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The Diversity of Diversity: Work Values Effects on Formative Team Processes

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The Diversity of Diversity: Work Values Effects on
Formative Team Processes

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Abstract

The benefits and drawbacks of homogeneity and heterogeneity for staffing work teams have been debated at length. The relevance of work values and work values similarity for effective team processes has been largely ignored, however. This article discusses the conditions under which work values and different work values types will impact early team processes and the implications of these relationships for staffing. Ways that work values similarity can mitigate against the negative effects of demographic diversity are discussed.

Discussions of staffing work teams or groups for diversity often involve the potential implications of demographic variables such as race, gender, or age. We contend, however, that the psychological processes operating in groups (demographically mixed or otherwise) command primary importance when it comes to predicting work team processes, especially in the early life of the team. In particular, we think that the nature and configuration of work values is strongly implicated in these team processes and, as such, deserves greater attention than it has received in relation to team thinking and interaction. Furthermore, we have made a conscious deliberative effort to focus on the team's formative stages. What happens early in the life of the team--the interpersonal processes as well as the normative tone--sets the stage for much of the group life to follow. This is, of course, not to say that values will not have implications downstream. In many ways team formation is not linear but cyclical: precipitating events such as gaining a new member or facing an ethical dilemma move the team toward revisiting values. Thus, values will have a continued impact.

Additionally, investigation into the ways values are acquired and changed should have implications for organizational practice. Attention to the differences and similarity in work values among team members should allow for the design and implementation of practices that mitigate against some of the potential negative effects associated with demographic diversity (e.g., inaccurate perceptions, stereotyping). We argue that, by

addressing the role of values similarity, even maximum demographic heterogeneity in groups need not result in dissensus or conflict. In fact, it should be possible to find ways to produce both diversity in staffing and solidarity in group membership.

Work Team Diversity

As a result of downsizing, re-engineering, and increased information load, teams make many decisions once generated by management (Bennet, 1994). Upper management, strategic planners, and knowledge workers, among others, make use of teams (Hargadon & Sutton, 1997; Janz, Colquitt, & Noe, 1997; Jackson, 1992; Sundstrom, DeMeuse, & Futrell, 1990). This emphasis points to the need for greater understanding of work team functioning (Gladstein, 1984; Jackson, 1991; Jackson, 1992).

Organizations, and consequently the work teams within them, are also becoming more diverse (Jackson, 1991; Jackson, May, & Whitney, 1995; Mai-Dalton, 1993; Tsui, Egan, & O'Reilly, 1992). With diverse work units or teams becoming more prevalent, "it becomes increasingly important to understand the factors that determine high performance and group-member satisfaction" (Gladstein, 1984, p. 499). However, in terms of diversity, Guzzo and Shea (1992) have admitted that "the 'right' combination of members has been very difficult to specify" (p. 301). In fact, historic reviews of the group composition literature (e.g., Lott & Lott, 1965; Shaw, 1981), as well as recent writings on diversity (e.g., Larkey, 1996; Mai-Dalton, 1993) depict a tension

between the goals of diversity and similarity in that the effect of diversity on group processes can potentially lead to either positive or negative outcomes.

On the one hand, staffing heterogeneous teams has been found to result in a wider variety of decision alternatives and more creative solutions (Hoffman, 1959; Hoffman & Maier, 1961; Triandis, Hall, & Ewen, 1965). Additionally, research has found that the resultant conflict resolution experience (more likely to occur in heterogeneous teams) can be beneficial for team effectiveness (Guzzo & Shea, 1992; Sessa, 1991). In fact, team cohesiveness brought about by interpersonal similarity can lend itself to dysfunctions such as groupthink, conformity, or over-attention to interpersonal issues (Janis, 1972; Ziller, 1965).

On the other hand, homogeneous teams promote favorable interpersonal interaction, cohesiveness, attachment and member satisfaction, reduce uncertainty, and also supply performance gains in certain situations (Clement & Schiereck, 1973; Fenelon & Megargee, 1971; Filley, House, & Kerr, 1976; Lott & Lott, 1965; Tsui et al., 1992). In contrast, diverse demography has been found to reduce satisfaction, increase turnover (Jackson, Brett, Sessa, Cooper, Julin & Peyronnin, 1991; O'Reilly, Caldwell, & Barnett, 1989), and decrease psychological attachment (Tsui et al., 1992). Interpersonal friction among team members can mitigate against the positive features of team heterogeneity (Jackson et al., 1991).

This complex pattern of findings has been viewed by

reviewers as implying that one must make a choice whether it is more important for team members to "get along" (implying homogeneity) or to be productive (implying heterogeneity; e.g., Lott & Lott, 1965). In fact, this is a false choice. More useful framing would be to ask what variables impact team processes and performance under what conditions, as well as how these variables affect processes. Moreover, the outcome of research on a given composition factor may be misleading because often only one such factor has been investigated at one time. To put it another way, all types of diversity will not have the same effect, especially in combination. Diversity can include both observable and less observable attributes, often uncorrelated and leading to complex interactions among team members (Milliken & Martins, 1996). Nevertheless, the increasing emphasis on work teams in organizations makes delineation of the appropriate composition in terms of types of homogeneity or heterogeneity increasingly necessary.

Values

In the context of team processes, values are particularly relevant composition variables, especially those values related to the work environment. "Values may well be more parsimonious predictors of organizational phenomena than are such variables as attitudes, perceptions, and personality traits--all of which are currently used frequently and with little thought of their relationships to underlying value systems" (Connor & Becker, 1975, p. 558). Although values have seldom been investigated in

the context of teams, statements such as this suggest that values should have great relevance to understanding team composition effects on teams in general and on team decision-making processes in particular.

