

Producing Diversity

A Policy Discourse Analysis of Diversity Action Plans

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Almost twenty years after the American Council on Education published its handbook for enhancing diversity (Green, 1989), the Association of American Colleges and Universities published *Making a real difference with diversity* (Clayton-Pedersen, Parker, Smith, Moreno, & Teraguchi, 2007), a step-by-step guide for implementing and sustaining diversity work on campus. This publication joins a growing list of publications designed to document the challenges and benefits of diversity, and offer administrators promising practices and practical tools for identifying and assessing diversity on campus, enhancing access and success for historically disadvantaged groups, and strengthening the overall institutional functioning regarding diversity (see Bauman, Bustillos, Bensimon, Brown, & Bartee, 2005; *Does Diversity Make a Difference?*, 2000; Garcia et al., 2003; Kezar & Eckel, 2005; Miley, Chang, & Antonio, 2005; *Now is the time*, 2005; Williams, Berger, & McClendon, 2005). The diversity agenda is no longer limited to simply improving the proportional representation of under-represented minorities; "each campus must create an environment that embraces diversity as one of its core values, infusing every aspect of campus life and purpose, and every measure of success" (*Now is the time*, 2005, p. 1; also Miley, Chang, & Antonio, 2005, p. 31).

In response to the continued elevation of inequity and diversity on the agendas of most educational practitioners and scholars, "most campuses today have some set of initiatives designed to enhance compositional diversity, create more inclusive communities, or expand horizons" (Clayton-Pedersen, Parker, Smith, Moreno, & Teraguchi, 2007, p. 2). Special committees, charged by senior administrators, typically codify diversity challenges and recommendations into *diversity action plans* – official university policy documents that serve as a primary means by which postsecondary institutions formally advance and influence policy for building diverse, inclusive campus communities.

While recommendations, initiatives, and strategies proliferate, many segments of the national population continue to be grossly under-represented on campus, and equity in education remains a much sought-after goal (Morfin, Perez, Parker, Lynn, & Arrona, 2006). The scholarly literature on the impact and

effects of diversity in higher education is growing; however, relatively little research exists investigating institutional policies (e.g., diversity action plans) and their role as a solution to social problems on college and university campuses. This analysis of diversity action plans issued at twenty U.S. land-grant universities investigated how discourses generated by these reports framed diversity in higher education. The findings suggest that the discursive representation of diversity in these policies is neither natural nor neutral. Rather, as Evelyn Hu-DeHart (2000) argues, "the diversity project as we know it on our campuses is complicit in perpetuating the racial order as historically constructed" (p. 42).

Purpose

In order to enhance understanding of diversity policy documents, how they contribute to producing a particular reality on campus, and how they may compromise the achievement of their own goals, this study sought to identify and analyze discourses circulating in diversity action plans. These policy documents are a primary means by which land-grant universities advance recommendations regarding their professed commitment to inclusive access and an equitable climate for *all* members of the campus community. As Schaubert and Castania (2001) observe, diversity policies provide a "vision for change" and "the language and goals that can guide our system" (para 16). As such, diversity action plans not only record and reflect organizational culture (e.g., as an archival document), but also construct particular realities for members of the institution (e.g., construct power relations and re/produce dominant ideologies) (Allan, 2003). This is notable when programs and policies are designed "from a dominant cultural perspective, which does not work for most of our under-represented cultural groups" (Schaubert & Castania, 2001). Thus, an analysis of the discourses circulating in diversity policies queries and illuminates:

which groups or institutions have preferential access to various kinds of knowledge, which groups or institutions set the criteria for the very definition or legitimization of knowledge, and which are specially involved in the distribution of knowledge – or precisely in the limitation of knowledge in society. (van Dijk, 2002, p. 88)

Well-intentioned attempts to create a more inclusive institutional culture may unwittingly reinforce practices that support exclusion and inequity. The use of assumptive concepts in diversity planning policies may limit a policy's effectiveness and actually reinscribe the very problem the policy seeks to alleviate (Allan, 2008; Bacchi, 1999; Ball, 1990; Scheurich, 1994).

ving; however, relatively little (e.g., diversity action plans) and college and university campuses. Many U.S. land-grant universities report framed diversity in higher education as representation of diversity in research, as Evelyn Hu-DeHart (2000) notes, "our campuses is complicit in perpetuating" (p. 42).

policy documents, how they are developed on campus, and how they may be used in study sought to identify and analyze these policy documents. These policy documents sometimes advance recommendations for increasing diverse access and an equitable environment. As Schaubert and Castania (2003) note, "the language of change" and "the language of resistance" (e.g., as an archival document), members of the institution (e.g., faculty, administrators) (Allan, 2003). These documents are designed "from a dominant perspective" (p. 42) of our under-represented groups, an analysis of the discourses that shape these documents:

access to various kinds of criteria for the very definition of diversity are specially involved in the limitation of knowledge

exclusive institutional culture of inclusion and inequity. The use of these policies may limit a policy's effectiveness in the policy seeks to alleviate (p. 42).

