Abstract

Why is it that some bodies, but not others, are able to comfortably navigate the workplace? What would it mean to imagine a workplace that allowed *all* bodies to exist and succeed in it fully? In this thesis, I explore how workplace norms are constructed, what politics and feminist justice theory has to say about it, and why certain performances and not others are accepted in the public sector workplace. Workplaces privilege "professionalism" scripts based on white, male performance and see white, male bodies as the somatic norm of public sector, salary work. These rigid behavior and bodily expectations construct an uneven playing field for success at work based on embodiment and performance. The Urban Scholars Program challenges how workplaces currently function by creating pathways for students of diverse racial and ethnic backgrounds to enter the public sector in the Twin Cities. I analyze the successes and opportunities for improvement of this program in order to discern what lessons can apply to creating a just workplace. I pose that while programs like Urban Scholars are important to increase diversity in the public sector, they train people from diverse racial and ethnic backgrounds to enter the workplace as is. This approach overlooks the unique gendered and racialized embodiments of Scholars. In order to create a truly inclusive and just workplace, the workplace itself must change based on the bodies that compose it. It must become *an adaptive workplace,* meaning that workplace norms and behavior expectations become more fluid and constantly reform themselves. From this investigation, I hope a more inclusive and equitable workplace can emerge.

JUSTICE AT WORK:
TOWARDS AN ADAPTIVE WORKPLACE

by
LILLIE L. BENOWITZ

Elizabeth Markovtis, Faculty Advisor

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the
Degree of Bachelor of Arts with Honors in Politics

Mount Holyoke College
South Hadley, Massachusetts

Spring 2017

Acknowledgements

To the Mount Holyoke community and Politics Department, thank you for equipping me with the tools to stay curious, think intersectionally, and embark on this independent project.

To my first reader, Professor Elizabeth Markovits, thank you for guiding me through the past year of lively discussions, conceptual puzzles, and blossoming ideas. The passion you bring to your work and your students is infectious.

To my second reader, Professor Ali Aslam, thank you for imagining how to change the way spaces operate – both in this work and in our meetings – with me.

To my third reader, Dr. Marcella Runell Hall, thank you for modeling how to effectively do institutional diversity and inclusion work and how to move through space with influence and grace.

To Abbey, Maddie, Christine, and Maggie, thank you for reading and re-reading my work. Each comment you offered encouraged me to think more critically, inclusively, and accessibly.

Thank you to members of the Urban Scholars Program – especially Cassidy Gardenier, Aaron Brink-Johnson, and Brittany Rice – for your honesty, vision, and passion to create a more inclusive and equitable workplace.

Finally, thank you to my family and friends for listening to me continuously soap box, cheering me on, and supporting me in this work.

Table of Contents

Introduction

"We know that no matter how many programs we go through, it will never be able to transcend our 'otherness.'" – Isa Kibira, 2016 Urban Scholar[1]

Although frequently discussed in the field of organizational studies and change, few scholars theorize about the intersection of race and gender in the workplace. While a growing literature about gender and a smaller literature about race at work exist, there is need for a more nuanced analysis of how these social identities impact workplace experiences.[2] In salaried, professional workplaces, the workforce is predominantly white and male. This makes workplace culture quite homogenous and rigid because workers' approaches and opinions often stem from similar backgrounds and experiences, leaving little room for the incorporation of other perspectives. Furthermore, current workplace culture overlooks how societal power structures impact diverse workers, creating an uneven field for success of people based on their unique embodiments and identity performances. In order to create a just workplace, more attention must be paid to the interaction between dominant workplace culture and bodies, identities, and perspectives that challenge this culture.

Sara Ahmed examines how diversity functions in institutions, focusing on efforts in organizations to help make them more inclusive of marginalized identities. She observes, "Diversity work could be described as a phenomenological practice: a way of attending to what

---

[1] Isa Kibira, interviewed by author, July 27, 2016.
[2] Evangelina Holvino, "Intersections: The Simultaneity of Race, Gender and Class in Organization Studies," *Gender, Work and Organization* 17, no. 3 (2010): 249.

gets passed over as routine or an ordinary feature of institutional life."[3] She argues that people often simply accept that workplace culture is the way it is, privileging white men over other workers. Diversity work, then, serves as a challenge to that norm, illuminating the way everyday practices privilege certain bodies over others. She calls for an analysis of how workplaces are constructed and how they include or exclude particular historically marginalized bodies.

Investigating how various bodies interact in the workplace piqued my interest while participating in the Urban Scholars Program, an internship program that focuses on advancing racial equity in the public sector, during the summers of 2015 and 2016. The Urban Scholars Program is a twelve week paid internship program that combines leadership and professional development with meaningful work experience.[4] It is based in Minneapolis, MN and administered through the Civil Rights Department, Equity Division of the City of Minneapolis. While other forms of equity, such as class or gender, may also advance by the Urban Scholars Program, its main goal is to focus on the racial dimension of inequality in Minneapolis. The program teaches participants to develop an equitable decision-making lens that allows for all voices at the table to be heard and valued.[5]

During my tenure as an Urban Scholar, I spent 32 hours a week working at a public sector internship placement and the other 8 hours a week engaging in professional and leadership development workshops with an extremely diverse cohort. As one of the only white people in

---

[3] Sara Ahmed, *On Being Included: Racism and Diversity in Institutional Life* (Durham ; London : Duke University Press), 22.
[4] City of Minneapolis, "Urban Scholars," http://www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/civilrights/urbanscholars/index.htm (accessed January 9, 2017).
[5] Cassidy Gardenier, interviewed by author, August 2, 2016.

this program,[6] I was pushed to question how workplace norms are constructed and why programs like Urban Scholars are necessary. The public sector in Minneapolis consists of predominantly white employees. When I entered my internship placements, it was not hard for me to transition into workplace norms. I already had particular cultural similarities and internalized routines due to my whiteness. I also had previous professional workplace experience and knew how to network. I built these skills, at least in some part, because I was granted access to spaces due to my whiteness and privilege. Hearing from my fellow Urban Scholars of color, they generally did not have the same seamless transitions. They often felt uncomfortable navigating their predominantly white workplaces and alone in their work. After hearing about these experiences, I questioned: Why is it that my white body can be more comfortable navigating the workplace, while the bodies of my co-workers of color felt ostracized in this same space? How do the intersections of race and gender play out in this context? What would it mean to imagine a workplace that allowed *all* bodies to exist and succeed in it fully?

This thesis aims to answer such questions by not only expanding current theory of embodiment and performance in the workplace, but also conceptualizing and building upon current practical efforts to make workplaces more equitable. I begin by reviewing political theories of justice, arguing that while theorists take into consideration distribution of resources and recognition of difference, they overlook embodiment and performance in assessing how to make spaces just. All bodies navigate spaces based on the performance of their social identities and some spaces, such as the workplace, privilege certain identity performances over others. This means that even though spaces are often perceived as neutral, they still may hold oppressive

---

[6] In 2015, I was one of five white people in a 58 person cohort and, in 2016, one of five white people in a 75 person cohort.

characteristics based on societal hierarchies that privilege whiteness and maleness. This structures everything from gendered "professional" dress code expectations to work schedules that privilege childless adults or families with flexible childcare options. Furthermore, many workplaces expect employees to perform specific types of behavior, or "professionalism" scripts, rooted in white, male performance, in order to be successful at work. These expectations force bodies outside of white maleness to unfairly adapt their performances at work to fit "professionalism" scripts, meaning that in order for bodies outside of this norm to be successful at work they must change parts of who they are. Most conceptions of justice overlook this important dimension, making it imperative to expand how justice is thought about and what it includes.

In this thesis, I will focus primarily on advancing racial and gender inclusion in public sector workplaces. The public sector runs on local tax funding and, therefore, should serve those paying for it – the public. Unlike a private business that focuses on maximizing profit, public sector organizations have a responsibility to focus on upholding fairness and reflect its constituency equally. Cassidy Gardenier, Civil Rights Department Equity Division Head and Director of the Urban Scholars Program, pointed out that if "the people who are interacting with the City can see someone who looks like them, find someone who speaks their language, someone who culturally is the same…that's equity in the workforce."[7] In Gardenier's view of equity, public employees should be able to execute their jobs with their identity performances present. The freedom to be their full self not only impacts an employee's experience in a job, but also the way customers interact with that organization. For example, when someone speaks Spanish or Somali at work, they are able to engage constituents who also speak these languages,

---

[7] Gardenier, August 2, 2016.

representing them effectively in the public institution. Furthermore, the public sector, specifically local government, is looked to as a role model of fairness practices, often enforcing anti-discrimination ordinances for their jurisdiction. This means that within their own workplace practices, they must uphold practices that allow their employees to be equally successful.[8]

To begin this discussion on justice in the workplace, I will unpack some important field specific terms. Diversity, inclusion, and equity are concepts central to shifting workplaces from a homogenous view of workers to a more adaptive model. Beth Zemsky, an independent consultant based in Minneapolis, MN,[9] described the difference between diversity, inclusion, and equity as:

> Diversity, you can think of as numerical representation. It's kind of "count the people." My colleague, Phyllis Braxton, says that. Inclusion, is how the people who you brought in, how do their voices, viewpoints, perspectives make a difference? So, you think about: Diversity is count the people, inclusion is the people count, and equity is the outcomes count. So, diversity and inclusion are inputs into the organizational system…[and] equity is the outcome.[10]

Diversity focuses on numbers. How many diverse bodies are in a workplace? Workplaces hold white, male bodies as the norm, meaning that racialized or gendered bodies outside of this norm are constantly compared against the white male norm. Diverse bodies are seen as bodies that fall outside this workplace norm.[11] Claiming diversity in an organization relies on the number of

---

[8] Velma Korbel, interviewed by author, June 28, 2016.

[9] Zemsky specializes in intercultural organizational development. She explained this as working with organizations "who have some core piece of their mission, vision, or values about equity and help[s] them align all of their organizational policies, practices, organizational culture with their mission around equity." From interview with author, August 2, 2016

[10] Beth Zemsky, interviewed by author, August 2, 2016.

[11] As I will discuss in Chapter 3, labeling certain bodies as "diverse" also marks them as "other." This is problematic because it inhibits their full inclusion into an environment. For the context of this thesis, however, when I use the term "diverse bodies," I am talking about those who are left out of the norm or dominant workplace culture as to draw attention to the group of people who *should* (even if they currently are not) included into workplace norms.

bodies that are present and deemed outside of the workplace norm. Furthermore, the claim of diversity within a workplace often exists for the sake of this claim and rests there, if the numbers are deemed sufficient or representative.

Inclusion goes a step beyond diversity. It is how the perspectives and ideas of diverse bodies are incorporated and valued within decision-making practices and organizations. This can be measured, for example, by how balanced contributions are during a workplace meeting, including frequency, reception, and number of interruptions of comments.[12] Furthermore, someone can be marginalized or marked as "diverse" for many different identities. Zemsky explains:

> Sometimes that marginalization is about race, sometimes it's about sexual orientation, sometimes it's about gender, sometimes it's about disability, sometimes it's about gender identification, sometimes it's about religion, but my experience is, and this is one of the principles behind my work, is I really think about it in terms of universal design[13]… If you just design pretty much anything for those who have least access, you design it better for everybody.[14]

By creating organizations that take into account all identities potentially present, they are able to function in an inclusive way.

Finally, my main point of discussion in this thesis will be about equity, which is the outcome of enacting diversity and inclusion. This is how the organizational actions change *because* of diversity and inclusion in the workplace. It is one thing to have a diverse workplace that produces what it always has, but another to have a diverse and inclusive workplace that

---

[12] Tali Mendelberg, Christopher F. Karpowitz, and J. Baxter Oliphant, "Gender Inequality in Deliberation: Unpacking the Black Box of Interaction," *Perspectives on Politics; Cambridge* 12, 1 (2012).

[13] The concept of universal design comes out of the disability rights movement. For more information about the formation of this concept, see: "History of Universal Design," *Institute for Human Centered Design.* http://www.humancentereddesign.org/universal-design/history-universal-design (accessed January 9, 2017).

[14] Zemsky, August 2, 2016.

creates new outcomes or behaves differently because their processes are more equitable. When something is equitable, power dynamics based on social identity are neutralized so that everyone can participate evenly. Imagine three people of different heights watching a baseball game. There is a fence in front of them blocking the field.[15] If all people are seen as the same, each person receives a box to stand on to aid their view. If the boxes, however, are the same height, they do not account for each person's height difference. An equitable solution to this problem would be for each person to receive the appropriate number of boxes to help them all see the game at the same height (equity) or, even, remove the fence entirely (liberation). What equity would look like, then, is for the tallest person to stand on the ground because they can see over the wall naturally, the second tallest person would get one box to see, and the shortest person would receive two boxes. Therefore, the outcome of adapting to particular needs, in this case all seeing the baseball game from the same vantage point, allows for everyone to have equal participation and an equitable experience.

