multiculturalism* explicitly recognizes cultural differences and considers them as a strength and an added value. In contrast, *colorblindness* foregrounds equality between all people by focusing on similarities and individual merit while ignoring cultural differences (Meeussen et al., 2014, p. 630).” This focus on merit and individualism as cultural values is intrinsic to the warp and the weft of the American narrative (Oyserman, Coon, & Kimmelmeier, 2002).

Colorblindness

Colorblindness, as a concept, is often expressed in the statement “I don’t see race”. At first glance, this statement seems to suggest that the individual making the statement sees people for who they are, rather than through the lens of racial, ethnic, cultural, or gendered stereotypes. Interestingly, however, the claim of colorblindness has

been found to be “associated with a greater level of prejudice both unconscious/implicit and conscious/explicit, and is also used as a justification for inequality” (Sorensen, Nagda, Gurin, & Maxwell, 2009, p. 15). Studies have shown that this perspective may lead people to believe that they have transcended bias, or are not racist (DiAngelo, 2010; Meeussen et al., 2014). Further, it may also prevent people from understanding how they have personally benefitted from existing power structures. The statement, “I don’t see race” has been held up as an example of what has been called “The Discourse of Individualism”, a term attributed to Jane Flax’ 1998 book, *The American Dream in Black and White: The Clarence Thomas Hearings* (DiAngelo, 2010).

To understand the impact of the Discourse of Individualism, “discourse” must first be defined. “Discourse” is intended to be understood in the Foucauldian sense: “discourses are about what can be said and thought, but also about who can speak, when, and with what authority. They embody meaning and social relationships, they constitute both subjectivity and power relations” (Pitsoe & Letseka, 2013, p. 24). In other words, “Discourse refers to *very specific patterns of language that tell us something about the person speaking the language, the culture that that person is part of, the network of social institutions that the person [is] caught up in, and even frequently the most basic assumptions that the person holds*” (Whisnant, 2012, pp. 4–5, emphasis in original).

The dominant discourses appear “natural,” denying their own partiality and gaining their authority by appealing to common sense. These discourses, which support and perpetuate existing power relations, tend to constitute the subjectivity of most people most of the time (in a given place and time). (Gavey, 1989, p. 464)

The U.S. undeniably holds individualism as a cultural value and certainly, this value underlies the subjectivity of the individuals who comprise that culture.

The Discourse of Individualism posits race as irrelevant. In fact, claiming that race is relevant to one's life chances is seen as limiting one's ability to stand on one's own; standing on one's own is both the assumption and the goal of Individualism. Because it obscures how social positioning impacts opportunity, the Discourse of Individualism is a dominant discourse that functions ideologically to reinforce and reproduce relations of unequal power. (DiAngelo, 2010, p. 5)

“Although a colorblind ideology may appeal to nonminorities, this approach to diversity also may alienate minority employees and allow a culture of racism to develop (Stevens et al., 2008, p. 120).” As colorblindness and the Discourse of Individualism reproduce and reinforce inequality, a framework for diversity management, practices, programs, initiatives, and training created on the basis of colorblindness can in fact serve to further exclude and marginalize individuals who do not belong to the dominant group.

Certainly many whites do not feel in control of the power structure, but people of color see that even outside the board rooms and the political elite, whites are primarily in control of the clubs, the leagues, and other social organizations. Moreover, people of color who experience the exclusion from those institutions see whites as responsible for the exclusion. (Ong Hing, 1993, p. 900)

It can further be argued that both colorblindness and the Discourse of Individualism are then manifestations of structural inequality, which can be defined as “attributing an

unequal status to a category of people in relation to one or more other categories of people, a relationship that is perpetuated and reinforced by a confluence of unequal relations in roles, functions, decision rights, and opportunities (Dani & de Haan, 2008, p. 3).” I offer up an observation made by Peggy McIntosh: “Most talk by whites about equal opportunity seems to me now to be about equal opportunity to try to get into a position of dominance while denying that systems of dominance exist (McIntosh, 1988).”

The differences ignored by colorblindness and the inequalities in power dynamics reinforced and reproduced by the Discourse of Individualism are rooted in the idea that “The legitimacy of our institutions [such as organizations] depends upon the concept that all citizens are equal” (DiAngelo, 2010). I would argue that McIntosh’s assertion that “[W]hites are taught to think of their lives as morally neutral, normative, and average, and also ideal” (1988), further supports the concept of “legitimacy” offered by DiAngelo. Though the individuals hired for positions within organizations may in fact be chosen on merit and not at all because of their identity differences, focusing solely on merit at the expense of those identity differences can create conditions that may well develop into conflict between non-dominant and dominant group members—precisely what diversity efforts aim to curb.

“A colorblind perspective does not reliably indicate a prejudicial organizational stance but rather, may reflect an attempt by the organization to frame their diversity practices using an ideology that has traditionally appealed to nonminority groups (Stevens et al., 2008, p. 120).” As Thomas (1990, p. 6) pointed out, AA efforts may have been difficult to accept by dominant groups as AA is seemingly at odds with the

meritocratic values that are central to American cultural values. Because diversity efforts are descended from AA efforts, it is no surprise that diversity efforts suffer similarly. This cultural value on merit, while generally seen in a positive light in the U.S., has sometimes manifested negatively as in the Discourse of Individualism. The idiom, “to pull oneself up by one’s bootstraps” is often used to connote self-reliant success—a central feature in the American narrative.

In practice however, while this self-reliance is in some contexts a thing to be admired, this ethos does not easily lend itself to empathy, or to building the capacity to entertain or explore perspectives other than one’s own. Further, “individualism promotes a decontextualized, as opposed to a situation-specific, reasoning style, one that assumes social information is not bound to social context” (Oyserman et al., 2002). If social information is *not* bound to social context, then it follows that any advantages or disadvantages held by an individual that one is in conversation with are not attributable to structural forces, but are personal triumphs or personal failures. By attempting to frame diversity efforts in ways that appeal to nonminority groups, the effect may inadvertently be the perpetuation of dominant discourse normalization.

White people in North America live in a social environment that protects and insulates them from race-based stress. This insulated environment of racial protection builds white expectations for racial comfort while at the same time lowering the ability to tolerate racial stress, leading to what I refer to as White Fragility. White Fragility is a state in which even a minimum amount of racial stress becomes intolerable, triggering a range of defensive moves. These moves

include the outward display of emotions such as anger, fear, and guilt, and behaviors such as argumentation, silence, and leaving the stress-inducing situation. These behaviors, in turn, function to reinstate white racial equilibrium. (DiAngelo, 2011, p. 54)

These expectations of “racial comfort” and low tolerance for racial stress are, I argue, motivators that continue to reproduce the Discourse of Individualism and the rationale behind colorblindness. If colorblindness can be construed as White Fragility’s answer to diversity, then its utility as a diversity approach may be extremely limited and even deleterious to serious diversity efforts, as numerous studies suggest. Certainly, if difference cannot be engaged with, then any conflicts arising from difference can be dismissed as illegitimate, irrelevant, and not worth finding resolutions for. In this case, diversity efforts become mere compliance measures to avoid litigation, which is to say, a loss of profit. While it is imperative that diversity efforts appeal to all those involved, racial comfort for the dominant group at the expense of others is likely to cause diversity efforts to fail.

The Fragility of the Black/White Binary

While the concept of White Fragility is discomfiting, I would argue that the Black/White Binary Paradigm of race (Perea, 1997) in America is as problematic a dominant discourse and far less acknowledged and recognized. This is particularly problematic as equality is considered to be a pillar of American culture. I would go so far to say that Title VII and AA were crafted primarily around this discourse and so the Black/White Binary is equally a manifestation of structural inequality (Perea, 1997;

Tamayo, 1995; Wu, 1995, 2002). Contrary to public memory, the Civil Rights movement was most certainly *not* solely Dr. King fighting for the rights of African Americans. The Black/White Binary is mentioned to emphasize that “diversity” is not a synonym, euphemism, or else a construction of figurative language meaning “White American and African American issues”. In conceiving of difference or race as a binary (even subconsciously) the complexity of subgroup interaction is overly minimized, and flattened, glossing over inter-minority group discrimination (Perea, 1997). I argue that not only does the phenomenon of White Fragility exist, but fragility in regard to race and ethnicity outside of the Black/White Binary as well. “Recognition of these differences helps develop a respect for other cultures and sets the groundwork for a workable multiracial society. This groundwork can help us counter the human tendency to divide and distinguish in *binary terms* of superiority and inferiority (Ong Hing, 1993, p. 905, emphasis added).”

The Black/White Binary in effect, sets further boundaries on who can be legitimately considered “real” Americans, playing into the implicit idea that European Americans are “really” American. If one must acknowledge slavery, then African Americans are “real” Americans too. People who are not White or African American are often referred to as “(other) people of color”—a term relative to the “real” races in America, which reinforces the Black/White Binary (Perea, 1997, p. 1219). The Black/White Binary frames racial dynamics—and more broadly, the dynamics of difference in America—as a zero-sum game of black and white. In doing so, relations between minority groups, and relations between other minority groups and the dominant groups, are often seen as less salient to discussions of race. One often overlooked

example is that of conflict between Asian Americans (the so-called “model minority”) and African Americans.

Asian Americans are encouraged to view African Americans, and programs for them, as threats to their own upward mobility. African Americans are led to see Asian Americans, many of whom are immigrants, as another group that has usurped what was meant for them. Indeed, Asian Americans frequently are imagined as the beneficiaries of special consideration, although they almost always are excluded from race-based college admissions and employment programs.

[. . .] The perception of even assimilated Asian Americans as perpetual foreigners reveals how important race remains. To be a citizen, an Asian American must be thought of as an honorary white, someone who is not considered a minority. (Wu, 1995, p. 226)

Perhaps the most salient and unfortunately, common manifestation of perpetual foreignness or identity denial—where individuals or groups are denied membership of important identity groups (Cheryan & Monin, 2005)—of not only Asian Americans, but Latino Americans, Middle-Eastern Americans, and even Native Americans might be the seemingly innocuous questions, “Where are you from? No, where are you *really* from?” In the words of Frank H. Wu, “People who know nothing about me have an expectation of ethnicity, as if I will give up my life story as an example of exotica (2002, p. 1).”

A popular misconception is that Asian Americans (as well as professionals of color) do not experience the effects of discrimination and racial and economic

stratification. On the contrary, the few professionals of color who are successful in mainstream society often bear the burden of having white society treat them as ambassadors or representatives of their entire race. (Ong Hing, 1993, p. 900)

If there is a hierarchy of “Americanness”—an inequality in who can legitimately share in or become part of that superordinate identity—not only along ethnic or racial lines, but as Ong Hing points out, along *class* lines, then according to Allport’s theory, optimal intergroup contact is unlikely (Pettigrew, 1998; Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006; Pettigrew, Tropp, Wagner, & Christ, 2011). Optimal intergroup contact is unlikely, because it is framed in zero-sum terms.

Allport’s Intergroup Contact Theory (ICT) asserts that for positive or optimal intergroup contact “The situation must allow equal group status within the situation, common goals, inter-group cooperation, and authority support (Pettigrew, 1998, p. 80).” Key to Allport’s definition of optimal intergroup contact is *equality*, which clearly cannot exist in a contest of who is “really” a member of a superordinate group. Some scholars even go so far as to state that among minority groups, “prejudices have prevented the formation of a multiracial civil rights coalition (Tamayo, 1995, p. 1).” To understand why past approaches to diversity have failed to create the desired effects, it will be useful to understand the dynamics behind those failures.

In a pluralistic society where many groups co-exist, it might seem intuitive that minority groups might form such coalitions in an attempt to consolidate power, say for the purpose of increasing bargaining or political power, as a union does. However, in the American context, this has as Tamayo notes, historically not been the case. To

understand subgroup dynamics in plural societies such as the U.S., cross-cultural psychologist John Berry has developed a conceptual framework of acculturation strategies (1997, p. 10), which members of non-dominant groups use when attempting to live in a new or different cultural context.

While *acculturation* might most often be associated with immigrant groups, in a society like the U.S., in which many cultures both from abroad and from within are present, I argue that acculturation is something that is broadly a part of American life. Americans commonly move to and settle in locales other than the region of their birth in the course of finding employment or attending institutions of higher education. As a plural, or diverse society, both acculturation and *interculturalization* are taking place in the U.S. Acculturation can be described as “those phenomena which result when groups of individuals having different cultures come into continuous first-hand contact with subsequent changes in the original culture patterns of either or both groups” (Herskovits via Berry, 1997, p. 9). In contrast, interculturalization can be described as, “the set of processes by which individuals and groups interact when they identify themselves as culturally distinct” (Claret via Berry, 1997, p. 10). Certainly, both “acculturation” and “interculturalization” apply to individuals within organizations, which are commonly held to have distinct organizational cultures.

Berry goes on to define four strategies of acculturation: Separation/Segregation (done willingly, it is separation and if not, segregation), Marginalization, Assimilation, and Integration (Berry, 1997, p. 9). Figure 2 displays the four acculturation strategies outlined by Berry and their orientations along “Yes/No” axes of two issues, which are

framed as questions. Issue 1 asks, “Is it considered to be of value to maintain one’s identity and characteristics?” while Issue 2 asks, “Is it considered to be of value to maintain relationships with larger society?”

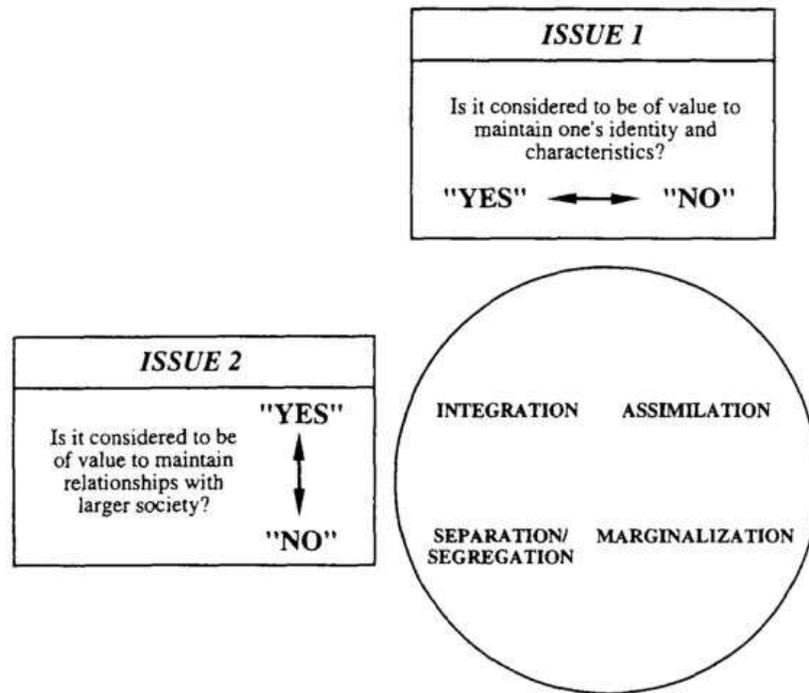


Figure 2: Berry's Accumulation Strategies, 1997, p. 10

In terms of segregation, the word in the American context is deeply laden with meaning in the cultural consciousness (stemming from the Jim Crow era) and has indelibly shaped American society. Though Title VII and AA efforts were crafted with the intention of “righting the wrongs of occupational segregation”, and much of the institutional apparatus of segregation has been dismantled, “the structure of segregation and its consequences have remained relatively intact over time (Williams, 1999, p. 178)”. An example of these enduring structures and consequences is that of housing segregation (Brief, Butz, & Deitch, 2005; Kramer & Hogue, 2009; Williams, 1999).