Conceptual Framework

Policy Analysis

As elaborated in Chapter 2, a variety of approaches to the study of policy exists. Using a dominant, conventional – sometimes called "rational" – approach, policy-makers employ formulaic steps in policy-making, and value decisions are assumed to be "relatively straightforward" and are "clearly formulated in advance" – meaning the problem which the policy seeks to resolve is accepted as an unquestioned, objective fact, and attention is instead focused on identifying solutions to the given problem (Bacchi, 1999, p. 18).

Critiques of conventional approaches to policy analysis (Bacchi, 1999; Ball, 1990; Marshall, 1999, 2000; Scheurich, 1994) posit that such policy approaches are guided by a technical-rational evaluation of what makes effective policy – meaning they want to offer ways of "doing it better" (Bacchi, 1999, p. 20) – and serve to legitimize some socially constructed norm of behavior that functions to categorize people, things, and ideas. Policy problems, studied using rational approaches, are typically uncritically accepted, naturalized in the individual, and ignore the social construction of the policy problem (Allan, 2003; Bacchi, 1999; Baez, 2002; Scheurich, 1994). From this perspective, policy implies consensus and risks "ignoring and creating silences on the contradictions of lived experience and social ideals" (Ball, 1990, p. 139). Such approaches to policy-making and analysis often fail to examine underlying and often taken-for-granted assumptions about solutions embedded within how a problem is represented and the implications for these representations (Allan, 2003; Bacchi, 1999; Baez, 2002).

Blending critical approaches to policy analysis with methods of textual analysis invites researchers to focus on silences and exclusions, giving voice to those at the margins (Baez, 2002; Reinhartz, 1992; Roe, 1994). Specifically, the use of a feminist perspective on policy helps to raise important questions about the control and production of knowledge, and the ways policy can be used to empower individuals to act upon/in their environment to challenge dominant ideology (Blackmore, 1999; Marshall, 1999, 2000). Eyre (2000), for instance, utilizing discourse analysis in her investigation of one case of sexual harassment on a university campus, investigated how policy administrators at one institution framed sexual harassment and raised awareness of how these discursive constructions may benefit some while marginalizing others. The researcher's basic suppositions with this approach are to make visible and critique the social relations of power that normalize sexual harassment; to reveal the conditions that make sexual harassment possible; and to transform the institution through this awareness (Eyre, 2000).

Power

Multiple conceptualizations of power exist. A dominant view is evident in articulations of power as a force that can be controlled, used to influence, possessed, and deployed as "weapons" that through "their tactical use" administrators can "influence policies" (Baldrige, 1971, p. 154; also Fisher, 1984; French & Raven, 1959; Pfeffer, 1981). From this perspective, which some conceptualize as "power-over" (Allen, 1999; Beckwith, 1999), power is causative, intentional, and purposeful, but not predictive; one event triggers the next, but power does not consist of a discrete set of actions or stages, nor can we predict the outcome of any one event or action (Burns, 1978).

Another view defines power as the "ability of a collectivity to act together for the attainment of an agreed-upon end or series of ends" (Allen, 1999, pp. 126-7). Such power is "an expandable resource that is produced and shared through interaction" (Astin & Leland, 1991, p. 1; also Beckwith, 1999; Blackmore, 1999). Redefined as "power through and with others," such power is exercised rather than possessed, illustrating its transformative potential (Blackmore, 1999, p. 161; also Anderson & Grinberg, 1998; Sawicki, 1991). This perspective is captured by a participant in Blackmore's (1999) study of women and leadership who redefined power as "being at the centre of the spokes of a wheel rather than out in front pulling the wagon" (p. 161).

In contrast to traditional views of power as possessive, coercive, and controlling, this study of the discursive framing of diversity draws upon the work of Foucault (1978/1990), who articulates a theoretical conception of power that is produced and transmitted through knowledge and discourse at the micro-levels of society. The "macro-level" of society focuses on power located in ideologies, structures, and institutions (Gore, 1998, p. 278), whereas a "micro-level" analysis of power relations examines specific (discursive) practices, such as those codified in diversity action plans that discipline individuals' ways of thinking and acting through self-regulation (Anderson & Grinberg, 1998). From this perspective, policy, itself a form of disciplinary power, "both constrains individuals by subjecting them to regulation, control, and normalization and, at the same time, enables or empowers individuals by positioning them as subjects who are endowed with the capacity to act" (Allen, 1999, p. 51; also Sawicki, 1991). Different from theorists of power who view individuals as oppressed by power relations, "Foucault sees [individuals] as the effects or instances of power relations" (Mills, 1997, p. 22).

Policy, a form of institutional knowledge and site of power relations, has the power to define what is normal (and thus abnormal); this power derives from its location at the top of the institutional hierarchy – that is from senior administration who legitimize policy with their official status. Institutions act, through policy, with the authority to classify, objectify, and normalize persons. Additionally, policies attempt to "represent the world in factual terms so that

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certain kinds of practices flow ‘naturally’ from them” (Knight, Smith, & Sachs, 1990, p. 133). This investigation of the discursive framing of diversity involves an examination of the forces and relations of power connected to discursive practices. It illuminates “the ways in which arguments are structured, and objects and subjects are constituted in language” (Bacchi, 1999, pp. 40–1).