In Chapter 1, I draw on political and feminist theorists to argue that while justice theory takes into account distributive and recognition-based justice, it does not accommodate for the power relations that exist based on the gendered and racialized characteristics of bodies and associated performances of those identities in particular contexts. I believe a new idea of justice should be applied to workplaces because they do not currently provide a fair path to success for everyone. I maintain that workplaces are exclusive because they mirror societal power relations that privilege certain identities over others, thus deeming some bodies acceptable and others unacceptable. I argue that a just workplace, then, would be one that values workers holistically

---

[15] This example was crafted from the following image: Augus Maguire, "Illustrating Equality vs. Equity," *Interaction Institute for Social Change*, January 13, 2016, http://interactioninstitute.org/illustrating-equality-vs-equity/ (accessed January 9, 2017).

and adapts its environment based on who composes it. In Chapter 2, I explore how bodies are gendered and racialized. Bodies enact these characteristics through performance and embodiment, predetermining particular treatment in and navigation of workplaces. In Chapter 3, I argue that workplaces are constructed for particular bodies and ascribed performances to succeed. I do this by examining how workplaces are currently constructed and how they promote certain types of scripted behavior that overwrite particular identity performances. I then apply this conceptual framework to the Urban Scholars Program as a practical intervention into the current workplace construction in Chapter 4. In my view, the Urban Scholars Program serves as a model for just workplace practices in some respects and does not go far enough in others. In Chapter 5, I build on how the Urban Scholars Program is run and where its gaps are to craft an alternative solution for creating justice at work.

Through assessing the Urban Scholars Program, I explore how the program's efforts impact the workplace. I first analyze how the program came to be and the current impact that it makes. I then argue that this program only addresses diversity in the workplace and does not do enough to create a just workplace. Many diversity efforts and programs aim to increase the number of people from diverse backgrounds in workplaces through assimilation-based training. The idea behind this training is teaching people from diverse backgrounds how to behave "professionally" in traditionally workplaces. This aims to increase diversity rather than equity because it teaches its participants to perform certain constructions of "professionalism" rather than bringing unique perspectives to workplaces. While diverse bodies are able to participate within the workplace, they are not truly included because they must change the way they perform in order to be accepted in the workplace. While the Urban Scholars Program sets up participants

to achieve higher management positions and reach a relative level of success at work, in order to be successful, the current workplaces push diverse bodies to compromise their identity performance in order to be seen as "professional." This does not create a just workplace. Rather, the workplace, not the worker, must change. In addition to programs like Urban Scholars, a new model of the workplace must be adopted. I call this an adaptive workplace. In order to create a truly inclusive workplace, the workplace culture must adapt to include diverse bodies by restructuring norms around what bodies can hold particular roles and redefining how "professionalism" is performed. This is a departure from standard professional development training for women and people of color. In order to adapt a workplace to overcome exclusive structures, a workplace must engage in a critical reflection process and system-level changes in policies and practices, such as hiring and training. In this model, a workplace shifts norms and adapts structures of power to be more equitable. I conclude that workplace norms and standards must change in order for workplaces to be truly just.

Chapter 1: Justice in the Workplace

In this chapter, I begin with an examination of the major theories of justice in order to better understand what exactly is at stake in diversity and inclusion questions at work. I will first examine the merits of distributive justice, as conceived by John Rawls. Then, I will discuss how Susan Moller Okin critiques and adapts Rawls' idea of distributive justice. I will also touch on Okin's analysis of the constructed division between public and domestic worlds, arguing that the two influence each other. Next, I will examine how distributive justice has been applied to workplaces thus far, through an analysis of Richard Wolff's work. I will then shift to exploring the idea of justice as recognition. Charles Taylor provides an important identity-based foundation for this concept, arguing that a solely distributive, difference-blind approach to justice leaves out important variations in human experience. Finally, for an important addition to the debate, I turn to Nancy Fraser who argues that in order to address interlocking systems of oppression we must take into account distributive justice, justice as recognition, *and* justice as representation. Here, she creates a new formation of justice that accommodates for the many forms of injustice marginalized people face. I argue, however, that past theories—including Fraser—of justice overlook key aspects in their construction: embodiment and identity performance. While I will go into how embodiment functions in the following chapter, embodiment can be thought of as how bodies act out aspects of their identity. Specifically, I will look at how gender and race are performed, causing particular bodies to be treated some ways but not others. In unpacking how justice is theorized, I determine how and why justice should be applied to the workplace. This definition will best encapsulate justice in the workplace because it goes beyond diversity towards inclusion and equity.

John Rawls writes, "Justice is the first virtue of social institutions, as truth is of systems of thought. A theory however elegant and economical must be rejected or revised if it is untrue; likewise laws and institutions no matter how efficient and well-arranged must be reformed or abolished if they are unjust."[16] Justice is, therefore, the primary concern for social institutions and should be at the center of their decision-making processes. For example, because the City of Minneapolis is a social institution, it should position justice as a central aspect of all it does. For Rawls, social institutions operate within a society governed by a social contract that recognizes the broader need for fairness.[17] Rawls orients his theory within the state of nature. He explains this as "a closed system isolated from other societies"[18] in which "everyone is presumed to act justly."[19] Rawls crafts his argument as "a purely hypothetical situation…[in which] no one knows his place in society, his class position or social status, nor does anyone know his fortune in the distribution of natural assets and abilities, his intelligence, strength, and the like."[20] In this situation, people are blank subjects. Rawls argues that the construction of justice is chosen behind a "veil of ignorance." This protects against someone being more or less advantaged in society.[21]

Within this ideal framework, Rawls argues that all members of society will act justly and hold institutions accountable to justice.[22] He writes that there should be "certain initial bounds...placed upon what is good and what forms of character are morally worthy, and so upon

---

[16] John Rawls, *A Theory of Justice* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1971), 3.
[17] Ibid., 4.
[18] Ibid., 8.
[19] Ibid.
[20] Ibid., 12.
[21] Ibid.
[22] Ibid.

what kinds of person men should be."[23] Furthermore, while perceptions of justice will vary among members of institutions, they will agree that "institutions are just when no arbitrary distinctions are made between persons in the assigning of basic rights and duties."[24] This is the procedural foundation for Rawls' notion of distributive justice. He calls this "justice as fairness."[25] In justice as fairness, all people agree upon conceptions of justice from the original position, before social differentiation takes place.[26] Given that all people see themselves as equal in the original position, Rawls argues, they would agree to require "equality in the assignment of basic rights and duties." Rawls assumes that some may be naturally more talented or accumulate more wealth throughout one's life. To accommodate this, he emphasizes navigating this inequality in a just way. He writes, "Social and economic inequalities, for example inequalities of wealth and authority, are just only if they result in compensating benefits for everyone, and in particular for the least advantaged members of society."[27] Therefore, it is unjust for some to have less so that others can prosper.[28] For example, if a business owner paid her workers under minimum wage to maximize profit, the workers would struggle while the business owner would thrive. This would be unjust because by exploiting the worker's labor, the business owner would grow only her own wealth. On the flip side, however, Rawls says inequality can be just if some earn more but by earning more the situation of those who earn less improves,[29] like if a business owner was successful and used this prosperity to pay her workers a living wage. In this situation,

---

[23] Ibid., 32.
[24] Ibid., 5.
[25] Ibid., 11.
[26] Ibid., 13-4.
[27] Ibid., 14-5.
[28] Ibid., 15.
[29] Ibid.

the success of the business owner resulted in the comfort of her workers. This is just because the business profits benefit everyone involved, including those worse off—the workers.

Susan Moller Okin builds on and challenges Rawls' conception of justice. She argues, "Theories that rely on 'shared understanding' also reveal their tendencies to reinforce patriarchy by neglecting to examine the effects of past and present domination on these understandings."[30] This is a direct critique of Rawls' theory of distributive justice, claiming that Rawls relies on "a 'veil of ignorance' [that] conceals from them all knowledge of their individual characteristics and their social positions."[31] Okin argues that by focusing only on initial distribution that Rawls does not take into account the differences between people over the course of their lifetime. She argues that a new theory of justice must be reflective of people's unique situations so that justice continues beyond the initial position. Furthermore, this alternative theory of justice should remove the "veil of ignorance" and apply to our current society (as we embody and perform different roles and characteristics).

Moreover, Okin challenges the constructed division between public and domestic spheres. The public sphere consists of political life and the marketplace while the private, domestic sphere consists of personal interactions and family.[32] For Okin, this is an arbitrary distinction because the two spheres impact each other. Okin writes, "The interconnections between the domestic and nondomestic aspects of our lives are deep and pervasive."[33] Because of the intertwined nature of our lives, it is vital that justice pervades both spheres. Injustice in the public sphere will affect injustice in the domestic sphere, and vice versa.

---

[30] Susan Moller Okin, *Justice, Gender, and the Family* (New York: Basic Books, 1989), 110.
[31] Ibid., 90.
[32] Ibid., 111.
[33] Ibid., 126.

Okin's writing focuses on justice within the family. She argues that the family and domestic world is not traditionally considered an arena of justice and argues with it should be. She notes:

> The unequal distribution of rights, benefits, responsibilities, and power within the family is closely related to inequalities in the many other spheres of social and political life. There is a cyclical process at work, reinforcing the dominance of men over women, from home to work to what is conventionally referred to as the 'political' arena, and thence back home again.[34]

Similar to Okin's emphasis on bringing justice claims inside the household, I argue that discussions of justice must extend to the workplace. Just as men often dominate women within the family, the gendered and racial hierarchies that exist within society also play out in the workplace. This feedback loop reinforces itself as women remain at the bottom of the family power structure and people of color remain at the bottom of the workplace power structure. Therefore, justice should extend not only to domestic life, but workplace life as well.

When scholars apply justice claims to the workplace, they usually forward a distributive justice perspective. Using only distributive justice, however, does not go far enough in creating an equitable workplace. Richard Wolff proposes restructuring workplaces to address power and economic inequalities at work. Wolff argues that the current economic, capitalist system thrives on exploitation. He marries Marxist critique with distributive justice claims. In current workplaces, workers are organized in hierarchies that privilege certain voices over others. For example, an executive has more sway than an assembly line worker in decision-making processes. Furthermore, with the executive's surplus of power, he is able to make decisions that benefit his personal interests and disregard the interests of his workers. In order to overcome this,

---

[34] Ibid., 113.

the distribution of power and decision-making processes must change to curb exploitation.[35] A main factor for why exploitation exists is that decision makers determine aspects of workers' lives without their input.[36] Wolff proposes workers' self-directed enterprises (WSDEs) as an alternative to dominant forms of capitalism. By incorporating workers into decision-making practices and equally valuing voices across hierarchal job rank, workplaces will more readily reflect the needs of their workers. Wolff argues, "Only when real democracy is established on the job, only when we institute economic democracy, can we expect or build a democratic politics."[37] While WSDEs are an answer to democratizing workplace structures and relationships through a redistribution of institutional power and access to economic resources, Wolff does not explore the interpersonal power hierarchies based on social position that exist in the workplace.

To interrogate these constraints, Charles Taylor accounts for differences among people in his conception of justice. He argues that in order to maintain a subject's humanity, we must take into account unique identities and recognize such identities in politics and governance. Like Rawls, Taylor recognizes that some envision a 'difference-blind' society in which institutions act neutrally and people of different backgrounds can coexist.[38] Taylor argues, though, that as society becomes more multicultural, power relations between groups become more stratified, making the need to recognize and accommodate difference much more important.[39] In contrast to Rawls, Taylor emphasizes that society is not in the original position and does not possess a "veil of ignorance." Diversity in bodies and embodiments is apparent and carries real impacts. He

---

[35] Richard Wolff, Democracy *at Work : A Cure for Capitalism* (Chicago, Illinois : Haymarket Books, 2012) 13.

[36] Ibid., 91.

[37] Ibid., 112.

[38] Charles Taylor and Amy Gutmann, *Multiculturalism : Examining the Politics of Recognition* (Princeton, NJ : Princeton University Press, 1994), 62.

[39] Ibid., 63.

writes, "The further demand we are looking at here is that we all *recognize* the equal value of different cultures; that we not only let them survive, but acknowledge their *worth*."[40] Here, Taylor develops a new sense of justice: justice as recognition. In justice as recognition, he argues to see differences between people as an asset to organizations and society. Taylor's belief in equal respect is a cornerstone of his theory of recognition. He explores this in reference to Immanuel Kant and the politics of equal dignity. Taylor argues that people deserve respect because if everyone existed without oppressive forces, they would be able to contribute equally. Taylor refers to this as *universal human potential*.[41] He defends this formation of justice when he says, "Due recognition is not just a courtesy we owe people. It is a vital human need."[42] There is a "vital human need" to be validated and treated as one's self. Justice as recognition can be seen as stressing the equal value and potential in every body. In order to do this and allow the *universal human potential* in diverse bodies to flourish, however, barriers to positive freedom for diverse bodies must be eliminated.