The U.S. has been home to numerous ethnic enclaves, both imposed and otherwise, historically and in the present (Bauer, Epstein, & Gang, 2005; Beckhusen, Florax, & Poot, 2012; Kramer & Hogue, 2009; Ong Hing, 1993; Padilla & Perez, 2003). Prominent examples include Native American reservations, Chinatowns, Irish neighborhoods, and “Little Italys”. While it is true that some of the aforementioned examples in the present day may persist as willingly separate, often such enclaves were established due to housing discrimination and exclusionary laws resulting in *de facto* or *de jure* segregation, respectively (Kramer & Hogue, 2009; Matias, 2014; Ong Hing, 1993).

Given this understanding, it is clear that the conflation of the term “segregation” and solely African American struggle, is yet another example of the Black/White Binary and is in fact, problematic. This common conflation excludes not only other people of color from the effects of segregation, but impoverished White people. However, in the context of ethnic enclaves, the experience of immigrants of color and their descendants differs greatly from that of European immigrants and their descendants. Though European immigrants of course experienced discrimination and conflict in the past, their descendants and even their ethnic enclaves have largely (though not always) become part of the mainstream (Ong Hing, 1993)—which is to say, they have acculturated and become White though they may retain their ethnicity symbolically (Gans, 1979). To put it another way, descendants of European immigrants and European ethnic enclaves may actually be able to escape the zero-sum dynamics that continue to negatively affect immigrants of color and certainly African Americans in regard to the formation of enclaves.

Segregation/Separation as an acculturation strategy is an important factor in considering diversity, as ethnic enclaves can deeply impact the employment and earnings of those that reside within them (Bauer et al., 2005; Beckhusen et al., 2012; Chiswick & Miller, 2005; Kramer & Hogue, 2009; Williams, 1999). Of particular concern regarding immigrant enclaves, “Numerous empirical studies [. . .] have shown that ethnic neighborhoods have detrimental effects on the educational attainment of migrants” (Bauer et al., 2005, p. 650), including language proficiency—which could then create a negative feedback loop perpetuating detriment to educational attainment, and even health (Kramer & Hogue, 2009; Williams, 1999).

In a study of immigrant language proficiency, Beckhusen et al., found that:

[I]mmigrants with good English proficiency will choose to migrate to locations with relatively low concentrations of immigrants of similar ethnicity and language. If the size of the enclave is small, it enables immigrants to improve their English proficiency over time, which in turn affects their earnings and assimilation into the local population. On the other hand, immigrants with poor English proficiency will choose to migrate to locations with large networks of migrants of similar ethnicity and language. [. . .] We may conclude that large enclaves are a potential source for a "language trap"; they attract poor proficiency English. (Bauer et al., 2005, p. 660)

“Not being connected to host country information networks when they arrive, immigrants have an incentive to create or “import” information networks through living in geographic concentrations with other new and longer term immigrants from the same

origin” (Chiswick & Miller, 2005, p. 3). “Furthermore, given the diversity of ethnic enclaves that exist in the United States today, some ethnic group members do not necessarily experience a great press to assimilate” (Padilla & Perez, 2003, p. 40). Padilla & Perez are quick to add an important twist to this assertion by giving an example from the work of Nguyen, Messe, & Stollack, (1999) who found that Vietnamese youth living in a majority white context experienced a great deal of psychological distress when assimilation was attempted, but not possible. “To cope with the rejection from the majority culture, these youth identify even more with their Vietnamese background, which in turn results in greater discrimination from the majority group” (Padilla & Perez, 2003, p. 40).

These outcomes have proved to be ammunition for politicians, particularly those who are opponents of increased immigration, who feel that “separatism by immigrants of color provides a reason for immigration restrictions” which in turn “provides a convenient forum for attacks on separatism by people of color generally” (Ong Hing, 1993, p. 892).

[T]he very existence and growth of separate ethnic communities decreases incentives [of antiseparatists] to integrate and threatens the viability of liberalism's solution to race relations. The end result is increased pressure for restrictive immigration laws directed at Asians, Latinos, and Haitians. In the process, the underlying basis and rationale for the strong separatist sentiment among immigrants of color, as well as African Americans and Native Americans,

goes unaddressed, and society's ability to progress on issues of race relations is hampered. (Ong Hing, 1993, p. 893)

However, the existence of ethnic enclaves is not unilaterally negative.

[A] body of evidence also suggests health-protective effects for blacks who live in racially homogenous ethnic enclaves, a phenomenon attributed to enhanced social support and ties. [. . .] increased clustering may provide social support and enhance political power for black communities [. . .] [which] can counter the negative effects of segregation on health outcomes. (Kramer & Hogue, 2009, p. 183)

While the above example explicitly names African Americans as beneficiaries of these effects, these dynamics are common to other prominent ethnic enclaves to “meet their economic, social, religious, educational, and political needs” (Ong Hing, 1993, p. 898).

The formation of ethnic enclaves may also be a positive occurrence in that it is thought to be prerequisite to Banks’ “Cultural Identity Clarification” where “individuals are able to clarify their personal attitudes and cultural identity and to develop clarified positive attitudes toward their cultural group” (Banks, 2004, p. 295). “Like the family, the ethnic community often supports an individual's emotional, social, and political development, when that person would otherwise flounder in the mainstream” (Ong Hing, 1993, p. 901). In this protected environment, an individual or group may develop the capacity to participate in their within the dominant culture. Banks argues that when immigrants develop the capacity to more fully participate not only in their own communities but in other cultural communities as well, then assimilation is possible.

Berry states that when acculturating individuals or groups no longer “wish to maintain their cultural identity and seek daily interaction with other cultures, the *Assimilation* acculturation strategy is defined (Berry, 1997, p. 9).” Essentially, assimilation or becoming equal in a society is only possible on the part of acculturating individuals by choosing to give up (to one degree or another), their original cultural identity. However, as illustrated by the example of the Vietnamese youths, the dominant culture must also allow or accept acculturating individuals or groups into the dominant group, allowing the groups to “melt” together.

Berry notes that “when people choose to Assimilate, the notion of the *Melting Pot* may be appropriate; but when forced to do so, it becomes more like a *Pressure Cooker* (1997, p. 10).” Where colorblind diversity efforts fall short is the assumption that individuals from minority groups are freely choosing to assimilate into the majority *and* that their assimilation is something that members of majority groups are receptive to. Outside of hiring committees, members of organizations—both from dominant and non-dominant groups—may not have a say in the assimilation of non-dominant group hires. If minority group assimilation functions by “refocusing group loyalties from the subgroup level to the superordinate level” (Hornsey & Hogg, 2000, p. 145) and that refocusing is blocked in any way, assimilation is not possible. In this context, according to Berry’s framework, individuals who were not able to assimilate will then attempt the Segregation/Separation acculturation strategy, or else be marginalized. In organizations where colorblindness is company policy, tensions can turn a pressure cooker into a timebomb.

Even if assimilation is possible, “in this practice [. . .] diverse employees are discouraged from acting and thinking in the unique ways associated with their social categories, which does not allow them to utilize fully the viewpoints of their distinctive social group memberships” (Stevens et al., 2008, p. 120), thus negating much of the business case for diversity (Robinson et al., 2003). In effect, assimilationist approaches require non-dominant individuals and groups to become reflexively colorblind. As the group that non-dominant/majority individuals are trying to assimilate to is ostensibly the White group, this reinforces and perpetuates the Black/White Binary, particularly if Blackness is the deficit of Whiteness. As aspirational as the ideal of colorblindness is—that we are all fundamentally equal, regardless of identity—it is those cultural (sexual, class, gender, etc.) differences that are what make individuals unique and are why those differences cannot be ignored. Further, in negating those differences and therefore negating the business case for diversity, AA/EEO practices become merely a conduit for reaffirming zero-sum thinking as competition for jobs becomes un-meritocratic and based solely on (through the colorblind/assimilationist lens) arbitrary social categorization aimed at blocking White people from getting jobs.

Because the ability to work is necessary to fulfill basic needs such as shelter and well-being—which are in turn, necessary to fulfill before satisfying higher order needs (Maslow, 1943)—colorblindness and the Discourse of Individualism can further be construed as *violence*. Structural violence theorists define violence as, “the avoidable disparity between the potential ability to fulfill basic needs and their actual fulfillment” (Ho, 2007). In Galtung’s view, structural violence may also be expressed as social (and in practice, economic) injustice (1969)—the very thing that Title VII and AA enacted to

address. How then, can those core American values—independence, individualism, and merit be harnessed positively for diversity efforts?

If, as DiAngelo asserts, the legitimacy of American institutions depends upon our individual equality, and the dominant group in the U.S. is White, then the common assertion that “white people don’t have a race or a culture” can better be made sense of. Whiteness, as a social construction and the effect it has on the lives of both White and non-White people, is something that White people (as the dominant group) don’t have to think about (Frankenberg, 1988). This structural or unearned advantage is often referred to as White Privilege (Braun, 2011; McIntosh, 1988). By acknowledging white privilege, that privilege can then be addressed, or so it is thought. However, in outlining the concept of White Fragility, DiAngelo asserts that “Whites have not had to build the cognitive or affective skills or develop the stamina that would allow for constructive engagement across racial divides” (2011, p. 57). Using White Fragility as a lens to better understand barriers to diversity efforts and the perpetuation of unequal and inequitable power dynamics, White Privilege becomes more clearly defined as part of the structural inequalities that diversity efforts must realistically address to reach their stated goals.

Therefore, to move past assimilationist approaches to diversity, White people must also be viewed as individuals with a culture, a race, an ethnicity, and as a distinct subgroup, and most certainly not as lacking culture or ethnicity, not as the ideal or status quo for humanity. This view must be held not only by non-dominant groups, but as importantly, by dominant groups. Additionally, it is clear that for any group in an individualistic society where relationships are considered “costly to maintain”, the

benefits must clearly and explicitly outweigh the costs for diversity efforts to succeed. In effect, dominant discourses must change.

Assimilationist approaches fail because they expect or require non-dominant groups to attempt to assimilate to the dominant group, who are expected to be receptive to that assimilation. In the context of the Black/White Binary, this is not possible because any advancement for African Americans is seen as diminishing opportunities or resources for White people. Because non-minority groups do not see themselves as part of the Black/White Binary, there is little incentive to form multiracial or multiethnic coalitions to increase well-being among non-dominant groups. Further, it is the discourse of the Black/White Binary that informs the aspirations of acculturating groups such as ethnic enclaves as Whiteness is pervasively projected and reinforced as “normal”. In other words, the Black/White Binary has both African Americans and other non-dominant groups competing for the limited resource of Whiteness in the effort to become equal. As jobs are part of the equation and Whites must compete for those same jobs, the Black/White Binary sets up a lack of incentive for White people to allow assimilation to occur. Assuming that Allport’s hypothesis is correct, then optimal intergroup contact is unlikely under these conditions. Conflict becomes more likely as intergroup contact is predicted to be suboptimal.

Conflict Resolution and Multiculturalism

In much the same way that colorblindness appeals to nonminority groups, multiculturalism tends to appeal to minority groups (Stevens et al., 2008). As stated previously, multiculturalism (in contrast to colorblindness) explicitly accounts for the

differences between individuals and groups and frames those differences as strengths. This idea is also at the heart of the business case for diversity emphasized by Thomas (1990). To better make sense of the multicultural approach, a greater understanding of what is meant by “identity” becomes necessary.

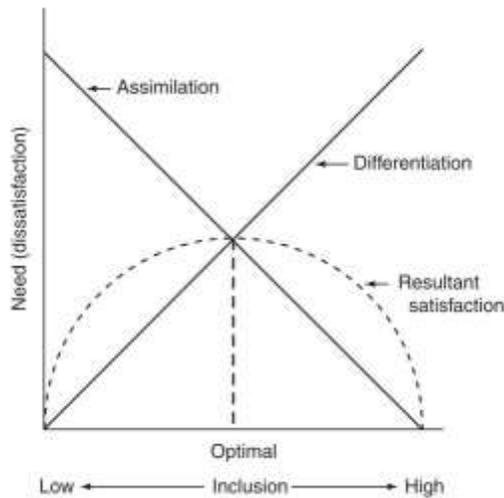
In both the fields of conflict resolution and also diversity, the concepts of identity and the social-self are useful in understanding the behavior of individuals and groups. Tajfel & Turner’s Social Identity Theory (SIT) posits that the social-self is composed of a number of nested identities (for example, I am an ethnically Filipino man, 33 years old, an ESL teacher, and a graduate student at the University of Massachusetts Boston) and that even the perception of an out-group is enough to trigger in-group favoritism in a given situation (Tajfel & Turner, 1986, p. 13). Tajfel & Turner further report that in-group favoritism is triggered even when groups are non-overlapping, or in competition with one another (1986, pp. 13–14). This can lead to preferential promotion or pay, for example.

However, Sherif’s Realistic-Conflict Theory (RCT) notes that when interdependence is introduced to competing groups in the interest of achieving superordinate goals, manifestations of in-group favoritism may be reduced, or even disappear due to the formation of a superordinate identity (Nadler, 2004). That said, not all superordinate identities are equal. Ideally a superordinate identity values the social identities of its constituent members—which is to say, individual differences. In the ideal form, individuals may develop more complex perceptions of others, even among other identity groups, which can mitigate in-group/out-group distinctions and “disconfirm

negative stereotypes of out-group members” (Nishii, 2013, pp. 1756–1757). Such a superordinate identity is thought to be useful in breaking free of the Black/White Binary, the Discourse of Individualism, and even White Fragility. Less ideal is a superordinate identity that ignores or even devalues those differences (as in a colorblind or assimilationist approach where conformity is expected), which could then lead to resentment and result in interpersonal conflict as individuals may feel that parts of themselves are not valid in the societal or organizational context, which can lead to strain and psychological disengagement from work (Nishii, 2013, p. 1757). This less ideal form could then also reinforce the Discourse of Individualism, White Fragility, and the Black/White Binary.

Building on SIT and RCT is Optimal Distinctiveness Theory (ODT) which addresses needs of assimilation and differentiation at the individual and group levels. If a group identity is *too* inclusive, then individuals may be motivated to differentiate themselves in an effort to maintain a positive self-identity and self-esteem (Brewer, 1991; Leonardelli et al., 2010). Though as noted previously in the example of the Vietnamese youths, this can sometimes result in marginalization. As a positive counter-example, in an office with a conservative dress code, individuals might attempt to stand out by buying higher quality clothes, or interesting clothes that allow one to be seen as distinct from the others. On the other hand, if a group identity is not inclusive enough, individuals might feel the need to conform to norms and behaviors of the dominant group in order to gain acceptance, as may be in the case of a lone woman working in an all-male office setting, who feels the need to modify her behavior to be seen as “one of the boys”. This could be detrimental to the group if that woman were to suppress her perspective as a woman, as

problem-solving might take only male perspectives into account, and therefore not be in step with the needs of their hypothetical target market. For individuals to feel secure enough to realize their full potential, it is necessary for people to trust that others will value individual differences and recognize them as relevant to achieving a superordinate goal.