Methods

This investigation utilized the method of *policy discourse analysis* to investigate university diversity policies to understand how these documents frame diversity and what reality is produced by diversity action plans. A hybrid methodology, policy discourse analysis focuses on written documents; it is a strategy for examining policy discourses and the ways they come together to make particular perspectives more prominent than others (Allan, 2003). The use of assumptive concepts in language may limit a policy's effectiveness and actually reinscribe the very problem the policy seeks to alleviate (Allan, 2003; Bacchi, 1999; Stein, 2004). For example, a university's diversity action plan may construct a world for racial minorities that disqualifies them from participation, even as it strives to include them as full participants.

In order to examine the discursive framing of diversity in diversity action plans, the following questions guided this study:

- What are the predominant images of diversity in diversity action plans?
- How are problems related to diversity represented in diversity action plans?
- How are solutions related to “diversity problems” represented in diversity action plans?
- What discourses are employed to shape these images, problems, and solutions?
- What realities do these problems, solutions, and images construct?

The data for this investigation consisted of 21 diversity action plans issued at 20 U.S. land-grant universities from 1999–2004 (see Table 10.1).¹ The process of data analysis was informed by established methods of coding and categorizing to identify broad themes and predominant images of diversity (Marshall & Rossman, 1999; Miles & Huberman, 1994). The first phase of the analysis involved deductive coding in reply to the research questions. Through the use of NVivo, computer software designed for qualitative data analysis, I conducted line-by-line analysis of each report to identify and code *images* of diversity, the *problems* related to diversity described in diversity action plans, and the proposed *solutions* to these problems. Once all documents were coded, I used NVivo to generate “reports” for each category – images, problems, and solutions – across all diversity action plans; these reports were then analyzed using both

Table 10.1 Sample

State	Institution	Diversity Action Plan(s)
Alabama	Auburn University	Strategic Diversity Plan, 2004
Arizona	University of Arizona	Diversity Action Plan, 2003–2004
Arkansas	University of Arkansas	Diversity Plan, 2002–2005
California	University of California, Berkeley	Report of the Chancellor's Advisory Committee on Diversity, 2000
Connecticut	University of Connecticut	Diversity Action Plan, 2002
Georgia	University of Georgia	Institutional Diversity Strategic Plan, 2002–2005
Idaho	University of Idaho	Diversity and Human Rights at the University of Idaho: Comprehensive Plan for Action and Accountability, 2004
Illinois	University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign	Final Report of the Diversity Initiatives Planning Committee, 2002
Maine	University of Maine	Diversity Action Plan, 1999; 2003–2005
Maryland	University of Maryland, College Park	Report and Recommendations of the President's Diversity Panel, 2000
Nebraska	University of Nebraska, Lincoln	Comprehensive Diversity Plan, 1999 (revised draft)
Nevada	University of Nevada, Reno	Strategic Plan for Diversity Initiatives, 2002
New York	Cornell University	The Cornell University Story: A Holistic Approach to Diversity and Inclusiveness, 2004
North Carolina	North Carolina State University	Diversity Initiative, 1999 (revised and final)
Ohio	The Ohio State University	Diversity Action Plan, 2000
Oklahoma	Oklahoma State University	Institutional Diversity Strategic Plan, 2003
Pennsylvania	Pennsylvania State University	Framework to foster diversity, 2004–2009
Texas	Texas A&M University	Report by the President's Ad Hoc Committee on Diversity and Globalization, 2002
Virginia	Virginia Tech	Diversity Strategic Plan, 2000–2005
Wisconsin	University of Wisconsin, Madison	Plan 2008: the campus diversity plan (1999)

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deductive and inductive processes, which served as the second phase of coding. These codes were then clustered according to common themes to generate image categories and identify identity positions that emerged from these images. All 21 documents were then re-analyzed inductively, listening for silences (Pollock, 2004; Stein, 2004) and with a focus on what is taken-for-granted or accepted as given, and analyzed deductively, using the following research question as a guide: what discourses are employed to shape the predominant images? In this phase of the analytic process, I also examined the identity positions that emerged in phase one of the analysis to identify discourses that were most prominent in constituting these positions.

The Discursive Representation of Diversity in Educational Policy

The goal of this investigation was to understand how university diversity policies frame ideas about diversity and what discourses are employed to shape the images, problems, and solutions related to diversity. In this section, I will provide an overview of the research findings as context for a discussion of what realities are produced by the discourses carried in these documents.²

Analysis of 21 diversity action plans revealed a dominant discourse of *access*, evident in attention to and improvement of recruitment, retention, and advancement practices to enhance entrée and representation, and create a campus culture which would affirm diverse individuals (see Figure 10.1). Three distinct strands were evident within the access discourse: a discourse of *entrée*, clear in calls for diverse persons to be permitted to enter and participate in the