Taylor also explores why paying attention to the multiplicity of identities is important. He writes that identities rely on being in "dialogical relations with others."[43] This means that you are constantly defining and redefining yourself based on interactions with others. The way bodies perform their identities changes based on social fields and peer reinforcement of norms. In contrast, identities in an earlier age were based on "social categories that everyone took for granted."[44] This made identities apparent and understandable to others in society. For example, status sometimes came from social class, which bore certain cultural makers through clothing.

---

[40] Ibid., 64.

[41] Ibid., 41.

[42] Ibid., 26.

[43] Ibid., 34.

[44] Ibid.

This was easily seen and mutually understood. Now, however, our understanding of social identities is more complicated and many can be difficult to discern in others, such as sexual orientation or hidden disability. Taylor writes, "Equal recognition is not just the appropriate mode for a healthy democratic society. Its refusal can inflict damage on those who are denied it, according to a widespread modern few."[45] Taylor advocates recognizing different identities because it causes emotional degradation when they are ignored.

Justice as recognition may allow workplaces to move beyond numerical diversity towards inclusion, or how the people count. In recognizing the unique perspectives that people bring to a discussion, they are encouraged by their workplace to reach their full potential without sacrificing their embodiment. Where this falls short, however, is it does not challenge the construction of particular spaces and roles that privilege certain bodies and performances over others. Building on the fence example in the Introduction, justice as recognition gives boxes for spectators to stand on but leaves the fence in place. So, even if people are able to exist more freely and be recognized as their full selves, they may not have equal access to opportunities and jobs because of their particular embodiment and social position.

Nancy Fraser provides another conception of justice that builds on Taylor and Rawls. She maps how views of justice changed over time in feminist theory. From this analysis, it becomes clear that representation of opinions and bodies is integral to justice. Similar to Rawls, the beginning of second-wave feminism followed the distributive justice model. They focused on the wage gap and equal access to job opportunities, sighting economic inequalities, mainly between white men and white women, as the main hurdle for gender equality. This viewpoint is most

---

[45] Ibid., 36.

often remembered through the "view of the political as encompassing 'the personal.'"[46] By "politicizing 'the personal,'" Fraser explains, "[Early feminists] expanded the boundaries of contestation beyond socioeconomic redistribution—to include housework, sexuality, and reproduction."[47] As neoliberalism rose, however, egalitarian redistribution as a principle for gender-based activism became less favorable.[48]

Instead of focusing on social equality, second-wave feminist thinkers later on, notably from the Black feminist thought,[49] aimed to shift societal culture by naming and exploring different social identities between people, what is referred to as *identity politics*.[50] By centering recognition-based justice, they were able to uncover and unpack concepts like male domination. Feminists' view of recognition-based justice aligns with Taylor in that both feminist thinkers and Taylor want to center seeing difference. They depart from Taylor, however, in their motivation behind seeing difference. Taylor focuses on recognizing difference because he believes this is a "vital human need" and necessary in the name of valuing humanity in each other.[51] I believe that Taylor brings an important perspective to this conversation. Fraser writes, "Unable to make headway against injustices of political economy, [feminists] preferred to target harms resulting from androcentric patterns of cultural value or status hierarchies…The tendency was to subordinate social struggles to cultural struggles, the politics of redistribution to the politics of

---

[46] Nancy Fraser, "Mapping the Feminist Imagination: From Redistribution to Recognition to Representation," *Constellations: An International Journal of Critical and Democratic Theory* 12, 3 (2005): 296.

[47] Ibid., 298.

[48] Ibid.

[49] The Combahee River Collective based in Boston, MA notes that before they began discussing "identity politics" it was not widely used. For more about this group of Black feminists see: Duchess Harris, "'All of Who I am in the Same Place': The Combahee River Collective," *Womanist Theory and Research* 2, 1 (1999): 9-21.

[50] Fraser, "Mapping the Feminist Imagination," 299.

[51] Taylor, *Multiculturalism*, 29.

recognition."[52] Here, feminist thinkers focus on recognition-based justice in order to advance gender equality. The power structures at play construct bodies to be in a hierarchy, valuing some more than others. To name equal value in all bodies and implement adaptive, self-reflective practices that incorporate difference moves us to a more just way of human interaction.

Fraser urges us to pay attention to the historical context of feminist theory's shift from distributive justice to recognition-based justice. She argues, by focusing only on redistribution and recognition, feminists did not account for the "larger matrix of postcommunism and neoliberalism" at play simultaneously.[53] She argues that the challenge for feminist thought was addressing the interlocking injustices of unfair distribution and misrecognition.[54] Fraser writes that in order to address all systems at play, feminist politics must include a third dimension of justice – *representation.*[55] She explains:

> Representation is not only a matter of ensuring equal political voice for women in already constituted political communities. In addition, it requires reframing disputes about justice that cannot be properly contained within established policies. In contesting misframing, therefore, transnational feminism is reconfiguring gender justice as a three-dimensional problem, in which redistribution, recognition, and representation must be integrated in a balanced way.[56]

Fraser proposes an interlocking vision of justice that includes distributive, recognition-based, and representational justice working together. Representation can be seen as including, incorporating, and amplifying voices that are traditionally left out of conversations, which, when applied to the workplace, would lead to equity. By adding representation to the justice framework, Fraser includes all voices in the conversation. By accounting for economic inequality, identity-based

---

[52] Fraser, "Mapping the Feminist Imagination," 298-9.
[53] Ibid., 300.
[54] Ibid., 305.
[55] Ibid.
[56] Ibid.

discrimination, and leveling how voices are heard through representation, Fraser incorporates many forms of injustice marginalized people may face.

For the purpose of my argument, I will pull pieces from these theories to form my conception of justice. While Rawls overlooks difference in his idea of justice, he emphasizes that institutions, specifically public institutions, must serve their constituents through agreed upon forms of justice. Okin adds to Rawls that institutions need to rethink the distinction between the public and domestic worlds. She argues that within the family men often dominate women, and I add to this that racial hierarchies exist within the workplace. Both systems of power exist within broader society but result in uneven relationships within the workplace and the family, spaces in which justice theory does not extend. Furthermore, as Kimberlé Crenshaw argues, not only do gender and racial hierarchies exist, but marginalized identities also intersect in such a way that they compound and amplify each other.[57] I believe, therefore, that discussions of justice must extend to the workplace. While Wolff theorizes about applying distributive justice to the workplace, the practical application does not go far enough. Wolff incorporates democratizing workplace relationships and means of production into his model, but overlooks how interpersonal relationships and societal hierarchies play out. Therefore, I turn to justice as recognition as an additional dimension to justice.

Taylor critiques difference-blind approaches to justice, arguing that differences between people should be recognized and valued. Fraser goes a step further than Taylor and maintains that not only should economic resources be redistributed and differences recognized but also diverse identities also must be represented in conversations about injustices. Fraser provides

---

[57] For more about the nuances of intersectionality, please read: Kimberlé Crenshaw, "Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and Violence Against Women of Color," *Stanford Law Review* 43, 6 (1991): 1241–99.

important nuance to how justice is constructed because she argues that situations and power dynamics may vary based on context and encourages us to be conscientious of how voices are represented.

Therefore, I believe justice must extend to the workplace as social identities and hierarchies impact job performance and success at work. Due to this inequality, current workplaces prevent all workers from reaching their full potential, as Taylor points out. Workplaces must embrace a model of equity to accommodate for the uneven placement of bodies within organizational culture. For a workplace to be truly just, they must address redistribution of economic resources, recognition of identities, and representation in decision-making and workforce composition as core tenants of their practices and policies. This means that workplaces function while understanding historical contexts and power structures embedded within their original make up and seeing their workers as holistic beings rather than as homogeneous workers. To address all bodies being held to the same standards, which are, in fact, only structured for some bodies to succeed, workplaces must broaden their concepts of how bodies should perform "professionalism" and engage with others at work. A just workplace in one in which all bodies are valued for what they uniquely bring to the table, adequately represented, and able to succeed equally.

Chapter 2: Embodiment and Performance

Bodies navigate in the world in particular ways based on their social identities, such as their gender and racial identity. These identities carry specific expectations about how they should be performed that are reinforced by those around them. Performance is how bodies put their social identities, the characteristics bodies embody, into practice. In the workplace, the way bodies perform their social identities often come into conflict with workplace norms, especially if bodies perform marginalized social identities. This is important because when workplaces expect bodies to perform norms that conflict with their personal identities, bodies with marginalized social identities are forced to compromise their personal way of being in the world. This can be a violent process because people must deny aspects of themselves in order to successfully navigate the workplace. In what follows, I will discuss how the body is constructed and how particular performance expectations come into being. Then, I will explore the formation of individual performance norms. I will conclude by arguing that pushing bodies to deny aspects of their social identities is a form of oppression.

A body is a physical object but also an actor. Kristin Zeiler builds on Maurice Merleau-Pontey, explaining "My body is both an object for others and my lived reality, and I exist neither only as a thing nor only as a consciousness…the lived body is a mind-body unity, acting and experiencing in a specific situation."[58] This means that the body is a malleable entity that impacts and is impacted by forces around it. It is perceived by others and by its self-identity. Both perceptions influence how the body navigates the world.

---

[58] Kristin Zeiler, "A Phenomenology of Excorporation, Bodily Alienation, and Resistance: Rethinking Sexed and Racialized Embodiment," *Hypatia-A Journal of Feminist Philosophy* 28, 1 (2013): 71.

The way bodies engage in the world does not begin from a blank slate. Bodies have particular material dimensions, such as physical features, that shape their engagement in social environments. Judith Butler argues, "The body is understood to be an active process of embodying certain cultural and historical possibilities, a complicated process of appropriation which any phenomenological theory of constitution needs to describe."[59] Therefore, Butler sees bodies rooted in histories and cultural norms that predetermine how bodies are seen and interpreted. The body is inscribed by the physical and cultural histories of those holding similar physical features to them. For example, bodies holding gendered features will be constrained by sexism; bodies of color will be inhibited by racial discrimination. In this view, there are a finite set of possible actions that the body may reproduce based on the societal expectations of how a certain body should behave. Not only do physical identities matter in this case, but so do perceived identities because how a body is read or interpreted impacts the way that body performs. Butler also emphasizes that embodiment is "an active process," meaning that the body, as an object and a consciousness, configures and reconfigures itself in various interactions and situations that impact it.[60] How bodies are interpreted by others changes based on context. Not only do bodies adapt through relationships with histories, interactions, and cultural norms, but they also perform differently in various contexts, thus redefining and reshaping themselves their own realities in different environments.[61] For example, if a person of color enters a predominantly white workplace, they will adjust their performance based on the social field.

---

[59] Judith Butler, "Performative Acts and Gender Constitution: An Essay in Phenomenology and Feminist Theory," in *Writing on the Body : Female Embodiment and Feminist Theory*, ed. Katie Conboy, Nadia Medina, and Sarah Stanbury (New York : Columbia University Press, 1997), 403.

[60] Ibid., 403.

[61] Judith Butler, "Gender as Performance," in *A Critical Sense : Interviews with Intellectuals*, ed. Peter Osborne (London ; New York : Routledge, 1996), 113.

Members of the workplace will respond more intensely to their race or ethnicity because the "discursive and institutional conditions"[62] of that workplace would normalize whiteness, making the person of color's otherness more salient. Conversely, if a person of color enters a diverse workplace, the members of that workplace may practice different norms, possibly responding in a more inclusive manner. By understanding that the perception of bodies shifts based on context, it becomes apparent that not only do individual consciousnesses map expectations of behavior and representation onto themselves, but other consciousnesses also map norms onto individual bodies. Furthermore, these expectations fluctuate based on context and who maps their consciousness onto a given body.

Butler understands performativity as how bodies create and embody their social identities, focusing particularly on gender.[63] She argues that "gender identity is the stylized repetition of acts through time, and not a seemingly seamless identity, then the possibilities of gender transformation are to be found in the arbitrary relation between such acts, in the possibility of a different sort of repeating, in the breaking of subversive repetition of that style."[64] So, while race and gender are constructed characteristics, expectations of how to perform these social identities manifest through repeated behaviors learned through external actors that become

---

[62] Ibid.

[63] In *Gender Trouble*, Butler talks about the relationship between sex and gender. She argues that "sex, by definition, will be shown to have been gender all along" (12). By this, Butler means that sex is just as constructed as she argues gender is. So, while sex is linked to biology and gender is linked to presentation on a spectrum of masculinity and femininity, both identities are informed and enacted through social processes. Given this alignment of sex and gender, noting that those identifications can map onto any bodies, I believe that bodies expressing feminine characteristics receive a particular set of oppressive responses in line with patriarchy and sexism. For this reason, I include sex and gender together in this explanation of embodiment. For Butler's full analysis of sex and gender construction and alignment, see: Judith Butler, "Gender: The Circular Ruins of Contemporary Debate," in *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*, (New York : Routledge, 1999), 11–8.