Level of self	Motivational pole	
	Differentiation	Assimilation
Individual	Uniqueness	Similarity
Relational	Autonomy	Intimacy/interdependence
Collective	Separation	Inclusion/belonging

Table 1: Opposing drives and levels of self-presentation, from Leonardelli, Pickett, & Brewer (2010), p. 103

Figure 3: Optimal distinctiveness theory: Opposing Process Model, from Leonardelli, Pickett & Brewer (2010), p. 67

Allport’s Intergroup Contact Theory (ICT) and Pettigrew’s subsequent reformulation thereof (1998), is useful in understanding how such an optimal situation may arise. The components of positive or optimal intergroup contact are: equal status within a given situation, commonality of goals, inter-group cooperation, authority support, and “friendship potential” (1998, p. 80). While it is easy to dismiss Pettigrew’s reformulation as some kind of scholarly “kumbaya” it is in fact an attempt to address what Pettigrew saw as deficient in Allport’s hypothesis—namely that though the original four components as named by Allport predict the circumstances in which optimal group contact may be possible, it did not identify or outline the processes that might underpin

positive or optimal intergroup contact. In Pettigrew's view, the processes are: "learning about the outgroup, changing behavior, generating affective ties, and ingroup reappraisal. Inter-group friendship has strong positive effects, because it potentially entails all four processes" (1998, p. 80).

In my view, ODT (see figures 3 & table 1, previous) provides a stronger theoretical framework in understanding the processes that could lead to positive intergroup contact than does SIT, as ODT includes as part of its framework ways in which individuals and groups may activate aspects of their social identity or self-representation.

[I]ndividuals might activate levels of self-representation that are, within a given social context, more successful at resolving the tension between the motivational poles that characterize that level of self-representation. For example, if a person has not successfully managed to resolve the needs for autonomy and relatedness in his or her primary interpersonal relationships, this person might be more satisfied at defining the self at the collective level to the extent that there are collective identities in which the needs for inclusion and distinctiveness are being successfully met. (Leonardelli et al., 2010, p. 105)

The motivational poles in question (defined along the vectors of Assimilation and Differentiation seen in Figure 3) being Uniqueness/Similarity at the individual level, Autonomy/Intimacy/interdependence at the group ("relational") level, and Separation/Inclusion/belonging at the collective (in this case, organizational) level (Leonardelli et al., 2010, p. 103).

As reduction of prejudice, bias, and destructive conflict are integral to sustaining diversity and inclusion such that its positive effects may contribute to business success, or ideally, to societal well-being, conflict management is essential to the success of diversity and inclusion management practices, including training. By better understanding identity and group dynamics, organizational practices and interventions can be crafted to meet the needs of all individuals within an organization. Ideally, these efforts are perceived by all as being fair, which may sound somewhat trite. However, “Perceptions of unfairness can lead to undesirable outcomes such as lower productivity, and higher turnover, which is costly to an organization” (Ferdman & Deane, 2014). By considering cultural and ethnic differences as resources rather than hindrances, the inherent unfairness of discrimination in the workplace may be approached in a positive and generative frame. It is in this spirit that multiculturalism as an approach to diversity initially emerged.

Multiculturalism, or cultural pluralism, differs philosophically from assimilation in that it assumes that ethnic identities are cognitively inescapable and fundamental to the self-concept; as a result, individuals are motivated to retain their cultural heritages. Rather than trying to eclipse ethnic identities, multiculturalism aims to preserve their integrity while encouraging ethnic groups to interact and coexist harmoniously. (Hornsey & Hogg, 2000, p. 145)

While critics of multiculturalism might assert that Hornsey & Hogg’s definition of multiculturalism is merely Melting Pot Assimilation under a different name, I would argue that the idea that subgroups maintain integrity while both interacting with others and coexisting “harmoniously” is an important distinction as the imposition of

conformity to the dominant group on the part of the assimilating group is absent. Under this definition, subgroups may retain their characteristics while still constituting a superordinate whole, as opposed to discarding characteristics in order to conform to the dominant group. According to Berry's framework of acculturation strategies, multiculturalism ideally leads to an Integration strategy. That said, Berry asserts that there are a number of psychological preconditions to multiculturalism.

These pre-conditions are: the widespread acceptance of the value to a society of cultural diversity (i.e. the presence of a positive "multicultural ideology"); relatively low levels of prejudice (i.e. minimal ethnocentrism, racism, and discrimination); positive mutual attitudes among cultural groups (i.e. no specific intergroup hatreds); and a sense of attachment to, or identification with, the larger society by all groups. (Berry, 1997, p. 11)

As Allport's first predictor of positive intergroup contact is "equality within the situation" and as Pettigrew observes, "Situations are embedded in social institutions and societies" (1998, p. 78), one might infer that normative institutional and social support for the moral imperative for diversity are necessary to set the stage for optimal intergroup contact globally. This however, seems unlikely as "Prioritizing the long-term collective interest over and above the individual commercial interest of an organization also conflicts with the 'winner-takes-all' culture of contemporary industrial democracies" (Jonsen, Tatli, Özbilgin, & Bell, 2013, p. 278). However, "The multi-cultural perspective seemingly triggers group-based processing among nonminorities, which, if not properly managed, could exacerbate existing prejudices in the work-place" (Stevens et al., 2008, p.

122). Further, “For majority members [. . .] multiculturalism may pose a threat to their identity if the emphasis on cultural differences is seen to value cultural minorities at the expense of the value of their ingroup” (Meeussen et al., 2014, p. 631). Thus, it seems that Berry’s Pressure Cooker analogy applies to both non-dominant and dominant groups when diversity management and training is perceived to be imposed upon them.

Both colorblind and multicultural perspectives on diversity emerge from ideas around social identity. As has been outlined here, social identity approaches often lead to identifying distinct groups within organizations. Consistent with Tajfel & Turner’s SIT, these identifications trigger in-group favoritism, with colorblind approaches favoring dominant groups and multicultural approaches sometimes perceived as favoring non-dominant groups (Plaut, Garnett, Buffardi, & Sanchez-Burks, 2011, p. 339), though this perception can also be seen as consistent with White Fragility. In a study of how beliefs of group leaders in regard to colorblindness or multiculturalism affected work group functioning, Meeusen et al., found that “when multiculturalism emphasizes not only the value of minority groups but also the value of the majority group, majority members may feel included rather than threatened and hence, negative effects for majority members are not inevitable” (2014, pp. 638–639). Stevens et al., refer to this as “All-Inclusive Multiculturalism” (AIM), which “addresses deficiencies in the standard multicultural ideology without reverting to colorblindness” (2008, p. 123). According to Stevens et al., organizations that stand as exemplars of having used aspects of AIM successfully include IBM and PepsiCo (2008, p. 127), which have been widely cited as organizations at the forefront of organizational diversity (Anand & Winters, 2008; Derven, 2014; Gregory, 1983; Jonsen et al., 2013; Menendez, 2014).

Stevens et al.'s, idea of AIM is preferable to traditional multiculturalism in that majority members are included as belonging to valid and legitimate social identity groups as part of organizational diversity instead of for example, Whites being treated as a “non-group” but rather a de facto group observed only in contrast to minority groups (Meeussen et al., 2014; Stevens et al., 2008). While the distinction between traditional multiculturalism and AIM may seem slight, Jansen et al., found in a 2015 study that “Perceptions of inclusion, in turn, predicted majority members’ support for organizational diversity efforts” (2015, p. 827). The significance of this finding is deeply important, particularly when paired with the findings of Meeussen et al. (2014); if leaders are able to set the tone for their followers by creating expectations and norms of all-inclusive multiculturalism, then fostering majority-group support for organizational diversity efforts is possible. However, “research conducted among minorities showed that a mismatch between an organization’s diversity approach and the perceived representation of minorities within the organization led to higher levels of mistrust” (Jansen et al., 2015, p. 829). In other words, when minorities do not perceive that they are accurately represented in organizational diversity efforts, this leads to skepticism and mistrust in the process. When majority-group members similarly are not represented in diversity efforts, there is a similar mistrust in the process. These findings are consistent with Allport and Pettigrew’s ICT, as equality is necessary for creating affective ties, which could in turn lead to optimal intergroup contact.

CHAPTER 4

INCLUSION

The terms “diversity” and “inclusion” are often conflated, but are in fact distinct from one another, though they are interrelated. “Definitions of diversity focus on demographic make-up of groups and organizations, while definitions of inclusion emphasize encouraging participation and moving beyond appreciating diversity toward leveraging and integrating diversity into everyday work life” (Cottrill, Denise Lopez, & C. Hoffman, 2014). Colorblindness and multiculturalism as diversity approaches both suffer from the assumption that inclusion will naturally result. Colorblindness assumes inclusion will result by treating people equally, but as people do not begin life from positions of equal economic status or social opportunity, it is unlikely that equality will manifest in the course of colorblind efforts (DiAngelo, 2010; Meeussen et al., 2014; Stevens et al., 2008). Multicultural approaches on the other hand, assume that by identifying different social identities, inclusion will result once different social positions are identified—often by comparing non-majority groups against the norms of majority groups—and are taught or encouraged to be valued (Jansen et al., 2015; Legault et al., 2011; Meeussen et al., 2014; Stevens et al., 2008). Both approaches may activate bias and actually increase prejudice and discrimination and therefore promote *exclusion* (Bregman, 2012; Dobbin & Kalev, 2016; Legault et al., 2011; Nishii, 2013).

While the various effects of exclusion are well documented and understood, “scholars have only recently begun to highlight inclusion as a focal construct in understanding diversity and its possible outcomes” (Ferdman & Deane, 2014, p. 8). While this scholarly focus is recent, diversity specialists and practitioners had identified inclusion as a way of utilizing diversity as a positive resource some years earlier (Ferdman & Deane, 2014). To understand how inclusion can be realized, inclusion must first be defined. While there are many definitions of inclusion in relation to diversity, (depending on the level of analysis—individual, group, and organizational), organizational inclusion can be generally defined as “the degree to which an employee perceives that he or she is an esteemed member of the work group through experiencing treatment that satisfies his or her needs for belongingness and uniqueness” (Shore et al., 2011, p. 1265). This definition builds on the Optimal Distinctiveness Theory model developed by Leonardelli, Pickett, & Brewer (2010), by examining inclusion and exclusion along dimensions of belonging (*Figure 4*). Ferdman’s definition clarifies the definition put forth by Shore et al.: “Inclusion also means reframing both what it means to be an insider in a work group or organization and who gets to define that” (2014, p. 12).

Inclusion Framework

		Low Belongingness	High Belongingness	
Low Value in Uniqueness	Exclusion	Individual is not treated as an organizational insider with unique value in the work group but there are other employees or groups who are insiders.	Assimilation	Individual is treated as an insider in the work group when they conform to organizational/dominant culture norms and downplay uniqueness.
High Value in Uniqueness	Differentiation	Individual is not treated as an organizational insider in the work group but their unique characteristics are seen as valuable and required for group/ organization success.	Inclusion	Individual is treated as an insider and also allowed/encouraged to retain uniqueness within the work group.

Figure 4: Shore's Inclusion Framework, 2011, p. 1266

In this framework, Shore et al., display dimensions in which diversity can move beyond assimilationist approaches, which require conformity of individuals and groups to dominant organizational and cultural norms. The appeal of inclusion is its apparent simplicity. Further, it appeals to both majority and non-majority members, and can apply not only in the organizational context, but in the social context as well. One example that springs to mind is that of the aforementioned ethnic enclaves, which are sometimes characterized as pejoratively as separatist communities.

Under a new version of pluralism, separatists would be welcomed when their separatism was based on self-help, self-determination, and comfort, rather than destructive racial or ethnic sentiments aimed at other groups. Concepts of what it means to be an American must include the diversity of new generations of

Americans—foreign-born, native-born, white, and of color—and be cognizant of the tension that accompanies diversity. (Ong Hing, 1993, p. 906)

When non-majority individuals can be accepted into societies, communities, organizations or workgroups without suppressing or discarding their cultural identities and are able to contribute to the definition of norms and cultures of societies, communities, organizations or workgroups as their whole selves, then it stands to reason that the benefits proclaimed by diversity and more specifically, the business case for diversity may be achieved.

[B]ecause it is created anew in each situation through the relationship of the individual with the surrounding social system, inclusion involves a dynamic and interrelated set of processes, [. . .]. In other words, “inclusion is a momentary, even evanescent creation, which depends on the particular people and the particular situation involved. At the same time, the behavior and attitude of the moment may not mean much without a history and a future, without a structure and system around them that give them the appropriate meaning and weight”. **It is in this sense that inclusion is a practice—an interacting set of structures, values, norms, group and organizational climates, and individual and collective behaviors, all connected with inclusion experiences in a mutually reinforcing and dynamic system.** (Ferdman & Deane, 2014, p. 16; emphasis in original)

Nishii establishes three dimensions for what she refers to as “climate for inclusion”—a necessary pre-condition for the practice of inclusion.

[T]he first dimension involves a foundation of *fairly implemented employment practices* and diversity- specific practices that help to eliminate bias [. . .] the second dimension, *integration of differences*, captures the interpersonal integration of diverse employees at work [. . .] the third dimension, *inclusion in decision making*, captures the extent to which the diverse perspectives of employees are actively sought and integrated, even if expressed ideas might upset the status quo. (Nishii, 2013, pp. 1756–1757; emphasis in original)

Within a climate for inclusion, the dynamic practice of inclusion can then take root, woven throughout the everyday operations of the organization and the norms of interaction among its constituent individuals. When a climate for inclusion is established along these three criteria, an organization can be construed as inclusive.

Leadership

As stated previously, the role of leadership is essential in creating expectations and norms in regard to diversity and as Nishii suggests, a climate for inclusion (2013) for members of organizations, but also influences such aspects of organizational life as conflict cultures (Gelfand, Leslie, Keller, & de Dreu, 2012) and employee turnover (Groeneveld, 2015; Peretz, Levi, & Fried, 2015; Robinson et al., 2003; Shore et al., 2011), which can be very costly (Boushey & Glynn, 2012; Ferdman & Deane, 2014). “To create a culture of inclusion, leaders must view and treat others as unique and different, engage individuals and groups in genuine dialogue, model appropriate behaviors and actively address resistance to diversity efforts” (Cottrill et al., 2014). Leadership in inclusive contexts differs starkly from more traditional leadership models,

(such as transactional leadership) wherein leaders reward followers for fulfilling their job roles and penalize them for *not* fulfilling their job roles (Ashikali & Groeneveld, 2015; Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995; Kearney & Gebert, 2009). Bass notes that often, “transactional leadership is a prescription for mediocrity. This is particularly true if the leader relies heavily on passive management-by-exception, intervening with his or her group only when procedures and standards for accomplishing tasks are not being met” (1990, p. 20).