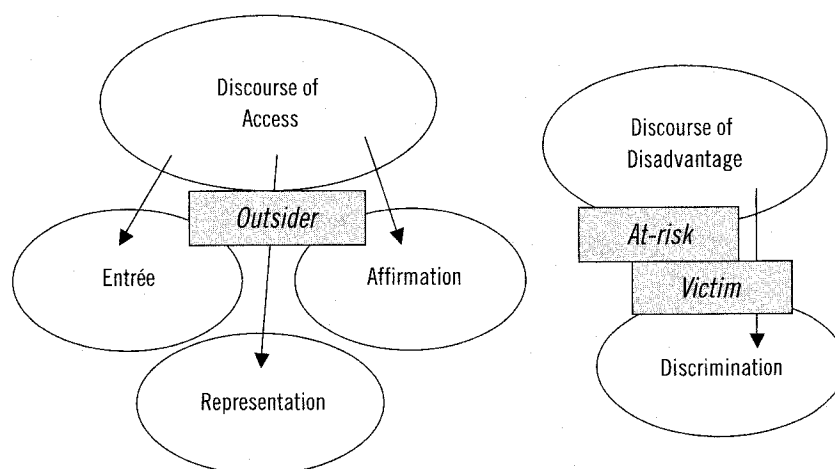


Figure 10.1 Discourses of Access and Disadvantage

Diversity Action Plan(s)

Logic Diversity Plan, 2004

Diversity Action Plan, 2003–2004

Diversity Plan, 2002–2005

Report of the Chancellor's Advisory Committee on Diversity, 2000

Diversity Action Plan, 2002

University Diversity Strategic Plan, 2003–2005

Diversity and Human Rights at the University of Idaho: Comprehensive Plan for Action and Accountability, 2004

Report of the Diversity Initiatives Working Committee, 2002

Diversity Action Plan, 1999; 2003–2005

Report and Recommendations of the President's Diversity Panel, 2000

Comprehensive Diversity Plan, 1999 (draft)

Diversity Plan for Diversity Initiatives, 2004

Cornell University Story: A Holistic Approach to Diversity and Inclusiveness, 2004

Diversity Initiative, 1999 (revised and updated)

Diversity Action Plan, 2000

University Diversity Strategic Plan, 2003–2005

Work to foster diversity, 2009

Report by the President's Ad Hoc Committee on Diversity and Inclusion, 2002

Diversity Strategic Plan, 2000–2005

2008: the campus diversity plan

university; a discourse of *representation*, apparent in attention to greater involvement, full participation, and increased retention and advancement; and a discourse of *affirmation*, visible in calls for diverse persons to be valued, welcomed, and celebrated by the campus culture. These discourses coalesce to produce the diverse individual as an *outsider* to the university, particular arenas within the institution, and the dominant culture.

Analysis also revealed descriptions of diverse individuals as *at-risk* for educational failure before entering institutions of higher education, and remaining at-risk once a member of the university – at-risk for educational failure, non-promotion, no advancement, no tenure, attrition, discrimination, and harassment, among other things. These characterizations are made visible by a discourse of *disadvantage*, along with a discursive strand of *discrimination* that constructs the diverse individual as an at-risk *victim* (see Figure 10.1). Framed in this way, differences in educational outcomes are generally attributed to lack of academic preparation, deficiencies in skills, and inadequate support. The diverse individual, constituted as at-risk before and after entering the university, is also dependent on the university – represented by an administration that is predominantly white and male – for access to and success in higher education, as well as for remediation, skill development, safety, and support.

Further analysis revealed a *marketplace* discourse, characterized by fierce competition and rapidly changing market conditions and the need for multicultural competence in the global marketplace. Two distinct strands emerged within this discourse: a discourse of *excellence*, evident in a focus on success and reputation, quality and performance; and a discourse of *managerialism*, apparent in the emphasis on effectiveness, accountability, monitoring of costs and effects, and quality assurance (see Figure 10.2). These discourses contribute to shaping the diverse individual as a *commodity*: possessing economic value that can enhance the university's status, and an object to be managed.

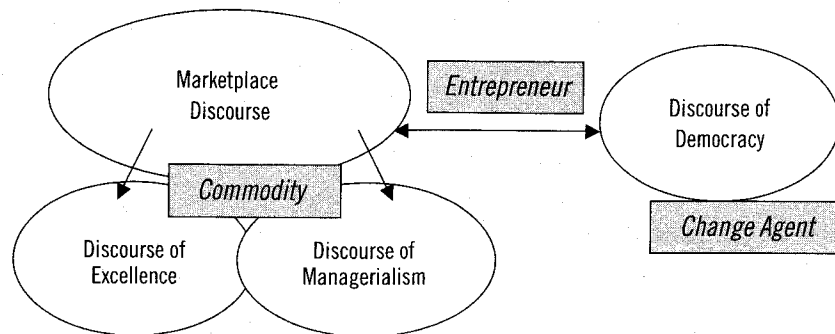
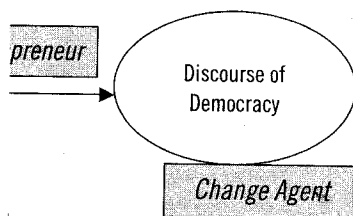


Figure 10.2 Discourses of Marketplace and Democracy

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Finally, analysis of diversity action plans revealed a discourse of *democracy*, evident in calls for inclusion and opportunity, civic responsibility, commitment to equity and equality, and open, participatory, and deliberative dialogue (see Figure 10.2). This discourse contributes to shaping a *change-agent* identity, visible in individual and collective efforts to produce social change and equality as a result. The discourse of democracy emerges as an alternative to the marketplace discourse; however, the dominance and greater weight of the marketplace discourse undermines the systemic change-making possibilities of the discourse of democracy. Instead, out of the tension evident between the discourses of democracy and the marketplace, images of the change agent give way to images of entrepreneurial endeavors: individuals encouraged and rewarded for initiative and the development of innovative programs that ensure the university a competitive edge in the marketplace.