[64] Butler, "Performative Acts and Gender Constitution," 402.

self-perpetuating. Butler argues that this happens through reiterating both learned and chosen actions that perform social identity.

Performing particular identities involves how a body behaves and presents itself. Richard Schechner writes, "Performances mark identities, bend time, reshape and adorn the body, and tell stories. Performances—of art, rituals, or ordinary life—are 'restored behaviors,' 'twice-behaved behaviors,' performed actions that people train for and rehearse."[65] The repetition of such actions can be conscious and subconscious. The behaviors are "twice-behaved" in that they are repeated more than once, adapting based on the situation but maintaining consistent features during each performance. This is how they mark identities and bodies, as Schechner points out. "Performance takes place as action, interaction, and relation,"[66] Schechner argues. Performances, therefore, form in relation to situations and other performances. Butler differentiates between performance and performativity, however. Butler argues:

> The former presumes a subject, but the latter contests the very notion of the subject…So what I'm trying to do is think about performativity as *that aspect of discourse that has the capacity to produce what it names*. Then I take a further step, through the Derridean rewriting of Austin, and suggest that this production actually always happens through a certain kind of repetition and recitation...Performativity is the vehicle through which ontological effects are established. Performativity is the discursive mode by which ontological effects are installed.[67]

By performativity contesting "the very notion of the subject," Butler questions the distinction between the original subject and performativity. She argues neither the subject nor the

---

[65] Richard Schechner, "What is Performance?," in *Performance Studies : An Introduction*, (London ; New York : Routledge, 2013), 28
[66] Ibid., 30.
[67] Butler, "Gender as Performance," 112.

performativity came first but they interact with one another. Therefore, through performativity, a subject *emerges* and the ideals of performance exist separate from their physical enactment.

Bodies enact varying action patterns specific to cultural perceptions of their bodies. Zeiler writes, "When walking or performing other skills, we seem to act on the basis of a tactic, a bodily know-how that makes it possible for us to engage in various activities without thinking about how to do so."[68] This is known as a *body schema*, or "an implicit, practical awareness of our bodies, motion and space."[69] A *body schema* is informed through interactions with others and causes the body to normalize specific actions. While this exchange continuously occurs, some behaviors become more ingrained than others. It does not start from a blank slate as bodies, upon being born, begin to take on expectations from those around them. Zeiler writes, "We are born into a world already inhabited, shaped and made familiar to us by others."[70] This means particular behaviors seem normal to us while others seem strange. Sara Ahmed sees this as "in line," following behavior patterns of those around you and past interactions with them. This feels natural and comfortable to us.[71] We do not actively accept or reject this subliminal orientation, meaning that we may not be aware of it until something contradicts it and we feel disoriented.[72]

Similar to Ahmed's idea of staying "in line" with expectations of those around a body, Butler explains that "those embodied rituals of everydayness by which a given culture produces and sustains belief in its own 'obviousness'"[73] are known as the *habitus*. Pierre Bourdieu believes that through the *habitus,* "the body does not merely act in accordance with certain

---

[68] Zeiler, "A Phenomenology of Excorporation, Bodily Alienation, and Resistance," 70.

[69] Ibid.

[70] Ibid.

[71] Ibid., 71-2.

[72] Ibid.

[73] Judith Butler, "Performativity's Social Magic," in *Bourdieu : A Critical Reader*, ed. Richard Shusterman (Critical Readers. Oxford, UK ; Malden, MA.: Blackwell Publishers, 1999), 113-4.

regularized or ritualized practices, but it *is* this sedimented ritual activity; its action, in this sense, is a kind of incorporated memory."[74] Not only, in his view, does the body become habitual and is defined by this ritualization, but it also influences and is influenced by the "social game in which the embodied subjects act."[75] Therefore, the *"habitus* is formed overtime, and that its formation gives rise to a strengthened belief in the 'reality' of the social field in which it operates, he understands social conventions as animating the bodies which, in turn, reproduce and ritualize those conventions as practices. In this sense, the *habitus* is formed, but it is also *formative*."[76] Think of this like a conversation between a body and its environment, both adapting and reinforcing each other simultaneously. Since the *habitus* does not only encounter its environment, it begins to understand it as well. This results in a "feeling for the game." This can also be thought of as knowing how to navigate a particular social field.[77] Butler explains that although the *habitus* and its environment craft one another, the *habitus* "must be adjusted by the field and that an *external* relation between them will be traversed through the action by which a *habitus* submits to the rules of the field, thus becoming refashioned in order to become 'congruent' or 'compatible.'"[78] Herein is the unbalanced nature of the relationship between the *habitus* and field. While the field exists and is societally bound prior to its encounter with the *habitus*, the field does not change to the *habitus*. The *habitus*, on the other hand, "always and only alters by virtue of the demands put upon by the 'objectivity' of the field."[79] As bodies enter

---

[74] Ibid., 115.
[75] Ibid.
[76] Ibid., 116.
[77] Ibid., 117.
[78] Ibid.
[79] Ibid.

the workplace, they alter their personal embodiment to the expectations of the workplace field. This, in turn, can alter the way bodies perform or show up in this context.

Expectations of behavior and modes of performing social identities extend to expectations about how bodies that perform marginalized social identities should act in various settings, such as at work.[80] These norms and the performance of these norms become habitual and taken for granted; they become "what we 'just do.'"[81] This would mean that someone stays "in line" with their gendered or racialized identity expectations. In order to be "in line," expectations of performance are reinforced by others and sometimes serve to neutralize difference. For example, in the workplace, women are expected to wear dresses and make-up to perform womanhood, but not too short of a skirt or heavy make-up. Women must be kind and feminine, but not appear weak. These expectations are reinforced by peers. At its core, performance expectations, in this case, aim to neutralize the feminine at work, making women seem more and less masculine at the same time. Being "in line," then, is a constantly redefined space, changing and reinforcing by bodies in that space.

Zeiler uses the ideas of incorporation and excorporation to expand the idea of being "in line." Incorporation, for Zeiler, is when something, such as a behavior, physical object, cultural pattern, etc.,[82] "becomes part of that *from* which [someone] perceives and engages with the world."[83] Actions, therefore, become not only part of the body's presentation and performance but also impact how bodies perceive and thus engage with the world. On the other hand, excorporation is an interruption in how someone conducts repeated habits. Zeiler explains,

---

[80] Zeiler, "A Phenomenology of Excorporation, Bodily Alienation, and Resistance," 73.
[81] Ibid., 74.
[82] Ibid., 73.
[83] Ibid., 72.

"Excorporation constitutes as an object a range of beliefs and norms that previously was lived as part of who the subject's being-in-the-world, up until now. It also implies a focus on the on-going *confrontation* that takes place when one's style of being-in-the-world is formed by beliefs and norms that are becoming objects for the subject."[84] In comparison with incorporation which includes characteristics within someone's feeling of normalcy, becoming an extension of their being, excorporation is a rupture in extensions of self.

The interplay between others' perceptions of a body and the body's consciousness informs how bodies perform and incorporate social identities. Zeiler believes that these social categories derive from physical markers on the body. They cause others to perceive the body with a set of assumptions and expectations for how that body will enact their gender or race. She writes, "I see these categories [of gender and race] as cultural 'readings' of particular bodily marks."[85] Others learn particular ways of socializing and treating bodies with sexed and/or racialized characteristics that reinforce how gendered and racialized identities perform those identities. When a body performs the socially accepted form of identity embodiment, the body incorporates these actions into their being. Spaces that deny gendered and racialized bodies integral aspects of their being can create conflicts of "how to exist." Thus, a body will experience excorporation: the denial of a certain embodiment. Excorporation, the estrangement from self, may occur when a body must take on a script that counters their identity. In the workplace, if expectations of performance misalign with a body's social identities, they must deny part of their personal identity in order to be successful at work. By making compromises with themselves, they are not able to honor their social identities fully and, therefore, are unable to exist

---

[84] Ibid., 76.
[85] Ibid., 71.

holistically. Because workplace norms privilege white, male performance over other social identities, success in the workplace becomes a violent process of self-estrangement.

Thinking about how bodies perform their social identities is vital to understanding how workplaces function. There are particular expectation based on social identities applied to how bodies should act and what spaces they should inhabit. The body is both an object, analyzed by others, and a subject of its own reality. Furthermore, historical and cultural contexts are mapped onto bodies based on their physical characteristics. Butler argues that this limits how bodies can exist in spaces, changing based on context. Bodies ritualize their actions, developing a *body schema* that is performed subconsciously. From birth, the *body schema* is crafted through those around the body. This can also be thought of as being "in line." When a body becomes so ritualized, this way of being in the world becomes part of the body's identity, or the *habitus*, which influences and is influenced by its social field. Zeiler argues that a body's habits become incorporated into their way of seeing the world. When this is challenged, it can result in excorporation, in which there is a rupture in identity. This rupture is violent because it forces bodies to deny aspects of who they are in order to conform to social norms.

Social identities, such as gender and race, impact what a consciousness sees as normal for their body to perform. When this is interrupted, the body's identity can become disoriented and fractured. This is important to keep in mind when speaking about diverse workplaces. Bodies maintain the *habitus* based on peer expectations and this *habitus* is challenged when someone who performs a certain role is placed in a "professional" role that does not fit the norms they embody. Social fields are powerful in shaping sense of self. In the next chapter, I will examine the construction of the workplace as a social field and how that interacts with particular bodies.

Chapter 3: Workplace Construction

Workplaces function according to accepted norms among individuals within broader institutions. While workplace expectations are supposed to apply to all workers evenly, in reality, they prioritize specific bodies and their identity performances over others. I will examine this contradiction throughout this chapter. Norms of behavior can be thought of as scripts, or performance expectations, workers follow. Scripts allow for workers who enact them to navigate workplaces with ease. I will look at the work of Dennis Gioia and Peter Poole to examine how workplace scripts function. Then, I will turn to Frans Bévort and Roy Suddaby's work to explore the relationship between workplace scripts and institutions. Bévort and Suddaby explain that institutional norms are seen as separate from individuals within a workplace. This creates the illusion that institutions determine fair practices without interference from individual biases. I will, then, bring in Nirmal Puwar's argument that workplaces are, in fact, designed for particular bodies and their expected performances of those bodies to succeed. She argues that despite workers being seen as identity-less and disembodied beings, social identities inscribe how people navigate spaces. Puwar argues that roles within the workplace are crafted for performance expectations based on white, male bodies. This is reflected in expectations for "professionalism," making it difficult for bodies with gendered and racialized social identities outside of a white, male identity to fully achieve success in an institution. Additionally, I will use Michàlle Mor-Barak and Sara Ahmed to explain how bodies outside of this norm as seen as "diverse" or "other" and the implications of this inherently exclusive construction in the workplace. I conclude with an overall explanation of how workplaces are constructed in order to examine why this is an issue of justice.

Dennis Gioia and Peter Poole describe how scripts show up in organizational behavior. They write, "A script is a schema held in memory that describes events or behaviors (or sequences of events or behaviors) appropriate for a particular context."[86] This can be understood as "knowing the ropes" or knowing how to navigate a given situation.[87] Scripts are similar to the *habitus*, the ritualized nature of behavior that becomes part of the self, in that a body takes on behaviors to perform a particular norm in a routine way based on a social field. These scripts, therefore, can become part of the subconscious "just what we do." Specifically in professional organizations, Gioia and Poole state that scripted behaviors must be upheld in order to succeed in a particular environment. In the workplace social field, the rules of the institution determine its scripts.[88] When a worker adopts an organizational-based script, those behaviors are positively reinforced by their coworkers and allow the worker to be accepted. In the long-run, taking on an organization-based script will allow a worker to gain influence and success within a workplace or institution as a whole. While the *habitus* of a body adapts how they behave in the world based on social environments, scripts are more prescribed and rigid. Similar to the *habitus,* which is both formed and formative at the same time,[89] scripts call for bodies to adapt their behavior to play their given role, such as a manager or sales person, and they change and are reconstituted overtime based on what bodies perform them. Gioia and Poole argue that scripts benefit people in that they provide a guide to understanding situations.[90] Similar to the habitual, subconscious

---

[86] Dennis Gioia and Peter Poole, "Scripts in Organizational Behavior," *Academy of Management Review* 9, 3 (1984): 450.

[87] Ibid.

[88] Ibid., 454.

[89] Butler, "Performativity's Social Magic," 116.