In Bass’ view, a superior model of leadership is “transformational leadership” which Bass defines as what occurs “when leaders broaden and elevate the interests of their employees, when they generate awareness and acceptance of the purposes and mission of the group, and when they stir their employees to look beyond their own self-interest for the good of the group” (1990, p. 21). Bass goes on to posit that leadership can become transformational when it inspires, meets individual emotional needs, and/or intellectually stimulates (1990), thus tapping into the full-potential of employees in the pursuit of organizational goals. Shore et al., assert that transformational leadership “creates belongingness among followers by unifying them around goals and values, moderated the relationship between demographic dissimilarity and team performance” (2011, p. 1273). Since Bass’ conception of transformational leadership, a great deal of scholarship on the subject has arisen and with it, a great deal of literature, which “is replete with studies documenting the positive effects of transformational leadership on numerous outcomes such as follower motivation, satisfaction, and performance, as well as—with respect to these criteria—the superiority of transformational leadership over transactional or laissez-faire leadership styles in most situations (Kearney & Gebert, 2009, p. 77).”

That said, transformational leadership exists today among other models of leadership which are also relevant to the creation of inclusive organizational cultures and a climate of inclusion (Cottrill et al., 2014; Ferdman & Deane, 2014, Chapter 10; Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995; Kearney & Gebert, 2009; Meeussen et al., 2014; Shore et al., 2011). Graen & Uhl-Bien categorize the domains of leadership as leader-based, relationship-based, and follower-based, with transactional leadership classed as a leader-based approach and transformational leadership as a relationship-based approach (1995). In an inclusive model of diversity management, relationships are deeply important as they are thought to be necessary in eliciting employee utilization of their full selves instead of functioning only in the capacity of fulfilling their job descriptions (Cottrill et al., 2014; Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995; Shore et al., 2011), like proverbial cogs in a machine.

	Leader-based	Relationship-based	Follower-based
What is leadership?	Appropriate behavior of the person in leader role	Trust, respect, and mutual obligation that generates influence between parties	Ability and motivation to manage one's own performance
What behaviors constitute leadership?	Establishing and communicating vision; inspiring, instilling pride	Building strong relationships with followers; mutual learning and accommodation leaders and members	Empowering, coaching, facilitating, giving up control
Advantages	Leader as rallying point for organization; common understanding of mission and values; can initiate wholesale change	Accommodates differing needs of subordinates; can elicit superior work from different types of people	Makes the most of follower capabilities; frees up leaders for other responsibilities
Disadvantages	Highly dependent on leader; problems if leader changes or is pursuing inappropriate vision	Time-consuming; relies on long-term relationship between specific	Highly dependent on follower initiative and ability
When appropriate?	Fundamental change; charismatic leader in place; limited diversity among followers	Continuous improvement teamwork; substantial diversity and stability among followers; Network building	Highly capable and task committed followers
Where most effective?	Structured tasks; strong leader position power; member acceptance of leader	Situation favorability for leader between two extremes	Unstructured tasks; weak position power; member nonacceptance of leader

Table 2: Three Domain Approaches to Leadership, adapted from Graen & Uhl-Bien (1995), p. 224

To investigate these relationships between leaders and their followers, the leadership-membership exchange (LMX) theory emerged from studying the quality of leader/follower dyads (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995).

[D]evelopment of LMX relationships begins with individuals who are strangers and engage in initial testing behaviors (limited social exchanges). This “testing process” through “social transactions” results in some relationships which advance to the acquaintance stage, with a greater amount of social exchange. Of these dyads, some are able to advance even further to “partnerships.” According to the model, these partnership relationships experience a “transformation” from self-interest to a larger interest. Thus, the type of leadership that occurs in the stranger and acquaintance dyads (low to medium LMX) aligns more closely with descriptions of transactional leadership, and the dyads that are able to “transform” into partnership dyads (high LMX) align more closely with transformational leadership. (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995, p. 238)

At this point, what is meant by “leadership” should be clarified. LMX focuses on the quality of dyadic relationships between leaders and their followers, which is to say that “leaders” are not here thought of only as singular heads of organizations, but as individuals within a leadership structure woven throughout an organization. “[T]hese relationships are not limited to formal superior-sub-ordinate relationships but include leadership relationships among peers, team-mates, and across organizational levels and organizations” (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995, p. 234). Through this lens, the role of leadership is decentralized and is distributed throughout the organization and lends itself

to understanding how diversity and inclusion efforts can become part of the day-to-day operations of organizations instead of only as compliance-oriented trainings or interventions.

Decision-making ability of individuals is often cited as an indicator of inclusion (Dani & de Haan, 2008; Derven, 2014; Downey, van der Werff, Thomas, & Plaut, 2015; Menendez, 2014; Mor Barak, 2015; Pelled, Ledford, & Mohrman, 1999; Sabharwal, 2014; Shore et al., 2011) and is also characteristic of high LMX relationships (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995; Shore et al., 2011). Typically, employees who have high-quality, partnership-type relationships (high LMX) with their leader have a great deal of trust in that leader, which in turn is generally thought to predict a lower chance of turnover (Shore et al., 2011). One downside of the LMX approach to leadership is that it takes time to develop those relationships (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995) and so requires job stability and job security. Graen & Uhl-Bien note that not all employees will develop partnerships with their leaders.

[M]anagers should be encouraged (and trained) to make the offer of high-quality relationship (partnership) building to all of their subordinates. Whether all of these offers will result in high-quality relationship development is problematic (and unlikely), but as long as the offers are made, the LMX process may be perceived as more equitable, and the potential for more high-quality relationships (and hence more effective leadership) will be increased. (1995, p. 233)

Engaging employees as their full selves is thought to be potentially important to business success for a number of reasons, including innovation and product development

(Anand & Winters, 2008; Chavez & Weisinger, 2008; Ferdman & Brody, 1996; Kearney & Gebert, 2009; Menendez, 2014; Son Holoien, 2013). According to a study conducted by Wang et al., “diverse groups had higher innovation climate strength when transformational leadership was high, and that innovation climate level was more strongly related to employee creativity when innovation climate strength was high” (2013, p. 335). However, in a study on LMX and employee turnover, it was found that “having a high level of LMX in a diverse work group contributed to the greatest amount of turnover **when the manager had good relations with most, but not all, followers**” (Shore et al., 2011, p. 1270, emphasis added). The findings of Shore et al., in regard to LMX and turnover might be explained by *perceptions* of inclusion. One cannot reasonably be asked to think of themselves as “included” if they do not perceive to be or *feel* included, much in the way that dominant group members cannot perceive themselves as part of a multicultural or diverse workforce unless they have the opportunity to feel that the dominant group contributes to diversity or multiculturalism as in the AIM model.

An alternative to transformational leadership, is “servant leadership”, which is attributed to Robert Greenleaf.

Both transformational leaders and servant leaders are visionaries, generate high levels of trust, serve as role models, show consideration for others, delegate responsibilities, empower followers, teach, communicate, listen, and influence followers. Certainly, transformational leadership and servant leadership are not antithetical theories. Rather, they are complementary ideologies because they both describe excellent forms of leadership. Nonetheless, there are significant points of

variation in the concepts. Most importantly, transformational leaders tend to focus more on organizational objectives while servant leaders focus more on the people who are their followers. (Gregory Stone, Russell, & Patterson, 2004, p. 359)

Servant leadership aims to achieve organizational goals in the long-term by first attending to their followers' needs and well-being and entrusting their followers to enact their roles once their needs are met. If organizational diversity and inclusion efforts seek to capitalize on their constituent members true selves, then it follows that leadership of inclusive organizations must also seek to meet any needs necessary to achieving what Maslow termed "self-realization" (1943).

However, in Booyesen's view, as inclusion is not something that is achieved once, but is achieved recursively, inclusive leadership is necessary. Booyesen defines inclusive leadership as, "an ongoing cycle of learning through collaborative and respectful relational practice that enables individuals and collectives to be fully part of the whole, such that they are directed, aligned, and committed toward shared outcomes, for the common good of all, while retaining a sense of authenticity and uniqueness" (2014, p. 306). In this context, inclusive leadership is seen as part of a series of inclusion efforts that are embedded in the fabric of the organization such that inclusion is part of all day-to-day operations, from leadership to task completion.

According to Booyesen:

[T]his also requires a revision of all management systems. Key in this process is to pay attention to employment relations (ER) systems. Some ER practices can create systemic exclusion if practitioners are not particularly mindful of inclusive

principles: these practices include recruitment, orientation and induction programs, performance appraisals, compensation and benefit packages, promotion, leadership and organizational training and development, and succession planning. (2014, p. 308)

Thus, for diversity and inclusion efforts to succeed, workplace training and interventions—while a useful tool—are only one aspect of system-wide changes necessary to bridge the gaps between social and organizational spheres. As organizations draw members from the societies they are embedded in, organizational structures must adapt to the many needs of their constituent members and the society those members reside in.

Diversity and inclusion efforts are crafted with the assumption that such efforts will minimize conflicts at all levels. Originally, such efforts aimed primarily to reduce incidence of litigation and employee turnover, though were later adapted to capitalize on diversity for the purposes of innovation and insider-expertise in regard to increasingly diverse target markets. That said, conflict will never be completely eradicated as it is endemic to human to human interactions. Therefore, organizational structures—including management and leadership structures—would be well served by becoming competent not only in the areas of diversity and inclusion and all their component parts, but in conflict resolution as well.

In reviewing the literature, it is clear that identifying diversity is not enough. What is done with the diversity that exists in the workplace is what matters. The literature reviewed suggests that diversity efforts created around highlighting social

identity can fail due to the triggering of in-group favoritism and bias by highlighting differences. As such, understanding social identity and how groups might become optimally distinct is very much necessary to create the basis for relational practices that result in inclusion at all levels of organizations. Thus, Pettigrew's idea that "friendship potential" (1998) as a necessary component for optimal group contact, might better be recast as "inclusion potential".

CHAPTER 5

METHODS

To discover how individuals make use of diversity and inclusion training in the context of conflict, a semi-structured interview protocol was developed (Appendix B). The semi-structured interview protocol was created around three topic domains: perceptions of organizational dynamics, experiences with equity and inclusion training at [union], and the influence of equity and inclusion training on conflict. These questions and their follow up questions, were designed to allow individuals to reflect on their training experiences and their experience with conflict within their organizations.

A common way of collecting data on diversity and inclusion training is quantitative feedback in the form of employee or organizational surveys, which often use a variety of scales to collect data in the form of numerical scores (Groeneveld, 2015). While these forms of feedback provide invaluable insight into the efficacy or impact of a training program, this type of feedback may provide very different detail than one might get by using qualitative methods. As many diversity and inclusion trainings are based on learning about the experiences of others (Anand & Winters, 2008) and it is often uncertain what individuals may take away from learning experiences, qualitative methods such as a semi-structured interview protocol seems ideal to collect detailed data on the individual perceptions of the efficacy of diversity and inclusion training on conflict in

organizations. Further, the perceptions of participants of these training programs may in fact influence how such training is made use of—or even if such training is made use of at all.

For this study, two locals of [union name redacted] were selected (hereafter referred to as “the union”); one in the Midwest and the other in the Northeast. The union is a large, international union with many local chapters throughout the U.S. As a union, this organization does not produce goods or services in the traditional sense. Rather, their “product” is fair treatment for their members. The union sees itself as an organization dedicated to the dignity, worth, and improvement of workers, and united in solidarity in the creation of a more humane and just society. The union has expressed in its mission statement the need to develop inclusive and motivated leaders at every level of the union through intensive training to better reflect the diverse individuals and communities where the union organizes. Further, solidarity across any and all possible division is seen as crucial to accomplishing the goals of the union. From the mission statement, as well as similar language found throughout the constitution and bylaws (including the code of ethics) of the union, it very much appears that the union is indeed committed to diversity and inclusion, particularly at the leadership level. This is significant, as leadership is important to organizational dynamics in a number of ways including the possibility establishing and maintaining a climate for inclusion (Nishii, 2013).

Initially, ten staff members of each chosen local chapter were to be selected from a pool of volunteers for the study, for a total of twenty participants. While a number of staff members volunteered via e-mail response, seven participants confirmed their

willingness and were recruited; three from the local in Midwest and four from the local in Northeast. Though this is a small dataset, the responses were extremely rich in detail. Further, participants of each respective site confirmed multiple events and details within the narratives of other same-site participants unsolicited. While the expected interview time was no more than 60 minutes, the average interview time was just under 72 minutes and the mean interview time was just over 82 minutes. As the interviews were so rich in qualitative data, this dataset (though small) was judged to be sufficient to carry out the study.

Both pools of participants were composed of members of the OE&I taskforce at their respective local. These participants were all full-time employees of their locals and most were organizers, though one was part of the office staff. Many participants had first been members of the union before becoming staff members and so were able to provide insight into how conflict is handled within the union from a variety of perspectives. The union, draws its members from many industries, including food service, nursing homes, and janitorial services. Participants were recruited using the attached Recruitment Script and Information Sheet, which were furnished to potential participants who were invited to participate by e-mail, phone call, or in person. Informed Consent was requested by electronically signing the attached Consent form.

To gain access to potential participants, presidents or acting presidents of two local chapters of the union were first required to grant approval. In both cases, each president requested a preliminary phone call. On each call, the president or acting president was present and in one case the chief of staff, and office manager were also

present. Details were further discussed and approved of via e-mail. Once participants had been recruited, interview times were established. Participants were told that interviews would take around thirty minutes, though five out of seven interviews took significantly more time.

Participants were asked to answer demographic questions (Appendix A) before proceeding to the semi-structured interview, which was audio recorded. Those interviews were then transcribed and coded to identify themes and patterns for analysis with the intention of answering the question of how members of their respective locals engage in conflict after having received diversity and inclusion training, with an eye toward organizational dynamics, reactions to equity and inclusion (the union has opted not to use “diversity” and instead uses “equity” as negative reactions to the word “diversity” have been observed) training, and reported efficacy of equity and inclusion training on conflict. Interviews began with a brief discussion to re-affirm informed consent and to re-state assurances of confidentiality. An opportunity to ask questions regarding the research was provided both at the beginning of the interview and also at the end.

Confidentiality of all participants has been assured by removing all identifying information so that participants remain anonymous. Multiple participants commented that the demographic representation within the OE&I taskforce at their respective locals did not necessarily reflect the demographic composition of their local on the whole. In the Northeast site, participants indicated that the membership was composed most heavily of white women, which was not the case for the taskforce. This is not seen to be problematic by the participants in this study, as they report that the diversity of the

taskforce is what they would ideally like to see reflected in their membership. In the Midwest site, it was indicated that staff of non-dominant sexual orientations and gender identification were prominent members of the taskforce. That individuals of diverse backgrounds are active and well-represented in OE&I efforts at the union, speaks to the union's deep commitment to diversity and inclusion and their overall message of empowerment.