What Has Been Produced?

In this section, I will offer a reply to the final research question, what realities do these problems, solutions, and images construct? First, however, I will punctuate the significance of Foucault's work (1977/1995, 1978/1990) for this investigation, in order to foreground my discussion. As noted above, this inquiry draws upon the work of Foucault and others who reconceptualize power as a productive force, meaning – through discourse – it constructs social identities (subjectivities) and produces particular realities. Foucault describes this form of power as “disciplinary power,” because it disciplines individuals’ ways of thinking and acting through self-regulation; in part, through “an increase of obedience and allegiance” to a perceived norm, but more so through “ordering and organizing” practices and relationships (Simola, Heikkinen, & Silvonen, in Popkewitz & Brennan, 1998, p. 68). This “disciplinary power,” according to Foucault, is deployed through “techniques of power,” such as surveillance, (self)regulation, normalization, and classification, among others (in Gore, 1998).

For the purposes of this discussion, I define these terms as follows. *Surveillance* is evident in the use of experts (e.g., senior administrators, presidential commissions) to supervise, oversee, and monitor diversity efforts, and through the dissemination of knowledge by those who are senior in rank, authority, or expertise. While surveillance can be seen to have regulating effects, *(self)-regulation* focuses on the explicit use of regulation to invoke a rule, often through use of rewards and punishment; through training, the rule “occupies” individual bodies who self-regulate and discipline, are compliant and obedient (Foucault, 1977/1995). *Normalization* is apparent in comparisons between “minorities” and “the majority,” sometimes framed as “them” and “us” respectively; these comparisons serve to invoke or require conformity to a standard (that which is “normal”). Related to normalization is *classification* which is evident in the ways in which groups and individuals are differentiated from one another through

sorting and ranking of identity statuses. Next, I present a discussion of the use of these "techniques of power" in diversity action plans.

Surveillance

A predominant solution described in diversity action plans is what I refer to as the use of expert hierarchy. Diversity action plans propose the appointment of senior administrators, faculty, and presidential commissions (e.g., diversity councils) to serve as monitors of diversity efforts, possessing instrumental knowledge. This view reinforces assumptions that anyone not endowed with privileged knowledge, expertise, or organizational stature (e.g., those in lower ranks) is dependent upon those who are.

An illustration of this use of expert hierarchy is the pronounced use (or proposed development) of mentoring programs. The goal of such programs is to pair "knowledgable" and typically senior persons as guides and to provide counsel and advice to diverse persons who are described as at-risk and in need of support. This strategy serves to help diverse persons with their "adjustment" and to ease their "transition"; this approach acculturates the diverse person to institutional policies and practices that may otherwise appear foreign. Exemplified by one report: "junior faculty . . . immediately upon his or her arriving on campus, [will be assigned] a senior faculty mentor, and advocate, who will offer both encouragement and useful advice" (University of Maryland, 2000). Another report, describing a peer mentoring program for international students, identifies its goal as "to help students assimilate into the university community" (Texas A&M University, 2002).

Overwhelmingly, the mentor is senior to the mentee (e.g., senior faculty mentoring junior faculty or upper-class students mentoring first-year students). On a few occasions peer-to-peer partnerships were described; however, these relationships are usually still hierarchic. For instance, a current staff person will be assigned to mentor a new staff person. Each is a peer to the other, but the current staff person has greater length of employment, and thus, more knowledge to offer the new employee. No documents propose "bottom-up" mentoring, which would assume that those in "subordinate" positions might possess knowledge that could benefit or inform senior persons. This surveillance, or more specifically hierarchical observation (Foucault, 1977/1995), provides for the (possibility of) supervision of inferiors by superiors (or even by peers).

A few diversity action plans consider the ways in which existing practices may benefit some more than others. For instance, one policy asserts that:

New approaches to evaluating diversity scholarship must acknowledge the scholarship inherent in research, teaching, and service without relying on narrow and unquestioned rubrics. . . . Diversity-related research and teaching initiatives [should] be supported and appropriately valued in

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2000)

However, diversity action plans are devoid of specific interventions to "trouble"
the ways existing practices advantage some and disadvantage others. Instead,
experts "clarify criteria," helping diverse "others" to navigate existing practices.
Thus, the criteria remain unchallenged. The documents, focused primarily on
diverse populations' needs and challenges, construct white males as the
normative standard against which to measure "minority" progress and success.
This standard or criteria (white, male), and thus advantage or privilege, remains
largely unacknowledged and unquestioned in the documents.