[90] Ibid., 450.

nature of the *habitus*, "scripts are considered to be held in memory in prototypical fashion."[91]

This means that people develop a baseline script of how to respond and then compare future, unfamiliar situations on that basic script in order to respond appropriately.[92] A body can adopt scripts directly and indirectly. Gioia and Poole write, "Direct script acquisition includes interaction experiences with other people, events or situations. This experience tends to initiate a script development process."[93] By repeating this experience, the script becomes stronger. For example, a manager may require certain patterns and forms of communication from their workers. As the manager reinforces these patterns with praise and feedback, workers adopt standards for how they communicate at work. Indirect script acquisition, on the other hand, happens through reading about or watching behaviors second hand.[94] This can happen through reading books about "professionalism," watching training videos, or modeling one's behavior off their superiors, such as their manager. For example, if all middle and top management positions in an organization are only white men, then workers learn to model their behavior and fit themselves into a mold of white male "professionalism" in order to succeed at work. Rather than experiencing a situation through trial and error, indirect script acquisition happens from studying appropriate workplace behaviors. These scripts construct standards of "professionalism" and workplace etiquette.

Frans Bévort and Roy Suddaby argue that not enough attention is paid to how these organizational scripts align with or contradict individual identity.[95] In Gioia and Poole's analysis,

---

[91] Ibid.

[92] Ibid.

[93] Gioia et al., "Scripts in Organizational Behavior," 451.

[94] Ibid.

[95] Frans Bévort and Roy Suddaby, "Scripting Professional Identities: How Individuals Make Sense of Contradictory Institutional Logics," *Journal of Professions & Organization* 3, 1 (2016): 18.

they state that scripts exist as a guide for workplace behavior but they fail to address how individual perspectives and experiences influence playing a role. Bévort and Suddaby look at how personal identity scripts, referring to how bodies perform their social identity through embodying their race, gender, etc., resolve tensions with institutional scripts of behavior.[96] By looking at how institutional patterns and individual actors relate to one another, Bévort and Suddaby state that "institutions are inherently phenomenological constructs. That is, they only exist to the degree that a community of actors adopt a unified set of beliefs and routinely behave in accordance with those beliefs."[97] Therefore, all members of an organization agree to a script that they all perform. It is not that they sit down and craft the script together, but they all abide by the same norms, socially reinforcing them if someone goes off script. These expectations are determined by those with more privilege within the organization, both in terms of social identity and organizational rank, and become so normalized that they are seen outside of the individuals who are part of the organizations. So, while members of the organization agree to perform organizational scripts, they do this through socialization rather than critical engagement. As these behaviors are objectified, institutions seem to take on their own identity apart from members of the institution, making it difficult to challenge its norms. Many people no longer see institutions as being "inhabited" by individuals.[98] Bévort and Suddaby explain, "Scripts are introduced, maintained and developed in a sequence of what we fundamentally see as a sensemaking process."[99] By sensemaking, Bévort and Suddaby mean the ways individuals add meaning to scripted actions. This can go a step further in which individuals derive personal

---

[96] Ibid.
[97] Ibid., 18-9.
[98] Ibid., 19.
[99] Ibid., 21.

meaning from the script.[100] By using scripts to analyze the individual-level of institutional processes, we can look at micro-level interactions.[101] What Bévort and Suddaby find is that "the constructed institutional logics…offer little space for individual agency in processes of institutional maintenance, creation or change."[102] This means individuals must adhere to institutional scripts to be accepted and impactful at work. This becomes problematic when scripts and workplace roles come into conflict with individual performance because institutional scripts are designed for some bodies and not others.

Puwar argues that workspaces are constructed for particular bodies and performances. She writes that while women and people of color can formally occupy positions that they were excluded from historically, "social spaces are not blank and open for any body to occupy."[103] This means, according to Puwar, that "some bodies are deemed as having the right to belong, while others are marked out as trespassers, who are, in accordance with how both spaces and bodies are imagined (politically, historically and conceptually), circumscribed as being 'out of place.'"[104] Specifically, Puwar argues that the somatic, or bodily, norm for workspaces is a white, male body.[105.] This means that many job positions are constructed to be filled by bodies that hold white, male characteristics. For example, in a standard office space, white men are expected to hold positions of power, such as manager or CEO, while white women hold clerical or administrative positions and people of color hold maintenance or janitorial positions.

---

[100] Ibid.

[101] Ibid.

[102] Ibid., 33.

[103] Nirmal Puwar, *Space Invaders: Race, Gender and Bodies Out of Place* (Oxford : New York : Berg, 2004), 8.

[104] Ibid., 8.

[105] Ibid., 33. For more about how white and male bodies dominate spaces, read Charles Mills, *The Racial Contract* (Ithaca : Cornell University Press, 1997) and Carole Pateman, *The Sexual Contract* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1988).

Therefore, when a body that is not white and male fills a position that a white male body traditionally holds, they are seen as a 'space invader.'[106]

In a contemporary United States context, "professionalism" can be thought of as being proficient at particular skills and a perception. Someone, for example, can be thought of as "professional" due to how they dress, the way they speak, and how they interact with colleagues. These characteristics, however, are modeled from white male behavior norms and performance. As Puwar argues, when diverse bodies enter into positions outside of where they are traditionally expected to be, there is dissonance. Despite being able to incorporate certain types of the "professionalism" scripts into their behavior, such as tying hair back or speaking formal English without using "up-talk," women and people of color must forgo personal freedoms in order to fit this performance. For example, a woman must be appealing but not slutty, she must be able to hold her own to men but only if she is feminine because being genderqueer or masculine presenting carries a different set of expectations. This means that even if a woman or person of color follows a script of "professionalism" well, they still will not be fully successful because they inhabit racialized and gendered bodies and must perform in a nuanced space between their own identity and that of white men.

Puwar references Henri Lefebvre's conception of space. She writes that "Lefebvre has famously noted that it is by means of the body that space is perceived, lived and produced. The proxemics of bodies and space means that 'each living body *is* space and *has* its space: it produces itself in space and is also produces that space'... Bodies do not simply move through spaces but constitute and are constituted by them."[107] In Lefebvre's construction of space, as

---

[106] Ibid., 8.
[107] Ibid., 32.

white male standards of interaction have historically constituted positions of influence, those positions are expected to be filled by white male bodies and performances. Puwar writes that although some of the formal barriers to holding such positions are gone, "subtle means of inclusion/exclusion continue to informally operate through the designation of the somatic norm."[108] In this view, positions have gendered and racialized norms implicit in them.[109] When a racialized or gendered body acts out workplace norms, there is a mismatch. Racialized and gendered bodies perform their social identities differently from white men. Because of this, they are perceived as playing a role for which they are not meant.

"Professionalism," therefore, is a performative practice. Bodies perform given scripts and norms of behavior in order to be seen as "professional," such as wearing a suit jacket, giving a strong handshake, or sending "thank you" notes following a meeting. Puwar states that "embedded in the ethics of "professionalism" is the notion that they are driven by principles of fairness and meritocratic judgement. That these universal standards could be premised on very specific, historically located, corporealities is a complete anathema."[110] This relies on a universal figure. Puwar argues that the "universal figure is disembodied; the body is irrelevant to this positionality. Being pure mind, their bodies are of no consequence."[111] Puwar builds on Donna Haraway in this idea. Haraway argues:

> The embodied nature of all vision and so reclaim the sensory system that has been used to signify a leap out of the marked body and into a conquering gaze of nowhere. This is the gaze that mythically inscribes all the marked bodies, that makes the unmarked category

---

[108] Puwar, *Space Invaders*, 33.
[109] Ibid.
[110] Ibid., 132.
[111] Ibid., 57.

claim the power to see and not be seen, to represent while escaping representation. This gaze signifies the unmarked position of Man and White.[112]

This means that bodies inscribed with gendered or racialized characteristics are seen and identified consistently in such a way that allows "unmarked" bodies maintain their dominance. She goes on to argue that we consider white and male characteristics to be "unmarked." Haraway expands, "Only those occupying the position of the dominators are self-identical, unmarked, disembodied, unmediated, transcendent, born again. It is unfortunately possibly for the subjugated to lust for and even scramble into that subject position—and then disappear from view."[113] Dominant bodies, then, have the ability to move through positions of power unnoticed because they are not amplified through gendered or racialized characteristics outside of white maleness. This allows them to seem universal or neutral figures. So, when "professionalism" is performed, it is modeled from characteristics of the universal figure, or general worker, who is assumed to have a white, male body. This means that it feels the most natural for white, men to be "professional" and fill jobs or positions associated with power. Women and people of color deviate from the universal figure because they perform and embody gendered and/or racialized characteristics and scripts of performance. Therefore, by being a gendered or racialized body, women and people of color deviate from standards of "professionalism."[114] This creates a hurdle for women and people of color to fully perform "professionalism." Their ways of being in the world can be challenged by scripts of "professionalism." When institutions demand that all bodies embody specific norms, this can force women and people of color to deny parts of their

---

[112] Donna Haraway, "Situated Knowledges: The Science Question in Feminism and the Privilege of Partial Perspective," *Feminist Studies* 14, 3 (1998): 581.

[113] Ibid., 586-7.

[114] Puwar, *Space Invaders,* 132.

social identity performance in order to reach moderate success. By deciding to compromise personal performance representation for "professionalism", as Zeiler points out, a subject can experience excorporation, a rupture in identity, when a racialized or gendered body is contradicted by demands or expectation of a given social field.[115] If a diverse body performs "professionalism," a script developed by and for white male bodies to perform, they inhabit a performance that does not express their true self. This dissonance can lead to estrangement from their identity and cause excorporation.

When dissonant bodies hold such positions, Puwar argues they are disoriented and amplified by others. Bodies are historically and socially conditioned in a white supremacist society in which white bodies maintain dominance over bodies of color. Therefore, Puwar asserts, "When racialised figures walk into historically white spaces as figures of authority, they generate unease. The boundaries that have contributed to a privileged sense of whiteness are jarred."[116] This disorients those members of the somatic norm because it reconstitutes boundaries of power. White bodies are taught that they are to control and lead bodies of color, so when this relationship is challenged, white bodies become uncomfortable and attempt in reclaim their power over bodies of color by enforcing social norms that hold white bodies in formal and informal leadership. Purwar explains that there is unease that dissonant bodies will "displace the security from which the white figure of authority (usually he, but sometimes she) has spoken."[117] Their actions are ascribed threatening characteristics and amplified by those who fit the somatic norm from fear of losing power.[118] Puwar summarizes, "As 'space invaders' they represent a

---

[115] Zeiler, "A Phenomenology of Excorporation, Bodily Alienation, and Resistance," 76.
[116] Puwar, *Space Invaters,* 42.
[117] Ibid., 52.
[118] Ibid., 53.

potential organizational terror. They are thus highly visible bodies that by their mere presence invite suspicion and surveillance."[119] Racialized and gendered bodies are created as "other" to the universal form that workplaces and "professionalism" expect in their performative.

Michàlle Mor-Barak emphasizes how "diversity" in the context of workplaces usually refers to an "other." She writes, "Diversity *is* about belonging to groups that are visibly or invisibly different from whatever is considered 'mainstream' in society. In short, it is about being susceptible to employment consequences as a result of one's associating within and outside certain social groups."[120] Being labeled as "diverse" or "other" in comparison to the mainstream workplace culture often results in exclusion. Mor-Barak interviewed employees of a tech company in Southern California. She spoke to both men and women across different levels of the organization. From this research, she concluded that most employees who were women or from racial or ethnic minority backgrounds "felt left out of social informational networks and barred from the organization's decision-making process."[121] This reflects what Mor-Barak calls "inclusion-exclusion in the workplace."[122] She defines this as "the individual's sense of being a part of the organizational system in both the formal processes, such as access to information and decision-making channels, and the informal processes, such as 'water cooler' and lunch meetings where information and decisions informally take place."[123] Social exclusion is, therefore, a key reason that people of diverse backgrounds experience a lack of opportunities and discontent

---

[119] Ibid., 54.

[120] Michàlle Mor-Barak, *Managing Diversity: Toward a Globally Inclusive Workplace* (Los Angeles : SAGE, 2011), 131.

[121] Ibid., 165.

[122] Ibid., 166.

[123] Ibid.

within their organizations.[124] Many promotions and opportunities come from a personal connection. If people of diverse backgrounds are socially excluded from workplace culture, they are not tapped for career boosting opportunities that a more normative member of the workplace would be. For Mor-Barak, the goal for organizations is to eliminate this divide so that all employees have equal access to information, opportunities, and decision-making processes.