At the time that access was requested to conduct this study, both locals had formed Organizational Equity and Inclusion (OE&I) taskforces to further their diversity and inclusion goals. The taskforces were composed of full-time union staff at their respective locals, who had received OE&I training on the job. The taskforces were to develop recommendations for implementing local-wide OE&I efforts and training for their members. According to the interviewees, training differed at each site. One participant estimated that training for her OE&I taskforce was conducted "quarterly" for two days per session. In each case, external trainers were contracted to conduct the training.

CHAPTER 6

HOW DO INDIVIDUALS HANDLE CONFLICT AFTER RECEIVING DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION TRAINING?

Participants generally reported very low instances of conflict in their respective locals. This is surprising, as “conflict in organizations is inevitable given that humans therein need to manage their mutual interdependence” (Gelfand et al., 2012, p. 1132). That said, according to Sherif’s Realistic Conflict Theory, interdependence should reduce conflict in the interest of achieving superordinate goals (Deutsch, Coleman, & Marcus, 2006, p. 426; Pruitt & Kim, 2004). A number of the conflicts reported occurred before the OE&I initiative had been implemented at either site. Though participants initially indicated lower than expected incidences of conflict, though many mentioned difficulties “getting on the same page”, gave examples of tensions, and named groups that they did not get along with as well as others—which could be construed as potential sources of conflict.

To discover how conflict is handled after receiving diversity and inclusion training, it was thought that understanding perceptions and the historical context from the eyes of individual stakeholders would provide insight into the success or lack of success of the OE&I work in progress. It was anticipated that interviewees would define “conflict” differently than scholars of conflict resolution and so this line of questioning

was crafted to get participants thinking or talking about conflict and sources of conflict by asking about “tensions”. The topic domains sought to uncover perceptions of organizational dynamics, experiences with equity and inclusion training, and the influence of equity and inclusion training on conflict.

The major themes that emerged from the participant interviews mapped closely to the three components of Nishii’s Climate for Inclusion: *fairly implemented employment practices, integration of differences, and inclusion in decision making* (2013, pp. 1756–1757). This is not entirely surprising, as Nishii’s work was influential in crafting the semi-structured interview protocol. Participant responses suggest that Nishii’s hypotheses are by and large, strongly supported in their collective experiences and that participants attribute the positive changes observed to OE&I efforts. Participants tended to situate their perceptions of organizational dynamics, experiences with equity and inclusion training, and the influence of equity and inclusion training on conflict in a historical context. As such, I have organized the findings of the study by grouping the emergent themes under the relevant component of Climate for Inclusion.

At the time of interview, neither Midwest nor Northeast had rolled out OE&I training to the membership of their respective local at large. Because OE&I efforts were still in the early stages, participant responses tended to center on the “integration of differences” component of Climate for Inclusion. However, even at that early stage of OE&I, participants reported experiencing tangible change within their respective locals, the roots of which tended to be connected to employment practices that shaped participant perceptions of organizational dynamics.

Component 1: Fairly Implemented Employment Practices

Participants were asked to discuss their perceptions of organizational dynamics to gather qualitative data on relationships within the organization. Participants unanimously reported that there was “no typical day” for any of them in the union. One participant summed up the general sentiment by saying, “I’m normally here between 6, 7 AM. I come in early since I do wear many hats”. Nearly all participants began their interviews immediately after other phone calls or meetings, sometimes out of breath, or even while finishing conversations with others. More than one participant requested to call back as soon as they had finished wrapping up their prior meetings or conversations. Often, interviews were interrupted by urgent phone calls, or else were punctuated by call-waiting notifications. All participants save one, reported their occupation as “organizer” though each served in a variety of roles within their respective locals.

While all reported that their day had been busy, no participants could be characterized as complaining about their day. A number of organizers did mention concerns regarding work/life balance. These concerns were attributed to a number of factors. In particular, six out of seven participants reported long-distance travel as central to their primary task of organizing various members. All participants mentioned leadership as one of their day-to-day roles. This is worth noting as it indicates that all participants hold occupations and roles that are highly task-oriented in the pursuit of their superordinate (union) goals. Many participants mentioned that they “get along with everybody”, though several were quick to qualify such statements with comments about

the depth (or lack thereof) in some of their workplace relationships, particularly those that they did not work with on a day-to-day basis.

The theme that emerged under topic domain of “perceptions of organizational dynamics” was that *OE&I works to diminish or eliminate arbitrary status differences and affect positive change*. While issues of fairness may often be breezily dismissed as childish with the application of such dismissive aphorisms linked to the Discourse of Individualism as, “life isn’t fair”, such issues have a real-world impact on job satisfaction and therefore turnover. This can lead to costly litigation, or the also costly training of new hires and loss in productivity. Further, scholars have long understood that arbitrary status differences can lead to the experience of “relative deprivation”, which can be defined as “the result of a person or group not enjoying what they believe they deserve” (Caprioli, 2005, p. 163). Such perceptions of arbitrariness may further be symptomatic of structural inequalities.

Midwest

While participants generally reported that their perceptions of current employment practices were fair, all participants mentioned that employment practices, namely in hiring and promotion, had changed over the course of their employment within the union. In the Midwest site, organizers had formed an internal union and were in the midst of salary renegotiations, which was reported as a source of tension. In discussing perceptions of organizational dynamics, Midwest participants detailed a series of interconnected conflicts. The ensuing conflicts likely arose from what Pettigrew describes as “high intergroup anxiety” stemming from a lack of trust between identity

groups within the local, which “can impede both contact and its positive effects”, (1998, p. 78). “[I]ntergroup contact and its effects are cumulative—we live what we learn” (Pettigrew, 1998, p. 78). According to one participant, “it took almost eight months” for the participant and the new, white executive staff member “to even start speaking”. However, he went on to state that since beginning the OE&I work, the relationship has improved through “relational, humanizing” efforts. In the words of the participant, many of the other staff “felt like they belonged to an oppressed group when he [the new executive staff member] came onboard.”

According to two of the Midwest participants, prior to the arrival of the new member of the executive staff in question (and also to the OE&I initiative), there was a series of serious conflicts. In one participant’s view, the staff’s difficulties in building relationships with this new member of the executive staff stem from a staff retreat where diversity emerged as a focus. While both participants reported the same series of events, their attributions to the cause of conflict differed (as is so often the case). The conflicts began at “a joint staff/board retreat” where race was discussed and “deep feelings started to come to the surface between everybody”, according to one participant. “There was a lot of concern about our staff wasn’t diverse enough” the participant reported, and when the new (white) executive member of staff was hired, things “blew up”, with staff and board members becoming “hostile” toward this new executive member of staff, whom they had yet to meet. This hostility was attributed by the participant to “gossip”, like “a game of telephone”. As one participant reported, the new executive staff member in question, though white, did not conform to the negative expectations of staff at the retreat

and in fact, was in worth developing a relationship with. In the participant's opinion, OE&I is exactly the vehicle that will enable staff to do so.

From this participant's perspective, the staff and executive board staff "really didn't know each other" at that point but decided to discuss racism nonetheless. Further, there was a "troublemaker on staff that was stirring the pot, that was accusing certain people of being racist." The other participant identified this "troublemaker" as "an African American woman". In the first participant's words, "I don't really know how to explain it any other way, other than everybody kind of ganged up and went on the warpath." The participant described the situation as, "very poisonous, toxic", further stating that "Rumors were being accepted as fact" to the point that "People weren't talking to each other." However, the situation worsened.

Clearly, one of our board members had heard some information that just wasn't correct. She was under the impression that Affirmative Action had had been putting black people in jobs that they shouldn't be in, which was pretty shocking for someone to say on our board and—the person that was stirring the pot [the troublemaker] unfortunately was the target of that conversation. She was an African American woman and it was absolutely mortifying. Problem is though, is that they were both [board member and troublemaker] wrong in the situation in the way that they went about discussing the issue because they ended up just attacking each other. Nonstop. Leaving the room, crying, yelling. I even at one point had to stand in between them and so I mean, talking about race is not easy.

- Participant, Midwest

The other participant also gave an account of these events, though he attributed tension to the fact that everyone worked in “very different industries” and so joint training was stressful. Apparently, the African American staff member (who was cast as “the troublemaker”) “did not feel the meaning of the training”, which caused the primarily white executive board members to feel as if “the white people were being attacked”.

My problem is that someone who is not a minority would not understand a minority—that’s the hardest part. My husband, he’s white and he’s seen it firsthand, he’s like, “I don’t have to worry about going out to the store and you know, ‘being looked at differently’, but you do” so, that’s the reason I was so outraged because she [the African American staff member] was actually being attacked and she was not in a safe place, she [did] not feel safe there but you know, the attackers were white people—someone who has that privilege of doing that without the fear of a consequence.

- Participant, Midwest

What is consistent in both accounts, is that the executive board member reacted badly to something that the African American staff member did, as she felt attacked and so the African American staff member was also attacked by other members of the executive board. This in turn resulted in negative feelings among non-white members of the retreat, including one participant. This participant’s account suggests at least elements of White Fragility and the Discourse of Individualism, though the other participant’s account asserts that the African American staff member had labeled certain

people as being racist—perhaps itself a defensive, fragile, and/or zero-sum thinking move—with the implication that such labels were being applied to the executive board. Further, it is implied that each party to the conflict was something of a leader of different groups present at the staff retreat/joint training—the fallout of the conflict being a difficult entry for the new executive staff member. One participant attributes the hostility toward the new executive staff member (who again, is white) as being triggered by “conversations around Black Lives Matter”. This is suggestive of zero-sum thinking and perceptions of relative deprivation, as the hiring of another white executive staff member seems to have been perceived as taking a job away from a non-white, or even non-straight person within the Midwest local.

Since the reported incidences of conflict in the Midwest local, two participants affirm that in their view, OE&I training has contributed to more positive relationships between staff members, while other participants also report that OE&I has had positive effects on relationships between the leadership and their subordinates. One participant went so far as to say that since beginning OE&I efforts “People who’ve hated each other before are now speaking.” This is encouraging, as developing relationships is crucial to achieving high leader-membership exchange (LMX), which is itself a predictor of inclusion. One of the frameworks that informs the OE&I work in the Midwest site is servant leadership, which as previously mentioned, approaches leadership from a follower-based model.

Our [new executive staff member] and our [direct superior] (being straight white men), have spent a lot of time lately thinking about their role—how they hire,

how they interact with other members of the staff to try and understand everybody's experiences. I feel that management is doing a great job now really trying to break down the barriers that we have. Since we have been doing the OE&I work, I would say that everybody on staff is really taking the time now to really sit down and think about—not just the structural racism and the big things—how we interact with each other on a daily basis.

- Participant, Midwest

The thoughtfulness of staff and leadership at the Midwest site in their interactions with each other is to be consistent with the idea that inclusion is not a one-time event, but emerges through sustained effort, with support not only from individuals, but from the leadership and the institution (Cottrill et al., 2014; Ferdman & Deane, 2014; Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995; Nishii, 2013; Shore et al., 2011). As the OE&I process and the work being done around OE&I was just getting underway in the union at the time of the study, it was expected that full inclusion would not yet have been achieved by either local.

That said, it does seem that these efforts are being noticed. One participant joined the Midwest local after preliminary OE&I work had begun and after the conflict described by other participants. By the time this participant had joined the Midwest local, efforts were already being made to follow a servant leadership model, in which the needs of the followers take precedence over the needs of the leaders. According to the participant, “[The union] does the hard work, it makes the attempts, it puts in the effort, addressing questions around equity, inclusion, much more intentionally than any other organization I’ve ever worked for.” The Participant went on to describe the sincerity of

these efforts in contrast to other organizations that he had worked for, where it felt like trainings had “felt like checking a box”. “I get a strong impression that this local is committed to being inclusive, to taking on big fights, and sometimes punching well, well, well above its weight—and not backing away, or shying away from things”, the participant said. He went on to say that “leadership is very much committed to my idea of what equity and inclusion is all about,” focusing on “the campaigns that are most going to benefit the people, most vulnerable, the people that we work with closely, or long-term members”. According to this participant, “That’s something that I really love about working here.”

When this participant’s perceptions are compared and contrasted with the perceptions and statements of the other two participants from the Midwest site, it seems that the servant leadership approach has been effective in creating higher LMX and therefore “partnership” relationships necessary for authentic leadership, transformational leadership, and servant leadership. Given the accounts of the Midwest participants and in particular, the participant who specifically mentions inclusion in relation to organizational goals, it would seem that though servant leadership is deliberately being used as a framework, the leadership styles within the Midwest local may also make use of authentic and transformational leadership, which are specifically oriented toward organizational goals. Given that the organization in question is a union, which tends to have long-term organizational goals, it makes sense that servant leadership would be made use of, as it is conceived of as being most effective in the long-term (Bass, 1990; Gregory Stone et al., 2004; Kearney & Gebert, 2009; Wang et al., 2013).

As is evidenced by the responses of the Midwest participants, there is plenty of room to improve relationships within the local, but already work is being done to improve relations between staff, and between leadership and staff. The Midwest participants seem to be aware of many tensions that currently exist, or have existed in the past, but also through their OE&I work and their experiences, that there may be a number of tensions that could hinder the achievement of their organizational goals in the future. One such tension is that the Midwest staff are part of a union within the local, which at the time of interviewing, was in the process of salary negotiations.

Overall, the participants indicated that OE&I efforts will contribute to those goals and that as long as the organizational vision remains clear, that staff and leadership can continue to work toward realizing that vision with one another, in spite of instances of serious conflict. This seems to indicate a certain resiliency within the local, which is a positive sign; it means that there is a general feeling that the participants continue to be willing to invest in those relationships and that this investiture will be reciprocated by their leadership. In other words, the perceptions of organizational dynamics in the Midwest local suggest that OE&I has contributed to positive changes in how participants perceive fairness around implementing employment practices.

Northeast

Throughout the narratives of the four Northeast participants were references to experiences tied to race and a clearer picture of what the participant had meant by “structural racism”. The Northeast participants related instances of inequality in representation in union leadership, hiring, promotion, and in how they felt that they had

been offered or denied respect in various situations by colleagues or co-workers. One participant noted that as a 15-year staff veteran, she had “seen a lot of people come and go,” though she did not specifically attribute turnover to any one factor. That said, it takes little imagination to connect hiring practices that prefer internal promotion over bringing in people from outside the organization, and a given employee’s willingness to stay. In any case, all participants reported positive outcomes of the OE&I initiative that they had begun.

According to one participant, “Being a part of that [OE&I] taskforce is really, really helpful. That helped me see things in a different perspective and figure out that a closed mouth gonna get you nothin’.” “My issue is just the certain way things are done”, said one participant. “One of the reasons why we decided to do OE&I taskforce is [to] try to tackle structural racism—or that was my main reason—because it’s just the way things are structured in the union.” This participant went on to explain what was meant by “just the certain way things are done.”