By way of definition, values are thought to be general in nature, stable, and central to an individual's identity (England, 1967; Kluckhohn, 1951; Meglino, Ravlin, & Adkins, 1989; Rokeach, 1968, 1973; Schwartz, 1992). Values are standards or criteria for choosing goals or guiding action (England, 1967; Kluckhohn, 1951; Rokeach, 1968, 1973; Schwartz & Bilsky, 1987). Values possess a motivational component (Kluckhohn, 1951; Rokeach, 1968), implying that they can lead to commitments to action (behavioral intention) and subsequent behavior. Thus, they tend to be important to the individual, have effects in a variety of situations, and are comparatively difficult to change.

Demographic variables are often assumed to be indicators of underlying values (e.g., Tsui et al., 1992). Although this may be true in some instances (e.g., age and conservatism [Elder, 1975]; education and innovation [Kimberly & Evanisko, 1981]), the appropriateness of using demographic variables as indicators can be called into question. For example, some research has found little or no difference in values according to sex (Bengston & Lovejoy, 1973; Sanders, 1993; Rowe & Snizek, 1995), although other research on the existence of mean value differences between men and women has been mixed (Galvin & Herzog, 1992; Vaz & Kanekar, 1992). Block, Roberson, and Neugen (1993) note the importance of individual variation in attitudes among those of the same race. Thus, demographic characteristics are not consistent, either as indicators of

attributes or as predictors of group processes. Hence, it is important to investigate values directly.

Work Values

Work values are evaluative standards relating to work or the work environment which individuals use to discern what is "right" or to assess the importance of preferences for actions or outcomes (Dose, 1997). Work values constitute a somewhat more narrow contextual domain than values in general. Although values transcend specific situations, it is reasonable to focus on certain values (e.g., autonomy or achievement) that have particular relevance for a work setting. Our goal, however, is not to specify a definitive set of work values. Instead, we wish to show how work values in general, and types of work values, will influence team processes.

Several attempts have been made to integrate the many directions work values research has taken in order to enable some broad theoretical statements about the role of work values, at the same time recognizing that not all work values have the same characteristics. Several theorists have attempted to classify values according to content (e.g., Elizur, 1984; Schwartz, 1992; Sagie & Elizur, 1996); however problems have been cited with the use of facet theory (Borg, 1990; Dancer, 1990).

Alternatively, Rokeach's (1973) model of values uses moral-competence and personal-social dimensions. According to Rokeach, the primary category into which a value can be classified is whether it is instrumental (having to do with a mode of conduct) or terminal (having to do with an end-state of existence). Instrumental values are further divided into the categories of moral (e.g., honesty) or competence (e.g., intelligence) and terminal values are described as

either personal (an end state describing oneself) or social (an end state describing society). According to Dose (1997), Rokeach's model can be improved in several ways. Because many of Rokeach's instrumental and terminal values are related (e.g., Loving and Mature Love) a two-by two classification provides a more precise yet parsimonious structure. Additionally, scales in the work values literature do not distinguish between instrumental and terminal values. The term "preferences" more nearly describes the opposite of moral values, distinguishing standards that denote right and wrong from those that do not. Thus, Dose (1997) used a revised structure to more adequately describe the work values construct (see Figure 1). One distinction is a continuum between personal and social consensus values. Although some values will have an element of social consensus, (e.g., honesty, fairness), others are held (and felt to be held) personally or idiosyncratically (e.g., security, creativity). The other distinction is between moral (e.g., Protestant work ethic) and preference values (e.g., individualism, prestige)--those that are held because they are "right" and those that are simply a choice. These distinctions will be explored further in the next section.

Social Consensus versus Personal Values

One advantage of the Dose framework for describing work values is the recognition that several factors play a role in determining the likely effect that work values homogeneity or diversity will have on teams. The first factor relates to how the value was originally developed within individual team members. It is reasonable to expect that most values develop through multiple and long-term influences stemming from culture, society, experience, and/or personality. True, once individuals develop their value systems, values become

more resistant to change; yet, as individuals move to different organizational settings, for example, their values may be influenced by the new organizational context. Adoption of new values is not always easy (James, James, & Ashe, 1990; Judge & Bretz, 1992; Louis, 1980; Lusk & Oliver, 1974), but it does occur (Schein, 1968). Dose (1997) emphasizes that some values originate through direct experience and others through social influence. Generally, values originally formed through personality or experience are stronger and less susceptible to change, whereas values influenced by society or organizational culture are more amenable to change (Fazio & Zanna, 1981). This factor is seen as a continuum: work values can be developed both through social influence and direct experience; however, in a given case, one source is likely to be dominant. How a particular type of value originates, whether by social influence or experience, has implications for whether that value can be learned or modified as a result of interaction among team members.

_____ Social consensus work values are those developed through social influence (Dose, 1997). Social comparison theory states that when objective information is absent, individuals often look to important others in their social environment (e.g., a work team) for validation of their understanding (Festinger, 1954) and the social context focuses individuals' attention on particular stimuli (England, 1967; England, Dhingra, & Agarwal, 1974; Salancik & Pfeiffer, 1978). Thus, culturally shared understandings play a role in defining what is valued (Scott, 1965). Social learning theory (Bandura, 1977) implies that appropriate work values can be modeled in the organizational setting (Weiss, 1978), and that work values can be modified as individuals are socialized (Berger, Olson, & Boudreau, 1983; Connor &

Becker, 1975; Weiss, 1978). Clearly, other team members would be an important source for social learning.