Diverse individuals, discursively constructed as at-risk outsiders, do not
possess the knowledge of the knower; are likely disempowered; and are
dependent upon experts from whom they acquire essential knowledge "in order
to gain a foothold in mainstream postsecondary education" (Tierney, 1992,
p. 109). Further, the use of expert hierarchy fails to challenge universalizing
systems and dominating social structures (Tierney & Dille, 1998). While
diversity action plans seek to contest monocultural perspectives and disrupt
assimilationist approaches, they may inadvertently reinscribe such views
through surveillance (e.g., mentoring programs).

(Self)Regulation

Linked with the use of expert hierarchy, or rather Foucault's hierarchic
surveillance, is the explicit use of regulation – the invocation of rules – that
"occupies" individual bodies that self-regulate, ensuring compliance. Regulation
is pronounced in solutions made visible by the discourse of managerialism that
contributes to (self)regulatory behaviors. This discourse is characterized by
efficiency, productivity, accountability, and coordination. Managerial practices
serve to monitor, supervise, watch, and regulate. Individuals are deferent to the
authority of "superiors" – whether mentors, administrators, faculty, or even an
ombuds-person, and subjected to surveillance. Aware of the consequences and
motivated by incentives, individuals are regulated by others and ultimately self-
regulate their behaviors to achieve a diverse and inclusive community.

Regulation is clearly evident in calls for accountability. Most reports
recommend specific strategies to ensure compliance with the goals of the plan,
including the creation of overseers to "monitor implementation" (University of
Idaho, 2004), e.g., committees or the appointment of "someone who sits on the
President's cabinet" (University of Maryland, 2000). One document identifies
"specific individuals . . . to serve as 'point persons' [who are] responsible for
taking the lead or overseeing implementation of and reporting the progress on

the key strategies" (University of Connecticut, 2002). Resonating with Foucault's illustrative use of the Panopticon as a surveillance mechanism, enabling an observer to watch and monitor without individuals being able to tell if they are being observed, another diversity action plan proposes to "squarely beam the accountability spotlight on individuals and units who are ultimately responsible for meeting the diversity challenge" (Auburn University, 2004).

A prominent regulatory strategy is the use of performance evaluations. Diversity action plans assert that employees are expected to "demonstrate helpfulness, consideration, and flexibility ... with respect to all foreign students" and their performance will be evaluated (at least annually) on "progress toward achieving diversity goals" (University of Idaho, 2004). More specifically, one report delineates elements of "a diversity and inclusiveness component" to be added to the annual performance review that includes "show respect for differences" and "promote cooperation and a welcoming environment" (Cornell University, 2004). "Skills in managing diversity" are also considered "standard qualifications for all leadership positions" (University of Idaho, 2004).

Regulation occurs on an institutional level, a departmental (or unit) level, and on a personal level. Personally, it is most evident through the use of performance evaluations, which, notably, form "the basis for annual salary increases" (North Carolina State University, 1999). Through an emphasis on "personal accountability" (University of Idaho, 2004), individuals, then, are not only observed by "experts" (e.g., supervisors, senior administrators), but also self-regulate to ensure compliance with diversity goals. Regulation, requiring conformity to a standard, is linked with normalization, which is discussed next.

Normalization

Normalization is most pronounced in the use of a "majority" in diversity action plans as the standard for success, progress, and quality. For instance, climate assessments differentiate white male responses from their "diverse" counterparts, e.g., white males don't perceive the campus as sexist or racist, whereas women and African-Americans do (Virginia Tech University, 2000). Similarly, numerous plans use retention and graduation rates for whites as the benchmark of achievement by which to measure the progress of "minority students." Diverse individuals, "them," are compared with and measured against a standard, "us," that is implicitly defined as normal. This "normalizing judgment" that "hierarchizes qualities, skills and aptitudes" (Foucault, 1977/1995, p. 181) is most prominent in characterizations made visible by discourses of access and disadvantage, which produces the at-risk outsider and enables comparisons to be made between "us" and "them." The use of training (e.g., professional development) and correction (e.g., programs designed to compensate for deficiencies) – predominant solutions to problems of disadvantage

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— ensure conformity to a standard "that is at once a field of comparison, a space of differentiation and the principle of a rule to be followed" (Foucault, 1977/1995, p. 182).

Throughout the diversity action plans, diverse individuals (them) are discursively constructed in binary opposition to a majority (us). One report observes: "Diversity is the recognition, value, and acceptance of . . . how we are similar to or different from others" (University of Arizona, 2003). Another document states: "the campus community [must] learn how best to interact with and support LGBT people" (University of Illinois, 2002). The solution to this us–them divide is through inclusion and integration, while affirming and celebrating difference. The diverse individual must shed "otherness" in order to conform to the norm, "so that they might all be like one another" (Foucault, 1977/1995, p. 182). However, a seemingly paradoxical conclusion is that while diverse individuals must be the same as the majority, in order to be included and achieve insider status, they must also sustain their difference, an exotic otherness that enables the majority and the institution to benefit from their presence. This illustrates the tension that exists between the discourse of access that demands the acculturation of the outsider to an insider (emphasizing sameness) and the marketplace discourse that commodifies the value of the diverse individual (emphasizing difference); this is exemplified by one report that recommends facilitating "learning opportunities available through interaction with international students," adding that "through these efforts, U.S. students will begin to understand the importance of having international students on campus and why they [U.S. students] should be part of the welcoming process for incoming international students" (Texas A&M University, 2002).