I was sent to [a city] along with some members and they sent a certain group of people into the hospital to talk to the workers and the people that they didn’t send to the hospital, we had to sit in the office. It was real noticeable. So, like I said, things are a little different now, because now we went to the OE&I for training but this was before that. But that really made me upset. It was only 1 person of color that did go in and they sent him back because he had an accent. I mean, that wasn’t told to us but, that’s what we *thought*, but the story that was told to us didn’t add up to what he said to us, so that was the issue. That was a real issue,

because it just seemed like y'all wasn't being conscious about what y'all was doing and I don't know if they thought whether we was gonna feel some kind of way, but, we *did* feel some kind of way.

- Participant, Northeast

This instance of unfairness—perceived or otherwise—granted a glimpse into the experiences that had led to the participant in question becoming a voice within the local, standing up for the kind of change that current OE&I efforts are perceived to support. In the course of the participant's responses the participant, and two other of the four Northeast participants linked changes in "the way things are done" to a change in the local [executive]. Three out of the four participants openly sang the praises of the current [executive], explicitly stating that their interactions with the current [executive] had resulted in feeling more included. The fact that the current [executive] also began as a member and was then an organizer weighed heavily on these accounts.

One participant in particular helped to shed light on the differences in the leadership styles of both the current and former [executives] of the local.

There seemed to be a perception of him [the former executive] just shutting people down. They didn't feel like they were heard. It was years of just nobody really bringing anything to the table because they thought it would be rejected. All in all, what it wound up being, what I've been able to assess it being, is people were kind of tired and fed up and felt unheard for a very long time. I'll tell you right now, we haven't resolved the entire issue, but we have existing entities within the union like [committee name redacted], so if we have issues with our

work or what's going on, we're supposed to be able to go there, air our grievances and have it addressed. Until [current executive] was hired, [former executive] was on the [committee name]. People felt like if they did have problems they wouldn't be able to go to [former executive].

- Participant, Northeast

This participant went on to state that because her colleagues felt unable to air their grievances, they began to consider the formation of an internal staff union. The participant had been asked to be a part of the formation of the staff union, as it is reported that the participant is a trusted person within the local. The participant reportedly asked colleagues when those grievances occurred, as the only person that had had a grievance since the current [executive] was installed has had the grievance resolved satisfactorily. Pressing further, the participant asked colleagues who was on the [committee name] and policy committees, only to discover that the people trying to form the new staff union in fact belonged to those committees. In the participant's view, her colleague's feelings of not being heard for such a long time influenced them to behave in ways that could have produced a redundant structure within the local. According to the participant, this could have increased an already heavy workload and added to an already busy schedule. In the end, the participant was able to persuade her colleagues to try to make the [committee] and policy committees function as intended by pointing out that the former [executive] no longer sat on the [committee] and policy committees.

The conflicts described here occurred before the current union [executive]'s term and also before the OE&I initiative and suggest that leadership deeply influenced

interactions between staff and leadership in the local. A lack of inclusion, a lack of empowerment can result in a lack of engagement and is as previously mentioned, often a component of employee turnover and one might imagine, lower productivity—an example of which would be as one participant recounts, a lack of “bringing anything to the table”. Another participant cited the incident at the hospital as a galvanizing incident to speaking out against things that the participant does not agree with, which the participant has elsewhere attributed to advancement within the local as a staff advocate for change in regard to “the way things are done.” It is interesting that this feeling of exclusion from a particular situation encouraged that response; it indicates that the participant felt included enough and secure enough in the position that the participant would be heard. This could be interpreted to suggest that even in a climate where inclusion was less than ideal, the participant’s sense of inclusion was strong enough that she felt that she could speak out in the first place. This willingness to speak out was attributed to time spent working at a nursing home, which unionized, getting the participant in question involved with the local initially.

The participant explained that when working in a nursing home, unionization changed the way that job openings in the nursing home were filled. Essentially, part of their renegotiated contract stipulated that if a job opportunity opened up at the nursing home, union members had “first dibs on it”, rather than the nursing home placing priority on outside hires. Since working in the nursing home, the participant commented that relationships with others in the Northeast local are such that the participant feels comfortable in speaking out against unfair hiring and promotions practices when the participant perceives that they are occurring within the union.

From one participant's account, the push for fairness in hiring and promotion within the union extends also to diversity, not only to increase representation of racially diverse people in all levels of the union, but also to increase representation of urban dwellers, who are predominantly people of color. Bridging the gaps between supporters of opposing political parties, rural and urban, white and non-white, and across the varied industries that compose union membership and staff is paramount to managing tensions within the Northeast local stemming from perceptions of fairness/unfairness, particularly as solidarity is a pillar of the union's strength.

Other participants also commented on their experiences with hiring and promotions within the Northeast local. One participant stated that while fairness in hiring and promotion is of definite importance, attention to "the lateral movement of officers and senior program staff within [the] local" as those lateral shifts are "predominantly white". Participants did not comment on the ratio of white to non-white within the local and so even a ballpark demographic ratio is unknown. However, one participant related a conversation that she had with a "black woman from [the city]" who through conversation "basically made the comment that it [the job] went to "another white girl [in the local]". The participant said, "It's those kinds of feelings and undertones that really need to be discussed, so that people don't feel that way, so that they understand the process of what is going on and how it works." The participant went on to say, "If that conversation doesn't happen, people are specifically going to feel that they're being excluded."

As solidarity is a guiding principle within the union, care was taken to set the stage for solidarity in the hiring of staff and officers, including the leadership team. One participant told me, “Today we have an African-American officer on our team and a Latino person on the leadership team, so the makeup is changing a little bit.” The participant reported that things “started to change before we even started that [OE&I] journey.” It can be inferred from the participant’s statement that even before OE&I, diversity was already a consideration in hiring and promotion, which is borne out in this participant’s statement that “our staff and officers to most degrees are diverse”.

However, in the process of the Northeast local’s OE&I journey, it was decided early on that the Northeast local felt that their officers and staff should be representative of their membership, only to discover that the membership was primarily composed of white women. This discovery prompted the participant to ask, “so do you really want to make it [the body of officers and staff in the local] not diverse?” It is unknown if the wider membership of the local is aware of this finding, though it does seem that it is something that is worth addressing, particularly given that competition for professional positions can often be viewed in zero-sum terms.

In terms of the OE&I taskforce at the Northeast local, the sole participant who is not an organizer stated that she likes “the fact that they included me in on the leadership side of things and even put me on the taskforce,” which “helped me in my whole development.” She went on to say that this was particularly powerful, because she is not an organizer as most other taskforce members are. Because organizers wanted her input as a non-organizer, she felt valued, included, and that the process of forming the OE&I taskforce was fair.

Component 2: Integration of Differences

While the implementation of fair employment practices is deeply important to achieving inclusion, it must work in concert with the integration of differences.

Essentially, once diverse individuals are hired and have the opportunities to function in roles at all levels of the organization, what exactly is to be done with that diversity? For inclusion to be realized, Nishii asserts that inclusion “requires a change in interaction patterns” in addition to fairly implemented employment practices (Nishii, 2013, p. 1756). To put this another way, this dimension Climate for Inclusion is rooted in “the openness with which employees can enact and engage core aspects of their self-concept and/or multiple identities without suffering unwanted consequences” (Nishii, 2013, p. 1756).

The second topic domain of the semi-structured interview protocol of this study asked participants to detail their experiences with equity and inclusion training. Participant responses tended to involve the application of various tools and exercises, such as tracking, dialoguing across difference, calling people in, the power of the single story, and “If You Really Knew Me”. These tools facilitate the engagement of core aspects of the self and multiple identities in the workplace. In effect, these tools can help the personal become the professional, which is essential to the success of the business case for diversity. The major theme that emerged was that *even minimal diversity and inclusion training creates a common vocabulary or framework for changing patterns of interaction such that conflict may be handled productively.*

Midwest

In the Midwest local, OE&I efforts had just begun when participants were interviewed. The training that they'd received involved tracking, focusing on the pattern, not the person, Constructivist Listening, and servant leadership training. Even just one month in, one participant stated that "OE&I works". The tools that the Midwest participants seem to have internalized the most are Constructivist Listening, and tracking. Tracking is a tool that helps to "separate the pattern from the person". By addressing patterns of behavior rather than addressing patterns of behavior as extensions of personality, one participant had already perceived productive outcomes.

Since we have been doing the OE&I work, I would say that everybody on staff is really taking the time now to really sit down and think about how we interact with each other on a daily basis. One of the things that we're doing to help overcome the difficulties of implementing something like servant leadership is having the value-based conversation about life experiences with people first, and we're building connections between people before we even discuss talking about race.

- Participant, Midwest

That said, all three participants reported a desire to see more implementation of OE&I training in their everyday experience at the local. In general, the Midwest participants believe that OE&I works and that OE&I principles are woven throughout day-to-day operations and objectives of the union. "One thing I appreciate about the labor movement is that for the most part, we're able to set some of the petty stuff aside and stay focused on what our greater goal is, that we're all working towards." The "petty stuff" as

the participant so easily dismisses it, could be understood as low-level conflict, or else conflict that the participant has made the executive decision not to place value on.

The participant who joined the local after the beginning of the OE&I effort stated that the relatively small size of the local was an advantage as co-workers were “around each other more often” and that there was no tendency “to get segmented out into all the little cliques”. However, this participant explained that even in a smaller local, where in the participant’s view diversity is a strength, relationships still needed to be managed. According to this participant, “You have to try that much harder to see eye to eye with folks, make sure you’re on the same page. That you’re speaking the same language”. That this participant uses three separate analogies for mutual understanding— “to see eye to eye”, “to be on the same page”, and “to speak the same language”—is interesting. These analogies seem to be indicative of the participant’s awareness of the necessity of maintaining interdependent relationships in the pursuit of superordinate goals, which conforms to predictions made by RCT. The participant’s statement on the whole suggests that for this participant, relationships are generally good and resilient enough to withstand the differences that may arise in what was termed “a very diverse group”.

Perceptions of organizational dynamics are somewhat different for another participant at the Midwest local. The participant serves on a prominent committee within the Midwest local and identifies as LGBTQI. Though there is evidence that positive intergroup contact may generally be occurring between sub-groups at each site, responses from interviewees suggest that perhaps intergroup contact may not be optimal. This

participant stated that the participant primarily associates with “LGBTQ folk” or people whom are perceived to be “good allies” in the workplace.

There’s always certain barriers between [LGBTQI people] and straight men that come up. Heterosexual men will have their “bro moments”. I don’t want to say there’s many “uncomfortable situations” between us or anything, but it’s “unrelateable” sometimes—our situations and life experience just cannot relate.

- Participant, Midwest

The participant’s responses elsewhere indicate that for him, being a “good ally” is more than a commitment to LGBTQI equality—it’s the ability to also relate to the lived experience of LGBTQI persons. Though this participant feels comfortable publicly identifying as LGBTQI, he perceives that the creation of affective ties to the dominant group (or from the dominant group to the LGBTQI group) has not occurred such that he feels wholly included, or perhaps even entirely equal. This participant’s perception of having difficulty in generating affective ties with individuals who are not LGBTQI, while still feeling like a vital member of his workgroups and organization, are suggestive of both Shore’s and also Leonardelli’s frameworks for inclusion and optimal distinctiveness, respectively. In other words, the participant’s statements could be taken to suggest that his “needs for belongingness and uniqueness” have not been met, even if he has stated a general trust in the efficacy of the OE&I training. Therefore, it is doubtful that this participant would describe the LGBTQI identity group in Midwest as “optimally distinct”. Further, as “friendship potential” is seen by Pettigrew as a predictor of optimal intergroup contact and the participant’s responses suggest “high intergroup anxiety”

which Pettigrew states, “can impede both contact and its positive effects” (1998, p. 78), it seems that work could be done to improve intergroup contact to better manage potential conflict.

The other participant in the Midwest local who identifies as LGBTQI, focused primarily on working relationships rather than personal relationships (as the other participant who identifies as LGBTQI, may be describing). According to this participant, “We have a very active transsexual member, she’s amazing—and the other [executive board] members that have been to these [OE&I] trainings have learned how to deal with that.” The participant further noted changes in the perceived attitudes of some Hispanic staff toward LGBTQI people, something which was named as an area of difficulty within the culture in question. Lastly, changes in attitude were described of some “very religious” staff. “I think those trainings have been very helpful for us—for me to understand why *they* would not understand me but as well for them to understand *me*—or at least try.”

This participant’s perceptions indicate that the OE&I trainings have been successful in some instances of creating space for inclusion potential in some groups, but not others. It is clear that while this participant does not necessarily feel that non-LGBTQI staff have a perfect understanding of where the participant is coming from, or how the participant might think and feel about certain things, in the participant’s mind, the possibility that others might honestly try to understand the participant, is very much appreciated. The enthusiasm displayed by this participant in this response suggests that OE&I work has had a positive effect on his personal feelings of inclusion within the

organization. It stands to reason then, that perceptions of high intergroup anxiety between LGBTQI and non-LGBTQI groups, may also change as the work continues and allow for more optimal contact effects.

As indicated by one participant, OE&I training has generally contributed to more positive relationships between staff members, but others also report OE&I has had positive effects on relationships between the leadership and their subordinates. This is encouraging, as developing relationships is crucial to achieving high LMX, which is itself a predictor of inclusion. One of the frameworks that informs the OE&I work in the Midwest site is servant leadership, which as previously mentioned, approaches leadership from a follower-based model. It is interesting that given this follower-based model of leadership that the Midwest local has chosen to implement, members of the LGBTQI group feel that their LGBTQI identity is something that some within the union simply cannot relate to or that they as LGBTQI people cannot relate to straight men. It is also interesting that neither participant reports any conflict as arising from identifying as LGBTQI, though this could suggest that any conflicts that have arisen are being handled productively through the OE&I process. It is interesting to note that the new executive staff member—reported to be a straight, white man—who was the focus of so much acrimony at the staff retreat before ever arriving at the local, seems to have been given a second chance. “People have taken the time to get to know him. And the people who take the time to get to know him get to see what he’s really about.” Perhaps as the OE&I process continues, LGBTQI-identified persons in the local will feel that they too have the chance to let others know what they’re really about and to integrate their differences with the rest of their local.

Northeast

It is clear from the responses that the Northeast participants feel very positively about the OE&I efforts. The Northeast local was further along in their OE&I efforts and predictably, reported a greater number of tools that they have found useful in the course of their experience in the local. Organizing and running the local office are roles that are highly task oriented, requiring high levels of proactivity and communication. Knowing this, I was surprised that the tools that the Northeast participants most gravitated toward tended to be communicative in nature. All four participants mentioned the “If You Really Knew Me” exercise—an icebreaker designed to reveal aspects of a person that might not otherwise come out in the course of workplace conversation--as being particularly powerful, three out of four mentioned the dominant/subordinate exercise, and three out of four mentioned the dialogue across difference exercise. Participants detailed many ways in which they were better able to connect with their co-workers through these exercises. That three out of four participants had difficulty recalling instances of conflict since the start of the OE&I initiative and that four out of four participants report putting tools learned from OE&I trainings into use, suggests that the OE&I initiative is in fact reducing what participants perceive as conflict. However, that four out of four participants now report using the OE&I tools into use in situations where conflict could emerge, suggests that in fact OE&I has empowered the participants to engage in productive conflict more often.