Not all work values are socially determined, however, or have equivalent social desirability (Ravlin & Meglino, 1989). In contrast to social consensus-based values, personal values are more likely to be formed through direct experience, and thus are stronger, more stable over time, and less susceptible to social influence (Fazio & Zanna, 1981). For example, if individuals value autonomy in their work role, another individual is unlikely to convince them otherwise. Some work values may even have a genetic component (Keller, Bouchard, Arvey, Segal, & Dawis, 1992), thus are less a function of social influence. Additionally, ethical values can be held in the face of contrary social influence (e.g., whistleblowing; Miceli & Near, 1998).

Consequences of Values: Moral versus Preference Values

In the context of values, several researchers have noted the need for a distinction between moral obligation and personal choice (Gorsuch & Ortberg, 1983; Sabini & Silver, 1978; Smith, 1969). However, in practice, this distinction has largely been neglected. As an obligation, a particular relevant value may have an ethical or moral component that implies that some outcome "ought" to be sought (Dose, 1997). On the other hand, a value may imply a preference held by a member, one that has no moral component; the consequences are up to the individual's discretion. Work values are moral to the extent that they follow standards of right and wrong (e.g., principles of rights, justice, or utilitarianism; Cavanagh, Moberg, & Velasquez, 1981). For example, holding the Protestant work ethic or valuing fairness represent moral values, while autonomy or security in a job

setting represent preference values.

The distinction between moral and preference values is important for team decision making in two ways. First, individuals are typically more conscious of holding moral values; thus, these values are more accessible (Fazio, 1986) in terms of affecting behavior and reactions. For example, Scott (1965) wrote that individuals feel guilt when their behavior does not support their moral values. A related distinction is that moral values are more often formally advocated. Thus, rather than being left up to individual definition, moral values are likely to be explicitly set down in the form of a code. Individuals holding that code are also likely to believe that others should hold the same values as they do--that moral values are objective rather than subjective (Sabini & Silver, 1978). Moral values are more likely to be internalized (Kelman, 1958) and more central (Smith, 1969) than preference values. On the other hand, those who hold strong moral values may also be more likely to attempt to exert influence toward value change in others. Investigation of the consequences of moral values for team processes seems potentially fruitful.

The Role of Work Values in Formative Team Processes

To date, there has been a conspicuous lack of work values research in the context of teams. In one sense, this deficiency is surprising--the popular literature is replete with suggestions that values are indeed an important factor in team relations and success (e.g., Nahavandi & Aranda, 1994). Honda is just one example of a corporation in which it is reported (e.g., Miller, 1988) that employees were recruited on the basis of possessing team-oriented values.

Our view is that similarity in work values is particularly important during the early stages of group formation. In these formative stages, the team must focus on starting out on the right foot, and strengthening the interactions between group members enough so that early trust can be maintained in the face of some precipitating event such as ideological or ideational conflict, or even failure. Virtually any type of team must go through this start-up phase in which norms are developed and communication begins, although production teams in which the team processes are already engineered are probably an exception. On the other hand, for teams that must face a novel or complex task or one that is optimizing rather than maximizing, the early life of the team is particularly important because they must be more deliberative in their norm development (Bettenhausen & Murnighan, 1985). In this section, we will make a series of propositions regarding several aspects of interpersonal relations and task performance patterns that are particularly important to groups and that have particular relevance to values similarity/diversity. Where appropriate, we will also discuss the effects of various types of work values. The article will conclude with some implications for practice. A heuristic for orienting the reader is given in Figure 2.

Expectations

McGrath, Berdahl, and Arrow (1995) note that demographic characteristics evoke certain expectations by other individuals, often based on stereotypes. Thus, even before team members have any real interaction, perceptions exist about what other team members are like, what views team members hold, how the team will get along, and so on. As discussed earlier, individuals tend to overestimate the

relationship between observed demographic attributes and underlying attributes such as values. Thus, expectations of other team members may be very inaccurate and irrelevant to the task. Furthermore, research suggests that the more salient a demographic characteristic, the more pronounced a stereotypic expectation may be (Eagly, 1987; Lawrence, 1988). Nevertheless, the team interaction will be affected by these predictions, accurate or not, perhaps engendering a self-fulfilling prophecy.

If, instead, circumstances (e.g., the task itself, the team leader, etc.) highlight work values, demographic characteristics will be less salient, and, consequently, expectations based on irrelevant demographic characteristics will be reduced. Perceptions of other team members will be more accurate as well, because potentially inaccurate linkages between demographic and underlying characteristics have been weakened. Thus, for example, a White and an African-American male from the same religious order may rely on similar values rather than skin color. Likewise, a male and a female member who have volunteered to join their firm's United Way fundraising committee because of their desire to help others may focus on this commonality rather than their gender differences.

Recognition that the group may be similar in some aspects (i.e., work values) and diverse in others will allow for specification rather than categorization (Larkey, 1996). An individual group member will be seen to have a profile of various characteristics rather than being viewed stereotypically, based on a single salient characteristic. Specification is proposed to facilitate understanding, varied ideas, and positive evaluations of other group members (Larkey, 1996).

Proposition 1: Making salient the similarities of member values at the outset of a group session will reduce the salience and impact of demographic characteristics, especially when values and demographic attributes are unrelated.