Classification

In addition to producing norms, differentiating "us" from "them" is also a form of classification. Nearly every diversity action plan defined diversity early in the document, sorting individual identities in component parts: race, gender, sexual orientation, age, disability, among other identity statuses. Some examples of this classification in diversity action plans follow:

Women are still not well represented in some colleges that have been traditionally dominated by men, and a significant disparity in graduation rates persists between undergraduate students of color and white students. (Pennsylvania State University, 2004)

For African American and Latino/Chicano students, the Berkeley freshman class of 1999 was less representative of the California high school graduate population than the freshman class of 1997. . . . The African American work force declined from 17.1% to 14.9% . . . Latinos and American Indians made only modest gains. (University of California at Berkeley, 2000)

An optional Franco American designation . . . has now been added to the UMS application. Beginning with the Class of 2004, we will have an indication of the number of Franco American students, in addition to the numbers of federally designated minority students, on campus. (University of Maine, 2003)

The classification of individuals and groups reinforces an "us-them" binary. It also serves to arrange, separate, and rank diverse groups from each other. Further, the diverse individual who achieves insider status is described in exceptional terms, thus ranked as unique from other diverse individuals. Some diverse individuals who the reports describe as having achieved insider status (e.g., Asian-Americans) are also classified as different. Finally, the attention to identity statuses occupied by diverse individuals implies that the majority are without race, gender, sexual orientation, enabling those who occupy privileged identity categories (e.g., straight white males) to remain oblivious to their complicity in the systems and structures that produce and maintain (dis)advantage (Johnson, 2005).

A Foucauldian analysis helps to reveal the assumptions of goodness embedded within most of the solutions represented in diversity action plans, and even the acceptance of the "naturalness" of diversity itself. Diversity, and all the solutions (e.g., mentoring programs) recommended to produce "more diversity," are assumed to be good and valuable. Yet, the inherent goodness of these solutions demands suspicion. Who determines "best" practices? In what ways are the criteria for benchmarking culturally projected? How are individuals "constituted and regulated with the claims of appropriate practice and learn to judge themselves as 'good' or 'bad'" (Grieshaber & Cannella, in Rhedding-Jones, 2002, p. 107)? My point is not to deny the growing scholarship on the educational benefits of diversity or the positive contribution many of the proposed solutions will have for a university toward achieving its diversity goals. Rather, my intent is to illuminate the unquestioned assumptions of goodness and challenge practitioners to interrogate the very taken-for-grantedness of the assumption of what is good. An acknowledgment of embedded value bias can lead practitioners and scholars to ask different questions.³

Implications for Policy

The goal of this research is to enable individuals engaged in the policy-making process (e.g., drafting diversity action plans) to be more aware of the discursive effects of their efforts to inform change and achieve equity in U.S. higher education. The findings of this study offer a particular perspective that invites an opportunity for thinking differently about diversity policies and the discourses carried by them. I will offer a few suggestions for how educational administrators might engage new possibilities for thinking to improve practice.

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Reframe the Problem, Influence Discursive Shifts

Generally, institutions approach educational policy-making as a process of problem-solving, and thus every policy proposal contains within it problem representations and an explicit or implicit diagnosis of the problem (Bacchi, 1999). How the problem is framed determines the range of solutions available; in turn, it also conceals from view an array of options that could emerge from alternate conceptions of the problem. Awareness calls for an interrogation of the assumptions that ground the construction of the policy problem – the "assumptions about the causes of the 'problem'" (Bacchi, 1999, p. 109).

What does it mean to initiate "an interrogation of assumptions"? Practitioners are challenged to consider how the articulation of "solutions" in policy corresponds with the stated "problems." For instance, in this investigation, the problems made visible by a discourse of discrimination are harassment, bias, racism, sexism, homophobia; solutions include to offer support services to those who are victims, deliver training and education, and facilitate inter-group dialogue. These solutions are important, but fail to sufficiently address the "source" of the problem: the individuals or systems that are discriminatory, racist, sexist, and homophobic. Examining the (in)congruence between problems and solutions articulated in policy, coupled with an awareness of the discursive construction of diversity, can provide a different lens through which to view diversity. Such a "cognitive shift" (Bensimon, 2005) may inspire discussions about different solutions and deploy the tactical use of discourse.