Well, I think the instructors of the—the facilitators of the taskforce, they were really good. They were able to create the space. I think some of the things that we

have learned in the taskforce, I'm going to be mindful of the situation, number one. But I also know that I'm able to talk about it in a way that I'm not here to criticize you, I'm here for us to grow together, I'm here for us to begin to break the cycle of this black, white, whatever, that's the goal here for us to operate that cycle. It's definitely empowered us. The good thing was there were all levels of the union on this taskforce. And so, I didn't want you to be superficial about what you talk, let's keep it real, keep it real because the person of color needs to hear that.

- Participant, Northeast

There will always be work to be done in creating better partnerships between leadership and subordinates, but just important are the relationships between individuals who are on the same organizational level. “Don’t bring your work home with you” is a familiar refrain but in my view, it is imperative for people to bring themselves to work if diversity and inclusion efforts are to be effective. Being professional does not necessarily mean being impersonal; if part of one’s ultimate mission is solidarity, then the personal must enter the space of the professional. As multiple participants have noted, union work is stressful, and people often feel the strain of their workload. When challenging things happen in the personal sphere, it can affect the professional sphere and so finding ways to manage that becomes important.

The enthusiasm that the Northeast participants had for their training and the impact of the training that they’ve received was palpable. That these sessions have been powerful for participants is an understatement. All participants discussed at great length the inspiration and feelings of empowerment that they drew from their training sessions.

According Participant 5, the board approved the recommendations developed by the taskforce unanimously. It is encouraging that even icebreaker activities like “If You Really Knew Me” were perceived as being powerful tools to create depth of understanding of others for participants.

It’s been a very powerful journey. It’s been fun. It was challenging, it was hard, and a lot of times it was *uncomfortable*. But it’s good to be able to get to a place of uncomfortableness and move through it and talk through it. I know that’s a lot and I’m rambling but it’s hard to keep it all sorted and in order because it was a lot! Through 4 trainings—4, 2-day trainings, and now we don’t want to break up the band and I mean, we weren’t all ace boon coons [best, most trusted friends] we were just co-workers, or officers of the union, or members and now we feel connected as a body of the union.

This participant’s experience of OE&I efforts strongly support Pettigrew’s revision of Allport’s Intergroup Contact Hypothesis. The context of the OE&I taskforce and the exercises that taskforce members engaged in allowed for “equality in the situation” in the pursuit of “common goals”. The involvement of various leaders of different bodies within the local, is a clear example of “intergroup cooperation” and also of “authority support” as even members of the leadership team were part of the OE&I taskforce. In other words, all of Allport’s conditions for optimal intergroup contact were met—including Pettigrew’s additional condition, “friendship potential”, which is thought to invoke all four of the processes that mediate attitude change through contact: “learning

about the outgroup, changing behavior, generating affective ties, and ingroup reappraisal” (1998, p. 70).

Component 3: Inclusion in Decision Making

Once fair employment practices are implemented, and differences are integrated, actors need to be included in decision making for the Climate for Inclusion (as Nishii conceives of it) to be fully realized. “In inclusive climates, the questioning of dominant assumptions is not seen as a threat, but rather as a value-enhancing proposition, and thus barriers that could perpetuate organizational silence are actively eliminated” (Nishii, 2013, p. 1757). Barriers might include certain styles of leadership, such as that of the former union executive mentioned by one of the participants from the Northeast, whose leadership style had members of the local considering the formation of a parallel, redundant committee in order to finally feel heard. Organizational silence also tends to be found in organizations where cost control is a strategic focus—for example, organizations that enact diversity and inclusion efforts with the intention of curbing costly litigation.

Topic Domain 3 of this study’s semi-structured interview protocol asked participants about the development of their relationships with others over the course of their employment in the union. Though workplace relationships and personal relationships may not generally have much overlap, they are relationships nonetheless. It is often said that relationships are built on trust. Relationships need tending to if they are to grow; they are subject to innumerable factors, including time, circumstance, and feeling in ways that are often unpredictable. However, trust is easily broken and

painstakingly rebuilt, but as it is a state of vulnerability, it creates the opportunity for mutual trust, or mutual vulnerability. Trust then, is a building block, not a foundation for the more resilient concept of solidarity. The major theme that emerged in this topic domain in the Midwest local was that *trust is tentative, solidarity is definitive*. In the Northeast local, the theme that emerged was, *OE&I efforts and institutional support by the leadership clarify routes to solidarity*.

Midwest

In spite of the conflicts described by two of the Midwest participants, all the Midwest participants outlined at length their commitment both to the union and to the goals of the union, including the OE&I work. That all the participants failed to mention dissatisfaction with the union such that they might prefer to and seek other opportunities suggests that each feels that the conflicts that they have experienced and the circumstances in which those conflicts arose, can be attended to. This suggests a sense of belonging and resilience in the face of adversity—perhaps due to factors such as the election of Donald Trump, which one participant cites as creating a sense of urgency and immediacy for the union to better achieve solidarity, making OE&I particularly salient. Given the statements of all of the Midwest participants, it appears that OE&I is providing a more stable framework to achieve inclusion and therefore solidarity.

The longer we've been here, the tougher the conversations we've had around workplace issues, or even campaigns. It's just got deeper; you just find more similarities and sometimes differences and you just learn more about where people are coming from. Sometimes that can really surprise you in a way, like,

“wow, I thought we were really more on the same page than we actually are”. It really does cut both ways—I guess that’s something we need to have realistic expectations about.

- Participant, Midwest

Clearly, the relationships present at the Midwest site are complex. According to all participants, OE&I practices have had an effect. In particular, using “tracking” to manage feelings around the behaviors of others and not to take things too personally. However, two out of three participants state that their perceptions of trust within their local is low. In both cases, there was some element of gossip involved. One participant reported a conflict where he was accused of saying something that he had not said, while the other described the conflict at the staff retreat that began during a discussion of race, where gossip had incited hostility toward a new executive staff member, due to his status as a white man who would be holding a powerful position.

While it is easy to dismiss gossip, scholarship on gossip suggests that it serves a number of functions. According to Jaworski & Coupland, gossip functions “as a means of identifying group membership and group boundaries, and as a sanctioning mechanism of moral policing” (2005, p. 668). Further, gossip “allows participants jointly to accomplish group solidarity and to strengthen group identity” (2005, p. 671) and also “allows the group to manifest resistance to the limiting, oppressive, and subjecting norms imposed on them from outside” (2005, p. 691). Given the manifestation of gossiping, it is possible that the gossipers felt that they had no, or limited access to fairly implemented employment practices, opportunities for integration of differences, or inclusion in

decision making, and so used gossip as a means of coping with their situation. In both instances of gossip, destructive conflict ensued, and perceptions of trust were damaged, with one participant going so far as to opine that gossip was a chief obstacle to solidarity.

That said, the participant who did not mention gossip saw things quite differently.

The whole mantra is “solidarity forever” right? It’s challenged because we are actually initiating and attempting on a daily basis to have tough and challenging conversations with each other, mostly about the work that we’re doing but sometimes about our own workplace. It doesn’t matter if they’re the most progressive, labor minded folks, there are still going to be challenges. This whole idea of “what’s the union going to do for me” is a quick way to essentially see any opportunity for you and your co-workers to actually see any change happening fall apart. We’re all in this together and that’s where “solidarity forever” and solidarity really comes from. That’s not to say some folks aren’t gonna get the short end of the stick sometimes and that sometimes the game can be zero-sum. Always try to maximize the gain as much as possible and minimize the hurt or minimize the suffering, that’s always the goal.

- Participant, Midwest

For this participant, solidarity *must* be definitive—in the sense that solidarity must be decisive and reliable. It must be something durable, because it is the vehicle which vulnerable individuals who stand against economic injustice use to mobilize against the “limiting, oppressive, and subjecting norms imposed from outside”.

Northeast

The Northeast participants all reported being a part of their local for years and so had quite a lot to say on how their relationships developed over time. One participant mentioned that her relationships with those positioned above her had improved due to OE&I work, and that her relationship with the president of the local has been on good terms for a number of years. A participant mentioned that in her many years at the local, people that she got close to have mostly moved on. Another participant went into detail about how his relationship with himself has changed in his time at the local, saying that his perception of himself has not always been as positive as it could have been, and so he “lost focus”. This is significant as relationships with other people can be sources of conflict, thus impeding workplace operations, but feelings about the self can very much bleed over into how individuals and groups perform in the workplace as well.

I’ll say I put up a wall frequently. I had to work through my own neuroses, my own kind of blocks, and be inclusive of people that I really do like. I had been in a relationship, she [a woman in the local] had been in a relationship. She let me in first and then I let her in. And even referring to [a woman] that I tend to avoid. After she shared with me, I was able to share more with her and I have more of a perspective where she comes from. So, I think I have made more of an effort, especially with the OE&I process to #1, let people in, and #2, share! I have tried, and I think successfully been able to start building relationships with people I wasn’t necessarily building relationships with before.

- Participant, Northeast

As this participant points out, relationships are a give and take; sometimes to connect with others, work has to be done internally to allow others to first connect with us. Further, that is not something that is always easy, but easy to overlook. The ICT phrase, “friendship potential” may be easily dismissed as something superfluous at first glance, but if the concept of “friendship” is unpacked, there are norms of reciprocity and long-term orientation embedded in this concept. People are friends to each other, which is to say, it does not exist in a vacuum, it is not something that is one-sided. This long-term perspective allows “the full decategorization, salient categorization, and recategorization sequence to unfold, [thus] we can expect striking results. Such a revised perspective explains why extended intergroup contact often has more positive results than either the contact hypothesis or cognitive analyses predict (Pettigrew, 1998, p. 76).”

The power of cross-group friendship to reduce prejudice and generalize to other outgroups demands a fifth condition for the contact hypothesis: *The contact situation must provide the participants with the opportunity to become friends.* Such opportunity implies close interaction that would make self-disclosure and other friendship-developing mechanisms possible. It also implies the potential for extensive and repeated contact in a variety of social contexts.

(Pettigrew, 1998, p. 76)

When asked about trust, the Northeast participants provided many examples supporting Pettigrew’s reformulation of Allport’s theory.

If you are truthful, you’re not a bullshitter, you’re upfront about how you’re feeling when you think about something, you’re thoughtful about what you’re saying to

someone. What you're putting out is a positive thing. I don't worry about the trust. What I worry about is that you know if you ask me something, either I'm going to say to you, I don't know, let me go into the information for you or I do know you may not like what I'm going to say but this is the truth. That automatically brings the level of respect back into the equation.

- Participant, Northeast

[M]y experience would be that once you break through and find a common bond, you can then go on a journey that will turn into trust, 'cause you'll find common things and build relationships and either it's a click and it'll continue, or it's not a click and you'll just work better together.

- Participant, Northeast

I mean, my co-workers we all get along. Actually, I didn't realize they had as much trust for me as they do! [Laughing] I just didn't know that! My co-workers said "we think you'd be great to speak for us" and I'm like, "really?!" So, me and my co-workers, we get along pretty good!

- Participant, Northeast

Clearly, the participants are in different places as far as their perceptions of trust, but these varied responses display many of the points to be found along the trust spectrum. Respect can create trust and from trust, potential for friendship, or inclusion. Once friendship potential exists, then there may be something of a cascade effect, but to

achieve that a certain security must be created and maintained. That security lies in the knowledge that an individual can be depended on—that is, that one is trustworthy.

Participants were asked to describe what obstacles to solidarity exist within their local.

I don't think there is any issue that we have to get over because that is the model. That is the union's model, solidarity. The separation comes within the membership itself, that's where it takes us to make sure that we engaged in, training, teaching, explaining why what we do is beneficial to all.

- Participant, Northeast

Not everybody can be all about solidarity if they don't understand what's going on. You can't just be pigeonholed into, "this is right, here's why, sign the card." "And you signing this card means that we're in solidarity about the same stuff." We need to have very comprehensive training that incorporates this kind of skills building—not just for organizers to use but for organizers to also facilitate with their members. Members have to be able to have these conversations—and not just have the conversations, but understand why they're having a conversation, understand the need for having a conversation, to understand the reasoning for getting to know somebody, establishing a relationship, and then giving them information that actually means something to them. And sometimes we're in rapid fire, everything is go, go, go, "we need to do this right now," *that* gets lost.

- Participant, Northeast

As one participant notes, training and education is necessary to get union members on board with the goals of the union. Given another participant's understanding of the internal workings of the union from her extensive experience and different roles within the union, it is clear that training and education is something that both staff and members must undergo to create the alignment necessary for solidarity. However, it does offer a view of how complex an undertaking that is, given that human beings only have so much time and attention to contribute to their professions, the union, and the lives that they ostensibly supporting through their employment in the first place. These multiple roles and identities can be difficult to manage. Complex as this picture is, one participant perceives yet another layer of complexity.

Solidarity, oh boy. There's several issues. One that always stuck out like a sore thumb for me was *class*—status, in our union. We have RNs, we have CNAs, we have LPNs, we have a few doctors, and then we have service workers and homecare workers. This is a *healthcare* worker union. This is not an RN local! We are a healthcare workers' local, we all work in the healthcare field and all of our jobs are just as important as the next. So, I would say that would be the one thing that I'd point out, is of class/status issues.

- Participant, Northeast

It seems like there's more solidarity now that the [executive] that we have is the [executive] because he seems to be more relatable to most of the staff, so it seems like that brings more solidarity to us. We had a retreat last year in the summer.

We all hung together—it seemed like a different feeling compared to before when

we had the other [executive] that we had. He's more interactive with us. He was like one of us. It don't really feel like "oh my goodness! [Executive] is coming! We better change the way we actin' like we do" he just seems like one of us even though he's the [executive].

- Participant, Northeast

There's a lot of time that conflicts comes out of ourselves, we bring conflicts on ourselves. Because the local is not about conflicts, the local is about solutions. We're going to give you a roadmap to say, "Here's how we're going to fix this." And this is the part of I think with the OE&I, I feel very, very positive about what's going to happen next because you can come up with recommendations, but once you've come up with those recommendations, you have to implement them, and you have to hold people accountable. You're not going to be nasty about it, but you want to "call that person in", again, we're not calling you out, we're calling you *in*. No, I tell you what, I'll bring you there and I'm going to let you figure out the answer because once you do that, that's like the "aha moment". I'm not going to catch the fish for you, you're going to do it yourself, I'll show you how to do it.

- Participant, Northeast

CHAPTER 7

CONTRIBUTION

This research contributes to the literature by empirically investigating two discrete sites within an organization that is deeply committed to diversity, equity, and inclusion. This paper argues that a major impediment to diversity and inclusion work has been the perception of diversity, inclusion, AA, and EEO as zero-sum, with any and all benefits to disadvantaged groups resulting in the loss of benefits to the dominant group. This perception, I argue, has been present from the public reception of the initial AA/EEO efforts. That the Civil Rights movement is synonymous with African American struggle, is evidence of this perception. This Black/White binary has constrained discussions of difference in the American context and perpetuated zero-sum thinking, as have the Discourse of Individualism, and White Fragility. Therefore, if diversity and inclusion efforts are to succeed as effective practices for mitigating conflict or potential conflict, the zero-sum mentality of the Black/White binary must be abandoned in favor of “expanding the pie”.