Perceptions of an Ingroup

Positive or negative perceptions of other team members depend at least in part on perceptions of similarity. One of the primary reasons postulated for the effects of demographic diversity variables such as gender or race is that individuals may immediately view themselves as different from, or even in competition with, individuals perceived as belonging to a different internal subgroup.

Research on social identity theory and self-categorization (Turner, 1987) raises important questions about the conditions under which individual team members will perceive the entire team as a single ingroup and when they will categorize the team into smaller subgroups based on one or more composition variables. Previous self-categorization research has typically focused on between-group differences rather than investigating the extent to which perceived differences within the group will mitigate against perception of the whole group as the ingroup. Lau and Murnighan (1998) take this focus on differences a step further by positing that diversity within groups can create "faultlines" that divide a group into one or more subgroups; the more characteristics upon which a group is diverse, the stronger the faultlines created. It is likely, however, that when ways in which the team is similar are made salient, especially early on, they can compensate for the divisive effects of diversity. Perceptions of an ingroup and cohesiveness will be strengthened. This should be particularly true if the homogeneity is related to the

task at hand.

Because values are central to one's identity, anything that promotes values salience will be particularly likely to elicit self-categorization. In most decision-making groups, values do become salient because attaining consensus requires communication of views regarding the relative merits of decision alternatives (Straus & McGrath, 1994). Social comparison processes take place, making similarity or diversity more apparent. Even if the judgment task itself is not related to specific values, the perception of values similarity will enhance task processes. This is because perceived value congruence will lead team members to expect to agree with each other and people who expect to agree with others are also more open to influence (Turner, 1987). One might also argue that even though degree of values similarity is more difficult to assess than demographic similarity, team members usually have multiple opportunities to make such an assessment in the context of their decision making. Thus, as team members interact, categorization processes should be on the basis of values rather than on demographics. We believe that perceived values similarity will ease the pressures that lead to faultline formation. On the other hand, perceived values diversity will motivate the formation of subgroups or coalitions among members and later identification with these subgroups. All this leads to Proposition 2:

Proposition 2: Perceived values similarity will lead to a greater probability that team members will experience the sense of being part a single ingroup (as opposed to subgroups).

The type of value has ramifications for perceptions of the work group as well. Moral values will affect perceptions of the character

of other team members such that team members who are congruent on moral values will perceive each other more favorably than teams that are less congruent. In contrast, members with dissimilar values will be seen stereotypically or negatively. Individuals holding a certain moral code believe that others should hold these values as well (Sabini & Silver, 1978). Team members would view holders of different moral values as wrong. On the other hand, preference values are more likely to be viewed as being the individual's choice. Thus, although preference values similarity can also work to impede subgroup formation, the effect is much less dramatic because preference values would not engender factions to the same degree in the first place. These dynamics may be promoted by merely perceived differences in value orientations.

Proposition 3: Perceived similarity in moral values will decrease the likelihood of subgroup formation, and will do so to a greater extent than perceived similarity in preference values.

Cohesiveness

An ingroup's shared values will also lead to cohesiveness. Researchers have described cohesiveness as being comprised of three components: interpersonal attraction, coordinated or interdependent task behavior, and shared beliefs or values (Driskell & Salas, 1992; Zaccaro & McCoy, 1988). Cohesiveness is viewed as a positive team characteristic, resulting in low levels of interpersonal conflict, the perception of shared goals, similarity in preferences for team regulation, and commitment to the task. A recent meta-analysis found a positive relationship between cohesiveness and performance (Mullen & Copper, 1994). Individuals in cohesive teams reach group goals more efficiently because they need to devote less effort to group

maintenance (Reizenstein & Burke, 1996; Sapolsky, 1960; Shaw, 1981).

Cohesiveness implies similarity (Newcomb, 1961; Zander, 1982) and compatibility (Sapolsky, 1960; Shaw, 1981). Similarity in values is particularly important as a potential antecedent of cohesiveness (Driskell & Salas, 1992; Yukl, 1985). Similarity research has shown that the positive relationship between perceived similarity and liking is especially strong in the case of values similarity (Newcomb, 1961). Further, both organizational and social psychological research have emphasized the importance of reducing uncertainty in relationships (Gudykunst, Yang, & Nishida, 1985; Katz & Kahn, 1978). Better quality working relationships are likely to result under conditions of work values congruity because a similar person's behavior is more predictable (Ravlin & Meglino, 1987). Because work values apply over a range of situations, predictability over a variety of situations will be anticipated and interactions will be smoother as a result of knowing what to expect. In contrast, members of teams that are not cohesive become dissatisfied, which interferes with effective team functioning (Marquis, Guetzkow, & Heyns, 1951). Several researchers have noted that individuals whose basic values do not coincide have difficulty forming a strong group (Newcomb, 1961; Scott, 1965; Zander, 1982).

Both moral and preference values should impact group cohesiveness. Similar ethical beliefs, for example, should promote cohesion. Teams that are congruent on preference values will interact in such a way as to be most pleasing to its members. For example, teams who value autonomy will interact in such a way as to provide members with the autonomy they desire in their work environment. This will have beneficial effects for coordination of

team effort.

Proposition 4: Values similarity will lead to greater cohesiveness.