Practitioners, then, have the potential to influence discursive shifts. Notably, individuals do not "stand outside of discourse and choose when, where, and how to take up particular discourses to produce some intended and predictable effect" (Allan, 2003, p. 65). Thus, policy-makers cannot write discourse into a policy recommendation to produce different effects; they cannot simply rewrite policy by finding and replacing certain words with others, such as searching a document for "disadvantage" and replacing it with "equality" in order to shift from a deficit to an equity focus. However, practitioners can be more informed and critical of the ways in which policy documents are discursively constituted and inspire opportunities for different discourses to be taken up. For instance, as noted above, the marketplace discourse undermines the change-making potential of the discourse of democracy. Diversity councils could take up strategies made visible by a discourse of democracy to facilitate difficult dialogues; suspend a rush to affirm and unite across difference; and "lean into" conflict and dissonance.

Working Within and Against

Drawing upon alternative discourses will likely bump up against dominant power structures. Fuller and Meiners (2005) describe this problem in their reflective essay on their decision-making process while writing a grant proposal. They observe that successful grant proposals originate "from a positivistic and a (mythic) politically neutral epistemological terrain" (p. 169). Thus, they determine that in order to acquire funding, they must "eliminate language that could be perceived as postmodern . . . to pass with a 'neutral ideology'" (p. 169), adding that "nonconformity with no money [is] unproductive" (p. 170).⁴ Individuals, then, working for social change must consider the consequences of deploying particular discourses, both alternative discourses (*This policy may not be approved by legal counsel*), and dominant discourses (*I am more likely to acquire grant funding*). Further, individuals must consider how participation in "mainstream discursive and epistemological paradigms" may constrain possibilities for change; and determine how to access the resources to fuel social change yet also resist the power of dominant discourses (Fuller & Meiners, 2005, p. 174). Applied to this analysis of diversity action plans, the current diversity planning process may better serve the existing structures and constrain efforts to enact social change. Individuals who serve on diversity councils and engage in the policy-making process, then, face a dilemma of how to work within the system they are trying to change.

One strategy is to educate diversity councils on privilege and power through reading, training, and discussion. Such education and training should not divert attention from the material realities of oppression and disadvantage, but rather extend discussion to include awareness of the privileging conditions that construct both oppressive and empowering realities for individuals. Further, this awareness may offer insights on how discourses can both constrain and liberate. An expanded focus from diversity, disadvantage, inequality, and deficiency, to include privilege, power, and individual and institutional oppression may also lead to a renaming of these councils; rather than councils on diversity, they could serve as councils on privilege and disadvantaging systems, or a diversity council could be charged with developing an action plan for equity, rather than diversity.

Conclusion

This investigation of discourses circulating in diversity action plans identified dominant discourses of access, disadvantage, the marketplace, and democracy as most prominent in conveying images of diverse individuals. These discourses contribute to shaping perceptions of diversity and constructing particular social identities for diverse individuals to assume. Discursive practices, carried

y bump up against dominant describe this problem in their while writing a grant proposal. originate "from a positivistic and terrain" (p. 169). Thus, they must "eliminate language that has a 'neutral ideology'" (p. 169), [is] unproductive" (p. 170).⁴ It considers the consequences of discourses (*This policy may not* discourses (*I am more likely to* consider how participation in paradigms" may constrain access the resources to fuel social courses (Fuller & Meiners, 2005, on plans, the current diversity structures and constrain efforts diversity councils and engage ma of how to work within the

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by diversity action plans, produce individuals' ways of thinking and acting, meaning these discursive practices construct (at times competing) possibilities and constrain, even conceal, alternatives. For example, diverse individuals constructed as at-risk outsiders by the discourses of access and disadvantage are dependent upon the university for access to and success in higher education. Also, constituted as victims by the discourse of discrimination, diverse individuals are situated as needy and vulnerable, requiring institutional intervention to ensure their safety and provide support. This discursive framing of diverse persons positions individuals as objects being acted upon. Intersecting with the marketplace discourse that constitutes the diverse person as a commodity, the at-risk outsider appears more like a chess piece moved strategically to achieve a competitive edge. However, multiple discourses circulating in diversity action plans construct multiple subject positions (social identities) which individuals may inhabit, including alternatives, such as the change agent produced by the discourse of democracy, which endow diverse individuals with the capacity to act.

In sum, I am hopeful this study of the discursive framing of diversity enhances understanding of diversity policy documents, how policy discourses come together to make particular perspectives more prominent than others, how they contribute to re/producing a particular cultural reality. I also expect these findings to inspire new questions and further research about discourses of diversity, and how diversity action plans, in their current form, may (unwittingly) compromise the achievement of their own goals.

Notes

- 1 For a full explication of sampling procedure see Iverson, 2005, 2007.
- 2 A fuller description of these findings can be found in Iverson, 2005, 2007, 2008.
- 3 Eccles (1994), in her analysis of gender and achievement-related choices, illuminates these taken-for-granted assumptions: "too many social scientists have adopted a male standard of ideal achievement when judging the value of female achievements. . . . [which] inevitably leads us to question 'why aren't the women selecting the same occupational fields as the men?' instead of the question 'why do women choose particular occupations?'" (pp. 586-587).
- 4 Fuller and Meiners do note, however, that some language required in the grant proposal, such as non-discrimination statements, "comes from the work of earlier paradigm changers" (p. 169) illuminating that change does occur (see also Johnson, 2005).

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Edited by
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