This paper further argues that leadership sets the tone for how conflict is handled within an organization. For inclusion to take root, leadership must be inclusive and necessarily, power distance must be reduced to enable leader/follower collaboration and partnership. These practices cannot be interventions but must be everyday practices.

CHAPTER 8

OBSERVATIONS

In both locals, participants reported that OE&I has had an effect of their perceptions of workplace dynamics. At each site, those dynamics were different. The composition of their membership, staff, and leadership differ, as do the industries that are represented by the membership and staff. However, there are many similarities, as each local is convened with the same superordinate goals in mind. Creating solidarity is no easy task and is rife with opportunities (both realized and unrealized) for conflict. The tools that participants have learned from OE&I efforts within their locals have been useful in empowering staff to engage with each other in ways that are reported to be productive. This effect has been observed by participants in their leadership as well.

Overall, participants are optimistic about these changes and are eager to continue the OE&I work. Participants feel that the tools and strategies that they have learned have worked to reduce prejudice and to some extent, feel that conflict can be used as opportunity to better understand one another. What seems clear is that the union staff are composed of people who are passionate, proactive, and dedicated to the hard work of achieving economic and social justice for workers. This passion, proactivity, and dedication are necessary for achieving both solidarity and inclusion, things which cannot be achieved once, but must be achieved and maintained continually. In interviewing

these participants, I was struck by the excitement and even the joy that they expressed in discussing their experiences. Initially, the interviews were planned to last around thirty minutes, but every one of the interviewees exceeded that expectation. One participant spoke to me until his phone died and then immediately finished his thoughts with an e-mail. Another participant had planned to use the duration of one of the many long drives that are a part of his professional life to speak about his experiences and ended up sitting in the parking lot of his destination for an additional forty minutes to finish responding.

I am particularly struck by the participants' enthusiasm in talking about their experiences with OE&I because they are all leaders within the union, though they may not be part of the leadership teams of their locals. One participant reported that she was so excited by the way that tools from OE&I had affected her workplace relationships that she had started to use those tools in her personal life as well. This is deeply encouraging, particularly as this participant also reported having made a close friend at work who is very different from herself because of their experiences with OE&I—an example of Pettigrew's reformulation of ICT.

It must be noted that Northeast participants reported more optimism and more success with OE&I than the Midwest participants, but by all accounts, Northeast has been engaged in OE&I longer than Midwest has, suggesting that Midwest may experience similar positive effects as OE&I efforts continue. For example, had the Midwest local been trained in such tools as "calling people in" it is possible to imagine that perhaps some of the conflicts detailed by those Midwest participants, might have gone very differently. While the efficacy of diversity training may be in question as an intervention

practice, I argue that DM and OE&I practices can in fact be effective measures contributing to the mitigation of conflict in organizations, if they are woven into organizational cultures as everyday practices, used regularly in interpersonal and intergroup interactions, not only among peers, but among leaders and followers.

Limitations and Suggestions for Future Research

The sample size of this study was very small. Initially, the study was planned to include ten participants from each site, for a total of twenty participants. Though a number of participants expressed interest in being interviewed, seven participants total actually sat for interviews. Further, a union was chosen for this study due to its stated commitment to equity and inclusion. As the union staff are composed primarily of organizers, who tend to be proactive, engaging, and communicative, it is unknown if similar result would be found in other organizations, even organizations similarly stating commitments to diversity, equity, and inclusion.

Directions for future research could include following up with this union to study how effective OE&I has been after being introduced union-wide. One avenue of research could be similar studies set in different types of organizations, and to pair such qualitative research with quantitative measures. Yet another avenue of research might be on how workers in workplaces that have implemented OE&I efforts deal with conflict in their personal lives, or in their communities. For example, if in a given community, a significant sample of residents work in places that are committed to OE&I and have strong climates of inclusion, studies might be done on the “splash effect”, say within school districts, on crime rates, or on political division.

In proposing this study, I believed that optimal distinctiveness theory would provide greater insight into organizational dynamics than proved to be the case. This is perhaps the case because of the small sample size and the decentralized structure of the organization. Further, as optimal distinctiveness theory predicts status mobility and the organization chosen for this study had relatively minimal power distance between levels, future research should investigate how conflict is handled in organizations committed to diversity and inclusion that are structurally dissimilar from the organization studied herein.

CHAPTER 9

DISCUSSION

When conflict is handled in organizations that are committed to diversity and inclusion, it is sometimes not recognized as conflict at all. When individuals have invested in their relationships and are equipped to have difficult conversations as part of their professional life, conflict can look as benign as “getting on the same page”. Much of the productive handling of conflict supports the model of Nishii’s Climate for Inclusion, which is closely aligned with the components of Allport and subsequently, Pettigrew’s work on the conditions and processes of optimal intergroup contact. Contact is central to the realization of Nishii’s work, as inclusion is necessarily oriented to the long-term, rather than the short, or immediate term. This has some interesting implications; if organizations wish to avoid costly litigation and turnover, then it is in their best interest to seek the establishment of a climate for inclusion. As equality in the situation is necessary for optimal intergroup contact, this discourages highly hierarchical and/or centralized decision making, as that is likely to result in organizational silence, which is a group-level phenomenon that is exclusive.

In both sites, it appears that even in the early stages of OE&I efforts, fairly implemented employment practices go a long way toward influencing feelings of inclusion and certainly exclusion. This is especially true when status differences are

perceived to be arbitrary, as in who is allowed to organize in a particular hospital, who is heard in a given committee, or even who is given the opportunity to fill a different professional role within the local. When these feelings of fairness go unaddressed, individuals can experience relative deprivation, which can lead to destructive conflict, lost productivity, and the formation of redundant structures within the organization. Things devolve to the point that people are not speaking to each other at all, and yet it seems that participants in both sites firmly believe that OE&I empowers them to deal with conflict productively. It is also clear that participants perceive the role of leadership in being central to the fair implementation of employment practices.

The integration of differences is possible in an organization committed to diversity and inclusion, even if training is somewhat minimal—as I would consider four, 2-day training sessions to be. When care is taken to promote optimal intergroup contact, the whole self with all of its multiple identities has the potential to be engaged and the business case for diversity then has its best chance of being enacted. If optimal group contact is achieved, it creates a positive feedback loop, which encourages those involved to repeat and deepen those types of interactions and to deal with conflict productively. In such a scenario, compliance with EEO is a by-product—nearly an afterthought.

Prior to conducting this research, I assumed that trust and solidarity were one and the same. I was surprised to learn that though they are related, they are distinct. The participants from Midwest helped me to understand that though trust is active, solidarity is proactive. By that, I mean to say that trust is a binary; it is on or off, there or not there, broken or unbroken. Solidarity seems more akin to inclusion, in that it is something that must be achieved again and again—it's something that must be fed. Another parallel that

strike me, is that as inclusion is what is done with diversity, solidarity is what is done with trust. Further, just as fairness is a crucial component of inclusion, it is also crucial to solidarity. In fact, inclusion is essential to solidarity, otherwise it's mere lip service; a hoop to be jumped through in order to reap the benefits of union membership.

Just as inclusion must be built by aligning processes and attitudes, so must solidarity. Because the structure of the union is spread out across different industries, class lines, and income levels, not to mention geography and political ideology, solidarity cannot be approached with the expectation of conformity. The strength of the union is that doctors stand with janitors, each fighting equally for economic and social justice. Because the product of the union is ostensibly, economic justice, rather than simply "better pay" solidarity, like inclusion, must be woven into the everyday lives of union members. That is to say, that solidarity is a practice, not an intervention. As such, institutional support and OE&I efforts can clarify routes to sustaining solidarity.

APPENDIX A

DEMOGRAPHIC QUESTIONS

Demographic Questions:

Age:

Gender:

Occupation:

Role(s) within Union Local#:

Number of years as an active member of the board/of the staff?:

Equity and Inclusion training received:

Date(s) of received training:

APPENDIX B
SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW PROTOCOL SCRIPT

I appreciate your willingness to participate in this interview. I am interested in understanding the impact of equity and inclusion training in organizations that take equity and inclusion seriously. Thank you for taking time to share your experiences with me.

Topic domain: Perceptions of Organizational Dynamics

Lead off question: I'd like to get a sense of what it's like to be a part of your Local from your perspective. Can you walk me through a typical day in your organization?

Categories: Time spent within Local, interpersonal, group, and organizational dynamics, relationships with staff members and management/leadership, positive and negative experiences that have shaped relationships, the role of leadership, responsibilities, climate for equity and inclusion, things that could or should be changed.

Possible follow up questions

1. I'd like to know more about your relationships in the organization. Are there individuals or groups of people that you get along with better than others? Why?
2. In your view, how has the leadership within your Local contributed to your sense of equity and inclusion?

3. What tensions (if any) do you see between staff in the organization? Where do you feel those tensions come from?
4. What relationships within your Local might be improved? Why?

Topic domain: Experiences with equity and inclusion training at the union

Lead off question: I understand that as part of your participation in your Local that staff and board members receive equity and inclusion training. Can you walk me through the training? What do you feel were the most valuable takeaways?

Categories: Personal feelings of importance of equity and inclusion training, sense of belonging, perceptions of the effectiveness of Equity and Inclusion training, commitment to equity and inclusion, the role of leadership in supporting or not supporting equity and inclusion from those in leadership positions

Possible follow up questions

1. As a part of this Local, how have you been able to put your training into action?
2. In your observation, how has the equity and inclusion training had an impact on how people work with one another?
3. If you could change anything about the training that you have received in equity and inclusion so far, what might that be and why?
4. In your view, have there been any negative reactions to the equity and inclusion training? If so, could you please tell me about them?

Topic domain: Influence of Equity and Inclusion training on conflict

Lead off question: I'd like to hear more about how your relationships with other staff members have developed in your time at the Local. In what ways have those connections evolved and why?

Categories: Influence of Equity and Inclusion training on interpersonal, group, organizational conflict, personal feelings about difference, possible seeds of conflict within the Local, historical information on conflict and conflict styles within the organization, perceptions of the effectiveness of equity and inclusion training on conflict within the organization at the personal, group, and organizational levels, perceptions of individual,

Possible follow up questions

1. It's often said that trust is the foundation of good relationships. How might you describe your perceptions of trust in your experience with other people in your Local?
2. I've noticed in some union materials that there is an emphasis on solidarity. In your view, what obstacles are there to solidarity within your Local?
3. If there are instances of conflict in your Local, could you give me an example of one and where you feel it comes from?
4. If you have experienced conflict in your Local, what happened? What has happened since then?

APPENDIX C

SAMPLE AWARENESS OF RESEARCH E-MAIL

Hello,

This e-mail is to inform staff of Union Local (insert Local #) that they may receive an e-mail from Enrico Manalo, a graduate student at the University of Massachusetts Boston.

This e-mail is not SPAM, but a research opportunity. Enrico's research is related to Organizational Equity and Inclusion (OE & I) training that has been done at the union.

Participation is completely voluntary and is for the purpose of research only. If you are interested in participating, please read the materials and follow the instructions in Enrico's e-mail message and direct to him any questions that you might have about the study. If you are selected for the study, about one hour of your time is requested. As a participant you would be interviewed and recorded. Any interview transcripts and/or recordings will be kept confidential and any information you give would be made anonymous in any written work. Enrico can be reached at enrico.manalo001@umb.edu, or by phone at (603) 969-5882.

Thanks,

APPENDIX D

SAMPLE RECRUITMENT SCRIPT

Hello, my name is Rico Manalo. I am a graduate student in the Conflict Resolution program at the University of Massachusetts (UMass) Boston. I would like to invite you to participate in a research study on the influence of organizational equity and inclusion (OE&I) training within the union organization. This study seeks to better understand how recipients of OE&I training use that training in their roles within the union, particularly as the union as an organization is committed to equity and inclusion as part of its mission. You have been invited to participate due to your affiliation with the union as a staff or board member.

If you agree to participate in this research study, I ask for about 60 minutes of your time so that I may interview you about your experiences within the union in regard to perspectives on the OE&I training that you have received. I will record your responses digitally in order to accurately transcribe those responses.

Participation in this research study is entirely voluntary and responses will only be used with your express agreement and consent. If you would like to take part in this study, we can schedule a time for us to speak. If you need to think about it, you can send me an e-mail or call me at a later time. If you have any questions, or decide that you

would like to be part of the study, I can be reached at enrico.manalo001@umb.edu, or by cell at (603) 969-5882.

Thank you,

APPENDIX E

INFORMATION SHEET

You are invited to participate in a study on the union's organizational equity and inclusion (OE&I) training and how that training is used in the day-to-day running of the union. You were invited to participate because you have previously received OE&I training as a member of the staff or the board. Please read this form and ask any questions that you may have before agreeing to participate in this study.

Participation in this study is entirely voluntary and if you do agree to participate, you will be asked to sit for an interview. Interviews may be done in person, by phone, or by Skype (or similar means). The interview will last about 60 minutes and will be recorded digitally so that accurate transcriptions can be generated. The interview will focus on your experiences at the union and the influence that your OE&I training has had on those experiences. What you choose to share is entirely up to you. You do not have to answer any questions that you are uncomfortable answering. You may choose to end the interview at any time.

Your participation in this study is confidential. Anything discussed in the course of the interview will not be presented in a way that could be used to identify you. Access to interview recordings will be restricted to the principal investigator and possibly by a

transcriber. In transcripts and any written work derived from the interviews, pseudonyms will be used for all participants.

The risk of participation in this study is very small. The primary risk might be the surfacing of negative feelings while discussing your experiences and perceptions of your training in OE&I and your experiences at the union. Please feel free to let the interviewer know if any such feelings arise. Once again, you may stop the interview at any time.

By participating in this study, you will have a chance to reflect on your OE&I training and how it has influenced your experience at the union. You will also have the opportunity to voice your opinions on the OE&I training and the union.

If any questions come up about the study after your interview, you are invited to follow-up with the interviewer, Rico Manalo at (603) 969-5882 or by e-mail at enrico.manalo001@umb.edu. If there are questions and concerns about your rights as a participant in this research, please contact the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at the University of Massachusetts Boston, which oversees research with human participants. The IRB may be reached at: IRB, Quinn Administration Building-2-080, University of Massachusetts Boston, 100 Morrissey Boulevard, Boston, MA 02125-3393. The IRB may also be reached by phone at (617) 287-5374 or by e-mail at human.subjects@umb.edu.

APPENDIX F

CONSENT FORM

Consent Form

After reading the attached Information Sheet and asking any questions I might have in regard to the research study on the [union name] and Organizational Equity and Inclusion (OE&I), I agree to participate in the research study, fully understanding that my participation is entirely voluntary and that I may decide not to continue participating at any time.

Further, I understand that as part of my participation I am agreeing to an interview of approximately 60 minutes and that the interview will be digitally recorded so that a faithful transcription may be made for the purposes of analysis. I also understand that in any transcription and any derived written work, a pseudonym will be used and that any personal information will not be presented in a way that could be used to identify me.

Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

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