Trust

Trust is important for self-managed, interacting teams, especially when external control mechanisms are reduced (Mayer, Davis, & Schoorman, 1995). Trust positively affects the quality of group task processes by enhancing the perceived worth of group meetings, personal involvement and participation in such meetings, mutual influence, approachability, group effectiveness through solving problems, and formulating policies through creative, realistic team efforts (Friedlander, Thibodeau, Nichols, Tucker, & Snyder, 1985). Trust is the basis for open communication and self-disclosure (Butler, 1991; Collins & Miller, 1994; Gabarro, 1978) and is related to sharing critical information, perceptions, and feelings (Klimoski & Karol, 1976; Mishra & Morrissey, 1990) as well as to accepting the ideas and contributions of other team members (Porter & Lilly, 1996). High trust groups outperform low-trust groups (Golembiewski & McConkie, 1975; Hyatt & Ruddy, 1997). Finally, in low trust groups, the climate is thought to become defensive and members perceive motives, values and emotions of others less accurately; messages become distorted (Gibb, 1961). Low trust relationships in groups have been found to interfere with and distort perceptions of the problem; information is not shared and ideas are ignored (Zand, 1972).

An initial decision regarding trust level appears to occur relatively early in the life of a group. Mayer et al. (1995) propose that perceived integrity, one of the components of trust, is most

salient early in the life of the group. Research by Klimoski and Karol (1976) showed that groups have a relatively high early level of trust; it does not entirely have to be built through repeated interaction. It should be noted, however, that the groups in this study were fairly homogeneous: all were female introductory psychology students. In contrast, research (Deutsch & Collins, 1951) has shown that individuals' initial attitudes toward each other were more favorable in segregated housing projects than in housing projects with both white and black tenants. Thus, similarity has been associated with propensity for trust early on in the life of the group. Perhaps similar individuals are perceived as having more integrity, or at least as being less of a mystery.

Because trust is so central for groups and appears to be formed relatively quickly, work values similarity is an important consideration. As discussed earlier, work values can decrease group members' focus on irrelevant demographic characteristics. Research has shown that group members do not need a great deal of experiential evidence or time in order to make a trust judgment either. Zand's (1972) study used only a brief description of other team members to induce feelings of trust. Knowledge of work value similarity would work in an analogous manner.

The key, however, is to maintain that trust in the face of adverse events. Teams may face roadblocks, stressful time constraints, or even failure. Team interactions are almost assured of precipitating conflict; indeed, ideational conflict is beneficial for teams. Exchanging creative ideas but doing so without fear of personal criticism is vitally necessary. The group needs to be sufficiently evaluative of members' ideas so that concurrence seeking

does not degenerate into groupthink, but not so critical as to inhibit members' contributions. Conflict can be a good thing; however, resolving that conflict is the key. We believe that shared work values will provide a foundation upon which trust can be built and maintained. Previous research has found that similar values lead to trust (Hart, 1988; Hlasny & McCarrey, 1980); in contrast, dissimilarity is associated with mistrust and stress (Triandis et al., 1965).

Proposition 5: Perceived values similarity will enable maintenance and increased levels of interpersonal trust.

Norm Development

Developing norms for group interaction is one of the primary tasks early in the life of the group (Bettenhausen & Murnighan, 1991; Gersick, 1988). All groups must develop some procedural norms (e.g., whether decisions will be made by consensus, majority rule, seniority, etc.) as well as appropriate relational norms (e.g., flexibility, information exchange, and solidarity; Heide & John, 1992). This "norming" stage is particularly critical for group development (Tuckman, 1965) and for subsequent group processes (Hyatt & Ruddy, 1997).

Individuals who hold similar values are thought to share certain aspects of cognitive processing (Meglino et al., 1989). The presence of shared meanings (James et al., 1990) allows team members to establish common assumptions (Houghton, Zeithaml, & Bateman, 1994) about a task or problem and facilitate efficient task processes. This commonality would allow the team to focus on the issues facing the larger collective rather than on within-group demographic differences (Brewer, 1979). Values similarity affects the decision-

making strategy explicitly or implicitly followed by the team, or even if one is followed at all (Jehn & Van Dyne, 1993). For these reasons, shared values are thought to minimize the energy expended to achieve shared group norms (Haythorn, 1968). In contrast, team members' dissimilar values will often lead to different approaches to team/task work, or at least to inefficient behavior, taking time away from the task at hand (presumably, a finite resource [Kanfer & Ackerman, 1989]).

Preference values would have the most impact on procedural norms development because they relate to what individuals value in their work environment. For example, members who favor autonomy will choose procedures that allow for as much independent work as possible. If team members are heterogeneous, it will be more difficult to agree on how the group should proceed and norms must be developed more intentionally. Thus, values dissimilarity will have a negative impact on team processes because it distracts team members from the task itself and requires greater effort for such activities as resolving conflict.

Proposition 6: Preference values similarity will facilitate procedural norm development.

Communication of Information

In general, perceived values similarity (together with resulting cohesion and trust) will have positive consequences for internal communication. Open and flexible communication patterns are essential for effective team functioning and performance (Gladstein, 1984), especially when the group task is complex (Tushman, 1979). Effective group processes such as sharing information and helping one another lead to higher satisfaction and commitment to the team,

particularly if that information is efficient (Janz, Colquitt, & Noe, 1997). The effectiveness of a team decision is usually a function of the information available (O'Reilly, 1983); thus, optimal decisions must utilize all relevant information at team members' disposal. Individual team members may be able to identify various problems and alternatives solutions; however, the team will not be successful unless this information is shared with the rest of the team.