Sara Ahmed flushes out Mor-Barak's construction of people from diverse backgrounds as "other" and how that is reflected in the workplace. Ahmed specifically analyzes diversity work within higher educational institutions. Ahmed names a value in diversity, but claims that institutions relegate certain bodies as the norm and certain bodies as other.[125] This creates a situation in which "diverse" bodies will always be seen as "other," thus inhibiting their full inclusion. Ahmed argues that this view of diversity upholds institutional whiteness. By institutional whiteness, she means holding dominant societal norms that favor white bodies central to an institution.[126] She writes, "The very idea that diversity is about those who 'look different' shows us how it can keep whiteness in place."[127] Because whiteness is the standard that informs the construction of an organization, bodies that do not fit into whiteness must adapt to inhabit whiteness in order to succeed.[128] Institutional racism is a complementary concept that strives to uphold the dominant white standard through discrimination against those who do not inhabit whiteness. Ahmed explains that racist attitudes are symptoms of systemic power relations and inequality.[129] She argues that within an organization "racism should not be seen as about

---

[124] Ibid., 6.
[125] Ahmed, *On Being Included*, 3.
[126] Ibid., 35.
[127] Ibid., 33.
[128] Ibid., 41.
[129] Ibid., 44.

individuals with bad attitudes (the 'bad apple model'), not because such individuals with bad attitudes (they do) but because such a way of thinking underestimates the scope and scale of racism, thus leaving us without an account of how racism *gets reproduced.*"[130] Diversity and inclusion efforts are often seen as one person or office's job but the power dynamics that create exclusion and discrimination at work pervade all workers through their socialization. It is vital to introduce and enforce workplace policies and practices that shift interpersonal and institutional norms to be more inclusive and combat institutional racism and sexism in order for all workers to thrive.

Building on the idea of creating change on the institutional level, Ahmed warns that diversity can become habitual when it is institutionalized. She argues, "When things become institutional, they recede. To institutionalize x is for x to become routine or ordinary such that x becomes part of the background for those who are part of an institution."[131] The danger of this is that if diversity efforts recede, the systemic oppression within an institution continues unchecked. This begs the question, how can workplaces be changed in an effective way that does not become habitual, thus remaining active?

Part of its habitual nature when diversity becomes institutionalized is that the presence of diversity work can act as a justification for not doing more.[132] Ahmed explains this idea as commitments to diversity as non-performative. Ahmed builds on Bourdieu and Butler's ideas of performative speech acts and establishes the idea of non-performatives. For Ahmed, "Non-performatives describe the 'reiterative and citational practice by discourse' [that] *does not produce* 'the effects that it names' (Butler 1993: 2). In the world of the non-performative, to

---

[130] Ibid.
[131] Ibid., 21.
[132] Ibid., 53.

name is not to bring into effect."[133] This means that just because something is said does not mean

that it comes into being. Ahmed uses the example of institutions saying they value diversity.

When an institution says this but does not implement practices that reflect this value, that

proclamation is non-performative.[134] For example, an organization could require that workers

attend a workshop about racism, claiming that they value diversity, but not implement

enforcement mechanisms to ensure that workers continuously confront and push against racism

in their workplace interactions and responsibilities. Ahmed writes, "What is created by the

description of the university as diverse might be the very idea of a university as being diverse,

which as an idea then circulates within the community that is being described."[135] This leaves

diversity only in the conceptual, meaning that the steps necessary to include diverse bodies never

happen. Alternatively, Ahmed argues, "To be seen as 'being diverse' can be a way of 'not doing

diversity,' because the organization says it 'is it,' or that it already 'does it,' which means that it

sees there is nothing left to do."[136] Saying that an institution is diverse implies that the job of

dismantling institutional whiteness and institutional racism is complete. This negligibly

reproduces the very things that diversity work tries to combat. If an institution is fundamentally

white supremacist, which most are, it will never be able to be fully eradicate those power

dynamics within its organization. In order for organizations to embrace diversity and inclusivity,

they must constantly undo the unequal power dynamics at play as white supremacy and

domination continuously reform to fit new fields and contexts. Therefore, all members and

---

[133] Ibid., 117.
[134] Ibid., 116-7.
[135] Ibid., 56.
[136] Ibid., 76.

practices of an organization must work to dismantle such forces in order to reach a more inclusive and diverse environment for workers.

Those who argue against seeing difference between bodies argue that "most modern democracies are equal under the law and have access to a uniform set of rights and privileged"[137] so there is no need to differentiate between social identities. Pushkala Prasad, Alison Konrad, and Judith Pringle argue, however, that:

> Color blindness overlooks the powerful cultural and economic legacy that centuries of exploitation and discrimination leave for historically disadvantaged groups. Entire epochs of slavery, patriarchy and colonialism have resulted in some social identity groups lacking the skills, confidence and institutional support to enter into and advance within work organizations. At the same time, they have also left us with a collection of adverse stereotypes toward [marginalized groups] that prevent their full inclusion into the workplace.[138]

This means that when an institution takes a "colorblind" approach, they attempt to erase the external historical and social factors at play in a workplace. Workers do not come to the workplace as blank slates so it is important to understand all factors and dynamics at play. I argue that by addressing the various ways bodies exist and navigate space, it is possible to create a more holistic work environment. White supremacy and domination pervade most institutions and reconstitute themselves over time. In order to combat such a system, all workers within an organization must dismantle these forces within themselves and within institutional practices. As Puwar, Mor-Barak, and Ahmed note, workplaces are created for particular bodies to succeed. Performing "professionalism" scripts are integral for success in the workplace but this script can be only fully successful when performed by the universal form, a perceived genderless and

---

[137] Pushkala Prasad, Alison Konrad, and Judith Pringle, "Examining the Contours of Workplace Diversity: Concepts, Contexts and Challenges," in *Handbook of Workplace Diversity*, ed. Alison Konrad, Pushkala Prasad, and Judith Pringle (Lund University, SAGE Publications, 2006), 8.

[138] Ibid., 8-9.

raceless worker who is coded white and male. Even if diverse bodies are able to perform institutional scripts well, they still will be perceived as "other" than a white male worker. Because workplace practices seem external to individuals who navigate institutions, these norms seem given, universal, and fair. Despite efforts made to apprehend discriminatory practices, the very workplace construction privileges some bodies over others. A just workplace is one in which all bodies are able to exist fully and perform their unique identities without contorting themselves into predetermined "professionalism" scripts. In order to create an inclusive and equitable workplace, diverse viewpoints and experiences must be represented and valued within decision-making practices and workplace culture. As workplaces currently operate, however, such an environment does not exist.

Chapter 4: The Urban Scholars Program as an Intervention

As argued in the previous chapter, workplaces are currently constructed in an unjust way. They privilege some bodies over others, creating an uneven playing field for success in the workplace. The Urban Scholars Program challenges how workplaces are currently constructed by creating pathways for students of diverse racial and ethnic backgrounds to enter the public sector in the Twin Cities. During the summers of 2015 and 2016, I participated in this program as an Urban Scholar in the Minneapolis Public Schools and the City of Minneapolis, respectively. I chose to engage in this program to gain a stronger sense of how racial equity can be applied to my work and use what I learned to navigate anti-racist work in a more respectful and productive way. From this experience, I decided to focus my thesis research on the Urban Scholars Program in hopes to imagine how these efforts could be extended and evolved going forward. Over the course of the summer of 2016, I conducted 17 interviews with current first year, current returning, and past Urban Scholars; past and present directors and program assistants of the program; and professionals working on racial equity work in the Twin Cities. My positionality as a white, queer, Jewish, middle-class woman most likely influenced the results of these interviews. While I did my best to construct unbiased questions and facilitate a neutral space, being a white person talking with interviewees who were predominantly of color could have influenced how their responses. I truly appreciate the time and effort that interviewees took to engage with me because their insights were invaluable in this process. From these conversations, it became apparent that this program is highly respected and deeply impactful to all involved with it. The efforts made over the years to continuously improve and adapt the program have resulted in an ever-refining program that aims to create strong pathways for young people from

diverse racial and ethnic backgrounds to influence the public sector in the Twin Cities. I write this analysis from a place of deep respect and admiration for this program and want to recognize the energy and persistence poured into this program thus far.

From this program, we can investigate both the benefits and limitations to advancing equity within the current construction of workplaces. By exploring and evaluating the Urban Scholars Program, I will analyze the effective elements of the program while also considering the ways in which it falls short in terms of creating equitable workplaces. I will first look at how the Urban Scholars Program came about. Next, I will examine the impacts the program on diversity and inclusion in public sector workplaces. I will then evaluate the possibilities for growth that I see in the program. Finally, I will theorize about the kind of workplace these efforts could create in the future and if that workplace could be just.

Inception of the Urban Scholars Program

The Urban Scholars Program is a twelve week "leadership and professional development internship program providing students from diverse racial and ethnic backgrounds with distinctive professional experience"[139] run by the Civil Rights Department of the City of Minneapolis. This program places undergraduate and graduate students from diverse backgrounds in meaningful work experiences at seven public sector organizations across the Twin Cities.[140] Scholars split their time between 32 hours in an internship placement and 8 hours

---

[139] City of Minneapolis, *Urban Scholars*.   http://www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/civilrights/urbanscholars/index.htm (accessed January 9, 2017).

[140] The Urban Scholars Program partners with the following public sector organizations. While ever growing, the following are partners as of May 2016: City of Minneapolis, Metropolitan Council, State of Minnesota, Twin Cities United Way, Hennepin County, Minneapolis Public Schools, and Minneapolis Parks and Recreation.

in the Urban Scholars Leadership Institute (USLI).[141] The program tries to bring together professional experience and personal growth. Cassidy Gardenier, current Director of the Urban Scholars Program, explained, "On an individual basis, it's how do you define your identity? How do you define your authentic self and your authentic leadership style? And then how do you show up in the workplace? Meanwhile, having an environment in which you can test that out, experiential learning, if you will."[142] This conversation between professional learning and experience allows for a new kind of job preparation.

The program came about following a 2010 *Economic Policy Institute* report by Algernon Austin.[143] It found that the largest employment disparity between African American and white people in a metropolitan area nationally existed in the Twin Cities—the African American unemployment rate (20.4%) was three times larger than the white unemployment rate (6.6%).[144] At the time of the report, Minneapolis was nearly 64% white and 18.6% black or African American, making this disparity even more stark.[145] Austin identified four main reasons for the disparity. The first was the achievement gap for both high school and college graduation.[146] This meant that white high school and college students in the Twin Cities were graduating at a higher rate than African American students. The second reason was the relatively young age of the

---

[141] USLI consists of leadership development through the Wilder Foundation, known for their Shannon Leadership programming; professional development through the Urban Scholars team and the Metropolitan State University's Institute for Professional Development; and public speaking training through Toastmasters International. In some years, there has also been a project management or group project component.

[142] Gardenier, August 2, 2016.

[143] For the full report, visit: Algernon Austin, "Uneven Pain—Unemployment by Metropolitan Area and Race," *Economic Policy Institute*. June 8, 2010, http://www.epi.org/publication/ib278/ (accessed March 19, 2017).

[144] Aaron Brink-Johnson, interviewed by author, July 11, 2016; Gardenier, August 2, 2016; Korbel, June 28, 2016; Karen Francois, interviewed by author, August 2, 2016.

[145] Minneapolis is also 10.5% Latinx, 5.6% Asian, and 2% Native American. There are large racial disparities in terms of population. For full data, see: "Minneapolis Population Estimates," *U.S. Census Bureau*. July 1, 2015, www.census.gov/quickfacts/table/PST045215/2743000 (accessed March 19, 2017).

[146] Gardenier, August 2, 2016.

African American workforce. This meant that professionals of color were entering into the workforce with less experience than white professionals.[147] In the Twin Cities, millennials make up the largest demographic of workers, now surpassing Baby Boomers.[148] As the Baby Boomers retire, many top level jobs will be vacant and, because of this age discrepancy, it may be difficult to fill these positions.[149] The third reason was a lack of the same professional networks in relation to their white counterparts.[150] This meant that white professionals had much more established professional connections. Building on relative age of the workforce, white people in the Twin Cities held more positions of leadership in the public sector so there were higher chances that young white professionals would gain access to jobs than their African American counterparts. The final reason was hiring bias,[151] in other words, discrimination and implicit prejudice in hiring decisions. The Urban Scholars Program arose as a response to this disparity and to create pathways for students from diverse racial and ethnic backgrounds into the public sector.

Karen Francois, former Civil Rights Department Employment Equity Division Director, founded the Urban Scholars Program in the summer of 2012.[152] Francois reflected, "I wanted to start a program that would position young student, college students from diverse racial and ethnic backgrounds to become influencers."[153] Francois worked with Civil Rights Department

---

[147] Brink-Johnson, July 11, 2016

[148] The Millennial Generation is comprised of those born between 1981 and 1998 and the Baby Boomer Generation consisted of those born between 1946 and 1965. For more information about this demographic shift, see: Richard Fry, "Millennials Overtake Baby Boomers as America's Largest Generation," *Pew Research Center*. April 25, 2016, http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2016/04/25/millennials-overtake-baby-boomers/ (accessed March 19, 2017).