Attention to staffing is essential to ensuring that effective communication takes place (Klimoski & Jones, 1995). Connor and Becker (1975) have argued that values congruity will increase accuracy of communication. Individuals gather more information from liked others (Byrne, 1971). Values similarity is related to more successful interaction with coworkers and ease of communication (Jackson, 1992). Work values similarity plays a role because members are likely to feel more comfortable proposing ideas within a group that shares a general philosophy about how work should be done and the results that should occur.

The previously mentioned likelihood that work values similarity will compensate for other, less relevant, demographic similarities is also relevant here. Team members who focus on race or gender dissimilarities may devalue others' contributions to the discussion, and ignore leadership or influence attempts. If work values similarity is salient, however, team members may more easily "gain the floor." Differences that at first appeared inexorable are now acceptable. Of course, it is vital that attention be given to values congruence early in the life of the team in order to provide the foundation for amicable discussion.

In contrast, decision makers are less likely to use information

when it leads to conflict among relevant individuals and when it can be attacked by those with opposing views (Hackman, 1992; O'Reilly, 1983). Thus, there will be decreased willingness to exchange information among team members with diverse work values. Individuals will seek to avoid conflict and will only make recommendations that they think are impervious to attack from fellow team members.

This situation is especially likely when the topic of discussion is complicated, ambiguous, or involves issues with no easy solution, such as trade with countries involved in human rights violations. Individuals inject moral values into the issue, often creating conflict. Thus, differences in moral values are more likely than differences in preference values (particularly personal preference values) to engender distrust. As discussed earlier, moral values are held more consciously and thus more strongly affect behavior and attitudes.

Proposition 7: Perceived values similarity across team members, particularly in moral values, will lead to increased communication of information.

Normative and Informational Influence

In addition to merely exchanging information, work values homogeneity will affect amount and success of influence attempts. Team members with similar work values will be influenced to a greater extent by each others' opinions concerning the issues to be dealt with or the alternatives to consider (Lott & Lott, 1961). Both normative and informational influence (Deutsch & Gerard, 1955; Festinger, 1950, 1954) are involved. When individuals accept normative influence they conform in order to be thought of positively by others. Individuals accept informational influence in order to be

correct in their assessment of reality (Deutsch & Gerard, 1955). Teams with similar values will be more likely to see members as sources of informational influence with whom they would agree. Thus, generating more reasons for a course of action will be encouraged. Under these circumstances, team members would continue to empathize with peer preferences even when not in contact with the team. They would be more likely to accept normative influence from members of their team because they are more motivated to present themselves favorably to their own ingroup. As previously stated, normative, social consensus type values would be more amenable to influence.

In contrast, more heterogeneous teams will be less accepting of one another's views offered during team interaction. Because values are enduring and central to individuals' identities, dissimilar team members will be reluctant to compromise if it will mean sacrificing important values. Instead, provided that the issue is seen as important, team members should be motivated to influence others to conform to their position. Notwithstanding the novel and potentially valid arguments that may be presented, teams with differing values will have more difficulty reaching consensus. In particular, if the decision task in question has moral-ethical implications and these highlight disparate values, there will be a stronger incentive to influence the other. At the extreme are "protected values" (Baron & Spranca, 1997) which individuals hold absolutely, resisting compromise or trade-offs with other values (e.g., conserving natural resources). Although there is much incentive to influence others to change their position, successful influence is unlikely.

Proposition 8: More influence attempts will be made among teams with conflicting values, particularly moral values.

Proposition 9: Influence attempts will be more successful among teams with similar values, particularly social consensus values.

Boundary Spanning

Values similarity will also affect the amount of boundary management that occurs. Teams do not, and should not, act in isolation. In fact, group members often perceive group processes as being divided into internal and external components (Gladstein, 1984). Teams that have developed their own norms, communication patterns, etc., must also communicate with others in the organization. Highly performing teams maintain, and even seek out, contacts with upper management and with other departments (Ancona & Caldwell, 1992). Teams must acquire information from parties outside the team (Deeter-Schmelz, 1997; Hargadon & Sutton, 1997; Tushman & Scanlan, 1981). Contact with individuals from outside a cohesive group is beneficial for countering groupthink (Janis, 1972). Additionally, teams must "sell" their ideas to upper management and other functional areas (Ancona & Caldwell, 1992). Finally, modern organizational structures often require individuals to be members of more than one team, participate in a matrix structure, or experience movement between teams. All this works against members' perceptions of being included in team processes and decisions. Thus, it is vital for team success that members be buffered from unwanted distractions, not letting the external activities overwhelm the internal group activities (Ancona & Caldwell, 1992). Bringing up the boundaries of the team acts to create a sense of unity and membership in the team. Gersick (1988) has indicated that this focus is particularly important early in the life of the team. Teams often act

sequentially, acting on internal activities initially, then turning to external activities. Ancona (1990) also found that focus on internal activities early in the life of the team was beneficial; too much focus on boundary spanning activities had detrimental effects in terms of cohesion and internal organization and internal conflict.

Team composition is important for boundary spanning. Diverse groups are able to create a variety of linkages outside the team (Milliken & Martins, 1996). However, for all the advantages of diversity, once again we run into the potential negative affects discussed previously, and the advantages of values similarity in concert with diverse composition in other areas. To the extent that values similarity facilitates development of role clarity and team norms, effective boundary spanning may also be enhanced. For example, clear expectations of team members in terms of roles and norms should allow members to acquire necessary information from outside the team accurately and efficiently (Deeter-Schmelz, 1997). Unclear norms and roles could lead to duplication of effort or neglecting to consult a full range of information sources. Additionally, similar views on norms, preferences for the manner in which tasks are accomplished, and the criteria for making decisions provide confidence that the necessary contact with "outsiders" will not dilute the team vision. Values similarity plays a role by providing a foundation for members' psychological perceptions of inclusion. A unified view of the team goals will facilitate convincing outside parties of their merit.

Proposition 10: Work values similarity will promote an effective level of boundary management.

Implications for Practice

The preceding propositions were made with the realization that some effort must be made to achieve values similarity and also that this goal is not entirely under one's control. Composition in terms of expertise, ability, and representation of particular functional areas may dictate that values composition be less than ideal. Nevertheless, effective team leadership may facilitate the positive effects of values similarity on formative team processes.

Team Leadership

Team leadership can play a significant role in influencing commonality (e.g., Klimoski, Friedman, & Weldon, 1980; Komaki, Deselles, & Bowman, 1989). Most teams have a leader with potential to exert influence on team processes (Zaccaro, 1995). Much as founders' values are intrinsic to the basic mission of the organization and determine organizational culture to a large extent (Schneider, Goldstein, & Smith, 1995), team leaders set the tone for their team. Discussions of transformational leadership emphasize leaders' influence on values (Bass, 1985; Conger, 1991). Janis (1972) highlighted the influence leaders have when he cautioned leaders not to state their preferences too early in group discussion so as not to overly influence the group decision. Leaders can influence individuals' self-worth based on their status as a group member (Huo, Smith, Tyler & Lind, 1996). Clearly then, the team leader has the opportunity to play an important role in fostering shared values in a variety of ways. The leader may be involved in selection of team members as well as being instrumental in guiding discussion, establishing normative structures, and surfacing shared values. He or she may stress common values by assertion or through the group's early activities. In some cases, pivotal work values may

be of the type amenable to social influence and can be developed at the work team level, perhaps concurrent with the development of group norms.

Although team leaders have great potential to influence teams, it may be necessary to train managers in team formation. In particular, guiding their efforts at enhancing perceived values similarity would be beneficial.

Recruitment and Selection

The team leader can affect the relationship of work values and team processes in several ways. One particularly relevant contribution of our analysis relates to the possibility of selecting team members for work values homogeneity in the face of racial and gender diversity. In spite of contemporary pressures to emphasize, even revel in, demographic differences, there is considerable similarity in the way workers tend to view work and work-related outcomes (e.g., Chusmir, & Parker, 1991; de Vaus & McAllister, 1991; Watson & Simpson, 1978). Thus, differences in race or gender need not imply competition or discomfort. Ultimately, factors that move a workforce toward commonality will be very beneficial for team and organizational effectiveness. To look at this idea another way, diversity in cognitive experience, expertise, age, tenure in the organization, etc., can offset the filtering effect values can produce (Hambrick & Brandon, 1988) yet maintain the positive aspects of values consensus. Perhaps this combination best describes the idea of "balance" between homogeneity and heterogeneity proposed by Hackman (1992).

Similar values may be inculcated in individuals throughout the organization such that all organizational members share core values.

Consequently, the team has these values as a common starting ground. This may occur through recruitment and selection practices (Klimoski & Jones, 1995), socialization (Schein, 1968), or attrition (Schneider, 1987; Schneider et al., 1995). Career path planning and reward systems can also promote organizational core values. Furthermore, teams are increasingly responsible for selecting their own team members (Klimoski & Jones, 1995); thus, they could be encouraged to include work values similarity in their selection criteria. Team leaders play an active role in the staffing effort, either through a direct role in selection or through influencing team members' selection criteria.

Generally speaking, managers must recognize the full implications of values diversity for staffing. As Schneider (1987) has pointed out, organizations tend to attract, select, and retain individuals who are similar on key dimensions to successful previous incumbents. In light of this and in light of our previous discussion, organizations will have to monitor their hiring practices and selection of team members in new ways. If the applicant pool is very diverse demographically, for example, or if the organization has racial or ethnic diversity as a goal, it may be prudent to make a special effort to select demographically diverse individuals who have similar values.

Task and Task Assignments

A further recommendation has to do with the task or the task assignment. The type of task is important in that it often dictates such things as the time frame for decision making, amount and type of interaction required, the likely distribution of knowledge among members, and the amount of discretion members have over procedures or

end results. These factors will interact with the work values held by members. It may be that team membership can be composed based on similarity in the values most related to the task to be undertaken or the procedure the team is required to follow. Conversely, if the team membership is already in place, the team leader may have some influence in the project or issue to which the team will be assigned. If the match between task and team is difficult to make, the team leader may have the opportunity to frame the task in such a way as to highlight values if this will promote perceptions of similarity among the group. More particularly, the team leader might frame assignments to elicit moral vs. preference values.

Group Working Agreements

As previously discussed, similarity in work values among team members can facilitate development of procedural norms. Often group working agreements are established implicitly; however, there is some advantage to giving explicit attention to developing normative understandings beginning with the first time the group convenes. The group will need to know how they are going to interact in order to best work together. Additionally, to the extent that behaviors are linked to values, some ways of doing things will be linked to values. Group working agreements can be established in several ways. The team leader can simply state normative expectations at the outset (e.g., for attendance, participation, candor, etc.). If there are newcomers to a group, socialization techniques may be used. Although we are presently most concerned with group level working agreements, it is also true that corporate level working agreements could be established. This would also facilitate changes in group membership since all organizational members would share the working agreement.