[149] Gardenier, August 2, 2016.

[150] Ibid.

[151] Brink-Johnson, July 11, 2016.

[152] Francois, August 2, 2016.

[153] Ibid.

Director Velma Korbel, representatives from other City departments, and Minneapolis Community Technical College to design the professional development components, adding in leadership development with the Wilder Foundation the second summer. In the first year of the program, there were eight Scholars. The program grew each year, with 17 Scholars in 2013, 36 Scholars in 2014, 58 Scholars in 2015, and 75 Scholars in 2016. This coming summer, 2017, the program is projected to have 200 Scholars.[154]

The Urban Scholars Program tries to advance diversity in the public sector. The founder of the program sees those who go through Urban Scholars as the future leaders of the State and even the country.[155] Gardenier, the current director, explained, "Ultimately, the goal of our program is to equip students so that they are able to get jobs, hopefully good paying jobs, and eventually seeing themselves in leadership."[156] To address the reasons for employment disparities raised by Austin, the program creates opportunities for meaningful work experience to address the young age of the workforce, facilitates an environment for networking among Scholars and with top leadership in the public sector, and provides premier leadership and professional development for Urban Scholars.[157]

The goals of the Urban Scholars Program have changed over time. Initially, the main focus of this program was to increase numerical diversity and address hiring bias in the City of Minneapolis. An interviewee noted, "In its inception, it really was about putting highly qualified people of color in the faces of the department heads and everyone else, saying here's a person of

---

[154] Brink-Johnson, July 11, 2016.
[155] Francois, August 2, 2016.
[156] Gardenier, August 2, 2016.
[157] Ibid.

color who is extremely qualified for the job."[158] Members of the City claimed that there were not qualified candidates of color to hire into open positions and that was why the disparities in the Twin Cities persisted. In response, the Urban Scholars Program brought highly qualified students of color into the City to shift these attitudes.[159] Along with increasing the number of people of color entering the public sector, there was a heavy focus on professional development, such as how to dress appropriately in a workplace and honing "professionalism" scripts based on workplace norms. Another interviewee explained that the focus was really to get people of color employed, not to raise issues of racism or diversity in their placements. The shift toward leadership development and professional development that prepares Scholars not only to enter into the current workplace culture but also to utilize a racial equity lens at work happened more recently and is still developing.[160]

Urban Scholars Program Impacts

As the Urban Scholars Program has grown and changed, it continues to succeed at advancing diversity in the public sector, exposing participants to how the system works, and empowering Scholars to dream big. From its inception, the Urban Scholars Program has been successful in getting people of color and people from diverse backgrounds into the workforce. Out of the Scholars placed with the City of Minneapolis in the past five years, approximately 33% go on to gain full-time or part-time employment with the City.[161] This is miles ahead of national programs

---

[158] Anonymous interview A, interviewed by author.
[159] Ibid.
[160] Anonymous interview B, interviewed by author.
[161] Gardenier, August 2, 2016.

that tend to hire about 7% of their interns.[162] In addition to hiring people, interviews with Urban

Scholars from the 2015 and 2016 cohorts show three main successes of the program. Scholars

gained a better understanding of the system, developed a racial equity lens, and pursued

additional opportunities from their experience in the program.

Due to the Urban Scholars Program, Scholars gained a better understanding of how "the

system" functioned and how to make an impact in the public sector. One Scholar reflected that

they learned how to "break [how the City works] down…is a huge piece of it…A lot of people

are having a hard time with the system. So, why would you work for something that you don't

agree with? But, I truly believe that you have to work within to dismantle it. That's the only way

that it's going to happen."[163] Scholars' participation in the program allowed for them to be

critical of the system and empowered them to change it from the inside. Jazmine Logan, a 2015

and 2016 Urban Scholar who worked in the City of Minneapolis' Neighborhood and Community

Relations Department, said that she did not have a clear idea of who was representing her in the

City before she worked there. She learned that the racial equity work in her department was

siloed and in learning that she knew how to better approach it. She revealed, "At first when I

came in, I was like 'Why is this taking so much time?' We could just hire people, we can train

people. And, you kind of realize the process. I think I have a lot more respect for that now. Even

though it still can be frustrating, I think I get what's happening now a little more."[164] For Logan,

it was helpful to see how things functioned in order to be understanding of the process. This

allowed her to more intentionally engage around issues that she was passionate about rather than

spending her time caught up in the inefficiency.

---

[162] Ibid.

[163] Anonymous interview A.

[164] Jazmine Logan, interviewed by author, July 18, 2016.

The second theme was that Scholars developed a racial equity lens for their work. A racial equity lens can be thought of as a template used to ensure that decisions, events, and processes are done in an equitable way. For example, asking if the impacts a process would have a disproportionally negative effect on communities of color. Gardenier believes that everyone should do their work with a racial equity lens in mind and that the Urban Scholars Program is an opportunity to instill this way of thinking in young people.[165] Many young people of color in the program, in comparison to young white people, already bring values and understanding of how public sector actions can disproportionately impact communities of color. Developing a set a skills of how to apply that knowledge, however, is something the Urban Scholars Program aims to develop. Gardenier said:

> This is a marathon not a sprint. I think that ultimately, yes, we want to hire folks, but more than that, we want the folks who come from our program to be culturally competent and, regardless of whether or not you are in accounting or IT or you're doing racial equity work with quotes…you should know how racial equity impacts your work and that bringing a racial equity lens is important across all fields…So, churning out students who have the ability to bring their voice is really important.[166]

This means that Scholars learn to think differently about how social identities, namely race, impacts their work and workplace from the program. As Gardenier pointed out, it does not matter what field Scholars go into because racial inequity pervades all fields. Iftou Yoya, a 2015 and 2016 Urban Scholar who worked in the City of Minneapolis' Civil Rights Department, saw this dimension of the program especially impactful. She shared that if someone did not study issues relating to race, even as a person of color, it is difficult to know how to bring racial equity

---

[165] Gardenier, August 2, 2016.
[166] Ibid.

into your work.[167] By engaging in conversations about racial equity in USLI and becoming more aware of how her workplace placement functioned culturally, she could better spot inequities. Additionally, Isa Kibira, a 2016 Urban Scholar who worked for the Minneapolis Parks and Recreation, noted that while he discussed racial equity in school, applying it to his internship helped him understand what racial equity work tangibly looks like. He reflected, "So, I am definitely growing in that this work is making me apply to [academic] concepts to real life situations."[168] Throughout the program, Urban Scholars developed a racial equity lens that creates the potential for change far beyond the end of the summer because it builds critical transferable skills.

The third theme, in the words of Director Korbel, is that the program "gives [Scholars] hope and the goals that they can be where they never have seen themselves before."[169] All Scholars interviewed noted that they felt more confident during or after their tenure as a Scholar. Ighedeosa Ogbeide, a 2016 Urban Scholar who worked in the City of Minneapolis' Human Resources Department, shared that since starting the Urban Scholars Program:

> I'm actually going for opportunities that I don't think I could do. Like, for an example, college. I want to be a psychiatrist. So, I have to go to med school and all of that. Now, there is a program called Minnesota Future Doctors…I looked at that and was like no, that can't be me. I can't be a part of that program. But now, after being in Urban Scholars, I realized strengths and weaknesses and how to cater to those, right? So, it's given me a lot of confidence to get the opportunities that are available to me.[170]

Being part of the program, engaging in meaningful work experience, and learning from USLI, Ogbeide branched out into other leadership opportunities that he did not think were for him. In

---

[167] Iftou Yoya, interviewed by author, July 22, 2016.

[168] Kibira, July 27, 2016.

[169] Korbel, June 28, 2016.

[170] Ighedesoa Ogbeide, interviewed by author, July 25, 2016.

sharing why she came back to the program for a second summer, Logan said, "I just felt like after doing the program last year…I was a lot more confident in a lot of different things. So, I started joining more student groups, I was on the board of more student groups. I think it was all because of Urban Scholars. It helped me develop more personally those leadership skills that I didn't think I had."[171] Logan, who on many occasions discussed her introverted leadership style, named her experience in the Urban Scholars Program as a main factor in her pursuing leadership roles beyond the program. Because of this confidence, she made an impact in her community with the skills she developed throughout the Urban Scholars Program. Finally, Kibira explained that he felt supported and inspired by those around him. He said:

> I feel confident enough already that I would succeed in one of those people's jobs that my bosses have. Which, I think before the Urban Scholars Program, I would have never even gotten the opportunity to demonstrate that I have enough skills not only to my colleges, but to myself which I think is interesting. So, yeah, giving me the opportunity to realize I can succeed at what I am doing. I think that that kind of confidence could stretch so far and I don't think you can even measure it. It's like now that I have the confidence, I believe that I could be a superintendent for the Park Board which I had never really thought of before.[172]

He named feeling confident enough to succeed in roles of his bosses and that is part of what the Urban Scholars Program tries to do. It aims to give students access to situations and leaders they would not otherwise be able to meet. The Urban Scholars Program wants future leaders of the Twin Cities to reflect the community it serves and that means empowering young students of color to set goals to attain those positions.

---

[171] Logan, July 18, 2016.
[172] Kibira, July 27, 2016.

Dissonant Results

If the goal of the Urban Scholars Program is to address the reasons for employment disparities in the Twin Cities, it is important to conceptualize the future workplace that this program would create. Will this program increase equity in the workplace? Based on the successes and gaps in that future workplace, I propose what is necessary to create an inclusive, just matured workplace. The program encourages individuals from diverse backgrounds to step into leadership roles within the Twin Cities public sector in hopes that they will open up pathways for others to attain positions in their organizations. The program focuses on Scholars building professional networks, engaging in leadership and professional development, and learning through meaningful work experiences to achieve this vision. The program focuses heavily on training racially and ethnically diverse people to enter and learn about cultures of predominantly white workplaces. The Urban Scholars Program currently faces two challenges that deter the creation of a more just workplace. First, Scholars received differing messages during USLI about how to behave at work. Furthermore, Scholars were placed in predominantly white, rigid workplaces and relied upon to make those spaces comfortable for themselves.

There is a rising dissonance between the professional and leadership development curriculum. USLI is split predominantly between learning about individual leadership and about professional skills. In the former, Scholars discuss leading with their values and their authentic selves. In the summer of 2016, this programming was administered by the Wilder Foundation and facilitated by two women of color. In these sessions, Scholars talked about their identities and how to interact across difference. The professional development workshops, conversely, were administered by white, upper-class women and focused heavily on professional skills.

These workshops ignored identity and the challenges diverse bodies will face in predominantly white workplaces. There was conflict between these two messages. One message was to "embrace your identity and experience fully in order to lead," while the other was to "embody these particular social norms and "professionalism" scripts instead of your identity." This contrasts promoting representation of unique perspectives, as Fraser would advocate for, with performing organizational norms. As Puwar notes, these expectations are modeled from white, male behavior and by training a group that is predominantly of color to adapt their behavior to that of white, men is a problem.

Kibira was hoping that Urban Scholars would be a more resistive space where he could learn about how to interrupt the white norm in workplaces, but found that some of the training was "colorblind."[173] This meant that it taught skills objectively without acknowledging that the skills stemmed from white cultural norms. He argued that the professional development component was taught a "cookie-cutter model of how to be a good employee. This is what you need to be like which is just wrong because it does not take into regard the community cultural wealth that youth of color bring to Urban Scholars."[174] The professional development, in his view, did not build upon the varying experiences and expertise within the room. Had the professional development done this, the Scholars could have develop a more holistic sense of how to be successful at work. Furthermore, teaching "colorblind" professional development also impacts the way that Scholars view and measure success as diverse individuals because it teaches "professionalism" scripts that privilege white, male experiences and ways of being in the world

---

[173] Kibira, July 27, 2016.
[174] Ibid.

as what they should live up to rather than measuring how they can uniquely thrive in and bring their important perspectives to a workplace.

Kibira also shared that there was a missed opportunity to be "intentional about educating youth of color on how to disrupt predominantly white spaces in the work environment."[175] In teaching professional development without nuance, the programming tried to socialize its participants into enacting "professionalism" scripts. This contradicted the leadership development component that emphasized expressing Scholars' authentic selves. These messages opposed each other such that Scholars had a difficult time figuring out which to listen to. Furthermore, the programming missed an important opportunity to teach Scholars how to take reflective knowledge about their identities and apply it to be successful in and to change future workplaces. In order to prepare Scholars for meaningful engagement and impact in their workplaces, the program needed to capitalize on both empowering Scholars to pursue leadership but also developing their ability to change their future workplaces.