Process Management

Given a particular configuration of team members and a particular task assignment, a team leader has an important role in terms of facilitating workflow processes. Criteria for the Baldrige Award is just one indication of the importance of successful process management efforts (Zemke, 1997). Once again, the leader plays an important role in directing workflow and interactions as the group performs. This direction could be implicit, such as by modeling desired behavior, use of language, or directing questions to individuals. The leader could also take more explicit action such as interrupting patterns of dysfunctional behavior and label it as such, using an event as a "teachable moment" or linking punishments or sanctions to a group's value orientation. Finally, the leaders influence on workflow can be in the form of reinterpreting task activities, issues, or problematics in order to highlight values.

Conclusions

Throughout this article we have argued the merits of a treatment of work values in the context of diversity in teams. Although we have focused on the value of values during the formative stages of team life, we recognize that contemporary theories of group processes view group life as one of punctuated equilibrium. This implies, and we concur, that conditions of change or disruption (e.g., changes in leadership, task properties or the environment of the team) will bring values again into the forefront.

Consideration of work values and values similarity allows for greater precision and prediction of team processes and provides an optimistic, yet pragmatic, approach to staffing. First, consideration of work values highlights that not all kinds of team

member diversity influence team processes in the same manner. Even within the context of work values, certain types of work values have stronger relationship with particular team processes. A focus on potentially shared work values may also mitigate against the tendency of group members to make invidious comparisons on the basis of demographic differences. In actual work settings, similarity in work values may supersede the impact of demographic diversity in producing effective and satisfying relationships. Finally, work values homogeneity in a team implies that team members will share perceptions of meaning, either developed within the team or already present as part of the overall organizational culture. This, in turn, will not only have major effects on group processes, it will affect the future cause of the organization as well.

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Figure Captions

Figure 1. Work values types.

Figure 2. Getting off on the right foot: The role of work values in teams' formative stages.

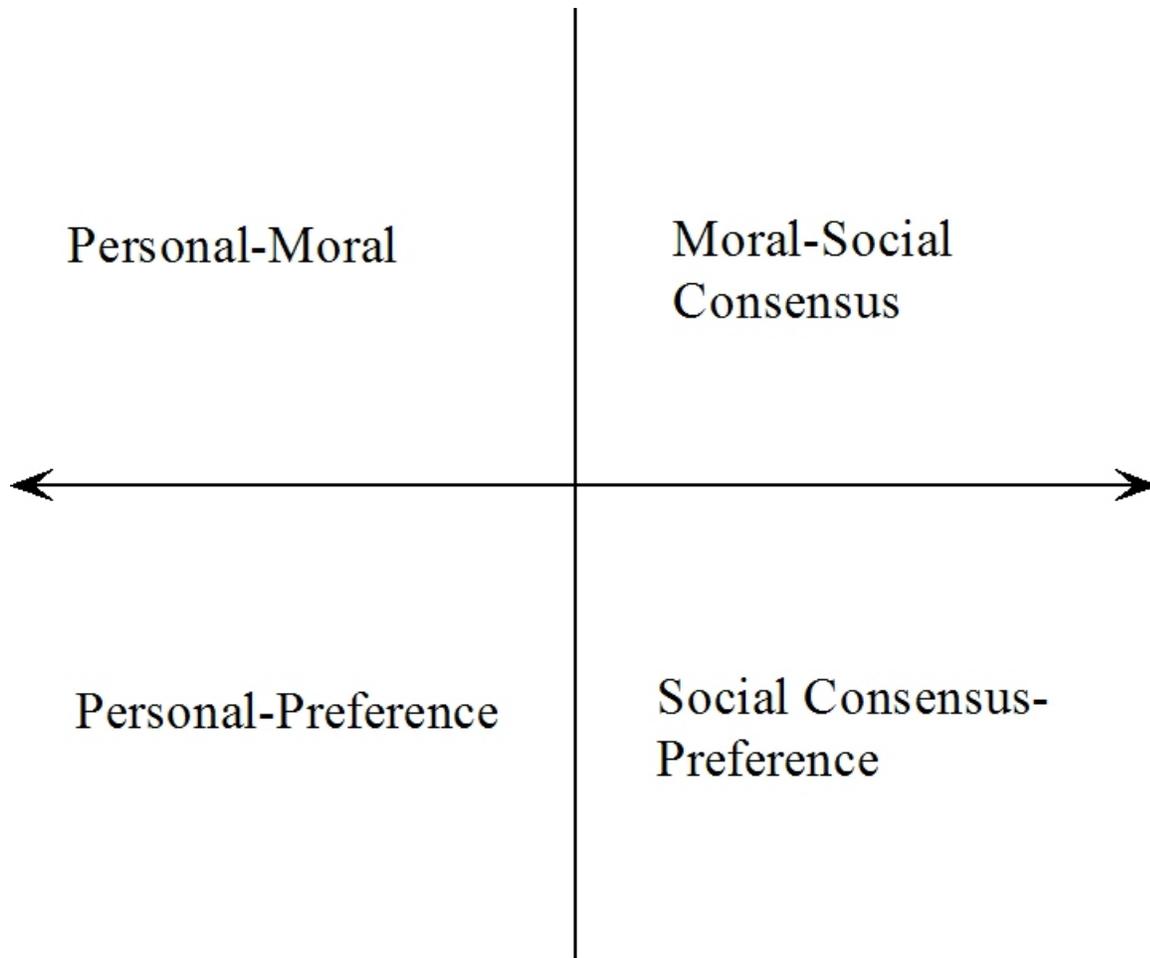


FIGURE 1

Work Values Types