The second opportunity for growth within the Urban Scholars Program framework is that Scholars are placed in predominantly white workplaces and enter them without the training to effectively shift them. This builds on the former point that not only are Scholars fed contradicting messages about how to show up at work and not getting adequate tools to disrupt oppressive situations they may encounter, but they are also entering into rigid, white spaces. One could argue that it is not the Urban Scholars Program's responsibility to help Scholars change their internship workplace. I would counter, however, that it is the program's responsibility to ensure that Scholars grow throughout the summer and part of that is feeling comfortable in the work placement where Scholars spend 32 hours a week. Scholars should not have to compromise

---

[175] Ibid.

existing as their full selves in order to enter into and be successful in the workplace. If the program places Scholars in predominantly white workplaces,[176] they must provide Scholars support and equip them with tools to adapt their workplace so they can succeed fully. Moreover, these tools are necessary to move beyond diversity to inclusivity and equity in the workplace.

Adrian Benjamin, a 2016 Urban Scholar working on the Government Affairs Team of Minnesota's Department of Commerce, reflected that he "was expecting this very dynamic workplace, very lively, very diverse in the workforce…and when I arrived, it was quite the opposite. [The people I work with] are of the same backgrounds, same age group. Very homogenous."[177] While it is important to expose Scholars to workplaces similar to those they may enter, there is also a level of shock involved going from an extremely diverse space at USLI to a predominantly white space four days a week. Benjamin said, though, that this made him think more about why the Urban Scholars Program was needed. Benjamin explained, "If it wasn't for the Urban Scholars, our place within these workplaces, they would be incredibly homogenous sites and that is detrimental not only to a site itself but also to a community of this state."[178] Benjamin saw some value in this exposure for the *workplaces*. By introducing diverse perspectives, the workplace begins to shift. In this set up, however, the push for change comes from the presence of a diverse body. This puts the labor and responsibility for shifting workplace culture on an undergraduate or graduate student of color. Not only is this a heavy burden to carry, it also disproportionately benefit a predominantly white space which, at its core, is

---

[176] Many of the workplaces across the public sector in the Twin Cities are predominantly white. While the lack of diversity in public sector workplaces is why Urban Scholars exists, it creates a potentially unwelcoming environment for people of color.

[177] Adrian Benjamin, interviewed by author, Minneapolis, July 13, 2016.

[178] Ibid.

exploitative. Therefore, the program needs to do a better job of working with the workplaces that host Urban Scholars so that workplaces are more receptive to the needs of Scholars.

Future Workplace Construction

Given the impacts and hurdles the Urban Scholars Program currently has, what does a future workplace look like as a result of this program? In a future construction of the workplace, a former Urban Scholar would be able to perform "professionalism" scripts well and use their values-based leadership to rise within public sector organizations. They would understand how the system functions and, therefore, know how to navigate it well. A former Urban Scholar would apply for and become involved in opportunities that they may not have thought of prior to the program. Through understanding their own identity and leadership style, they would attain high leadership positions, perhaps as the Mayor of Minneapolis or the Minneapolis Public Schools' Superintendent. Hopefully, as they attained positions of power, former Scholars would allow for other diverse bodies to enter their organizations with more ease than in the past, through making processes fairer.

Though in this future workplace model former Urban Scholars, and potentially other diverse bodies, attain leadership positions, the workplace construction would still prevent diverse bodies from succeeding in the same way white male bodies would. The leadership roles they may attain would still have the somatic norm of white male bodies, as Puwar would argue.[179] As discussed in Chapter 2, this means that no matter how well a body outside of that norm performs their role as a professional and as a leader, there will still be dissonance and doubt attached to their performance based on their diverse body.

[179] Puwar, *Space Invaders,* 8.

An additional concern that Zeiler brings up is that if diverse bodies take on "professionalism" scripts that contradict their social identity performance, they can experience excorporation, the fracturing of identity when personal identity and script performance contradict.[180] By taking on "professionalism" scripts without nuance for so long, diverse bodies can become alienated from themselves. By simply performing "professionalism" scripts without consideration of personal identity, Scholars would potentially experience self-alienation because they would be taking on a script that subtly erases their diverse identities.[181] As discussed in Chapter 2, "professionalism" is seen as a white, male performance. This means that even if diverse bodies follow "professionalism" scripts well, they deny parts of their racialized and/or gendered performance, or expression of identity, in the process.[182] Professional success should not come at the expense of this type of internal turmoil. It is important, then, to conceptualize professional roles and workplace constructions that allow for holistic experiences at work for all bodies.

The Urban Scholars Program, if it were to continue as is, would create more access to jobs and positions of power for those who may not otherwise have access. The program alone, however, is not enough to create a truly just and equitable workplace. Joy Marsh Stephens, Manager of Equity and Inclusion for the City of Minneapolis, argued that to have equity you have to change the way that you do business.[183] So, while the Urban Scholars Program may be able to make the public sector more *diverse*, that is different from equity. She explained, "You can have 64 crayons in a box, but you use them all and they all write the same color because

---

[180] Zeiler. "A Phenomenology of Excorporation, Bodily Alienation, and Resistance."
[181] Ibid.
[182] Puwar, *Space Invaders*.
[183] Joy Marsh Stephens, interviewed by author, August 1, 2016.

environmentally you're in the same [place]…You're just basically bringing people in to, hopefully, socialize them to operate the construct under which you've built that organization to do [and] to get the same outcomes you've always gotten."[184] By teaching rigid "professionalism" scripts, the Urban Scholars Program taught its participants how to operate within the organizations as they were. While it is important to give students from diverse racial and ethnic backgrounds the tools to enter the current workplace, the end goal must be to change the actual workplace environment so that diverse bodies do not need to learn another way of being in the world to be successful. The future workplace that this program creates does set Urban Scholars to gain leadership roles, but the program only provides Scholars with the training to write in a similar color to past leaders, if Scholars can parse out pieces from USLI effectively, and will produce comparable outcomes. The work environment will only be more diverse, not more equitable. In order to create a just workplace, Scholars must learn how to challenge aspects of the workplace that suppress diverse identities and the workplace, itself, must change. In the next chapter, I will theorize how to solve this problem.

---

[184] Ibid.

Chapter 5: Creating an Adaptive Workplace

The key issue with the future workplace the Urban Scholars Program creates is that it heavily relies on diverse bodies to adapt their performance and conform to "professionalism" scripts. Furthermore, this future workplace expects diverse bodies to engage in the unpaid labor of pushing for change in the spaces that they enter in order to succeed fully. Even when diverse bodies are able to succeed in workplaces as they are, however, there will always be dissonance with their leadership unless the actual work environment and workplace culture adapts to its workers. In order to address how embodiment and performance impact the workplace, workplace environments need to change based on who compose them. I call this an adaptive workplace. When a workplace becomes more flexible, expectations about who can lead and how someone can be "professional" in terms of behavior norms change. Bévort and Suddaby argue that workplace norms are established by those who work there. All members of an organization agree to and perpetuate particular scripts within the workplace.[185] This means that if the members of an organization choose to alter those norms and practices that it is possible for the workplace construction to eventually shift. An adaptive workplace constantly changes in order to grant all of its workers full access to resources and success and shifts behavior expectations to include all identities present. I recognize that many workplaces already have particular norms ingrained within their practices. For this reason, I propose that workplaces would be able to adopt this model from where they stand rather than imagining an entirely different workplace. In an adaptive workplace, there must be an authorizing environment that supports inclusion, the organizational culture must stay open to feedback and focus on relationship building, and

---

[185] Bévort et al., "Scripting Professional Identities," 18-9.

systemic change must occur to eliminate discriminatory practices. In order to flush out these components, I will draw heavily on lessons from the Urban Scholars Program's operations and how it has grown over time.

For a workplace to be adaptive, organizational leadership needs to support and advocate for this model. This can be thought of as an authorizing environment. Zemsky explained that having an "authorizing environment" means that leadership at the top, such as a CEO or team manager, directs those below them to follow through on an action or policy.[186] The higher the person ranks in the organization, the better, but there can be microcosms of equity throughout the organization if the top leaders are not actively authorizing equity.[187] In the City of Minneapolis, for example, the Mayor identified "equity" as a value of the City. By doing this, she empowers City departments to craft business plans and policies that must forward equity in their work. This means City departments should be open to conversations about equity and, for example, host an Urban Scholar because equity work aligns with an organizational value. For many other Urban Scholars partner organizations, however, leadership may not explicitly state equity as a top priority, making it difficult to advocate for hosting an Urban Scholars.[188]

Diversity and inclusion efforts are uncomfortable and often receive push back. If there is an authorizing environment, explains Zemsky, there will be less pushback because organizational leadership is promoting and supporting such initiatives.[189] Bévort and Suddaby argue members of an organization agree upon behavior norms, reinforcing the performance of

---

[186] Zemsky, August 2, 2016..

[187] If there was only someone in lower-level management promoting these practices, the whole organization would not be equitable, but those under them would move towards a higher level of equity.

[188] Gardenier, August 2, 2016.

[189] Ibid.

"professionalism" scripts across workers.[190] Workers take cues from one another, especially from those in higher leadership positions. This means in an authorizing environment, organizational leaders should model and encourage equitable and respectful practices because, then, others within the organization will begin to shift their behavior norms to be more inclusive. Furthermore, when leadership positions are filled by diverse bodies, they redefine the possibilities of what leadership and authority can be.

Another component of an adaptive workplace is all employees are open and receptive to feedback and change. This has two main sub-components: adopting processes for critical reflection and changing practices based on feedback. First, members of a workplace must constantly analyze current practices and brainstorm how to make them more inclusive. Puwar explains that workplace roles are constructed for bodies with gendered and racialized embodiments.[191] In order to deconstruct and redefine what bodies can fill a given role; diverse bodies must be able to name exclusionary formal and informal workplace practice and the workplace must shift accordingly to be more inclusive. The Urban Scholars Program models this practice. Gardenier explains, the program really values "continuous improvement, the idea that one size doesn't fit all, equity and equality are not the same so there needs to be policies that are flexible to meet the needs of people."[192] Many Scholars use public transportation to get to work, for example. Buses often run behind schedule, meaning that an employee could get to work late. If the workplace is adaptive, practices should be implemented that allow for open communication in such an instance, perhaps having the employee text or email their boss about their new arrival time and mak up lost time later on. Gardenier argues that in order to be fair,

---

[190] Bévort et al., "Scripting Professional Identities," 18-9.

[191] Puwar, *Space Invaders*, 33.

[192] Gardenier, August 2, 2016.

situations like this should not be handled case by case, but policies should be crafted with room for discretion.[193] This is where equity can get fuzzy. It is a matter of figuring out what can be flexible based on external factors, like the bus being late, and what must stay consistent in order to maintain a consistent standard of production. By including this level of precision in crafting equitable policies and adapting them when issues arise, workers will be protected from individual acts of discrimination because the workplace will collaborate with employees to create an inclusive environment.

Furthermore, formal reflection practices help maintain continuous improvement towards an adaptive workplace. In the summer of 2016, two Urban Scholars worked with Marsh Stephens to evaluate equity practices across all City of Minneapolis departments. They organized conversations between Scholars and department leaders about what equity work departments did and what support they needed. The goal of this project was to understand what racial equity efforts departments currently did and how to help them grow. Marsh Stephens hoped Scholars could provide feedback from their personal experiences and that department leaders would listen to their perspective.[194] Through this process, for example, Scholars identified subtle discriminatory practices in departments.[195] While institutional practices like this are important, Ahmed warns that when diversity initiatives and inclusion practices can become habitual, they become forgotten.[196] When they recede to the background, she argues, they become ingrained within the workplace culture and allow for exclusionary practices to resurface.[197] There must be self-reflective practices in place to ensure that workplaces continuously check white supremacist

---

[193] Ibid.
[194] Marsh Stephens, August 1, 2016.
[195] Ogbeide, July 25, 2016.
[196] Ahmed, *On Being Included,* 21.
[197] Ibid.

and sexist power dynamics. In crafting such a reflection practice, adaptive workplaces must implement reflection techniques that not only critique organizational processes, but the reflection processes themselves.

Creating a culture that welcomes and encourages reflective and critical conversation is the second part of a receptive feedback environment. In this model, workplaces would go from rigid structures and expectations to an adaptive workplace. It is important to point out that, in this process all members of an organization come from different levels of exposure to and acceptance of equitable practices. This means that co-workers must collaborate and create an inclusive community together. Rather than having a worker enter a job and be expected to assimilate to the workplace culture, the workplace must also adjust so that the worker is able to show up in that space. In the summer of 2016, various Urban Scholars confronted their supervisors about microaggressions they experienced in their workplace over the summer.[198] When Scholars did this, they advocated for respectful treatment at work. In order for this to be successful, those in the workplace must be receptive to feedback about discrimination. The *habitus* of workers and the *social field* of the work environment enter into a relationship in which they push each other to continuously form and reform as issues arise. Brittany Rice, Program Assistant of the Urban Scholars Program and a 2014 Urban Scholar, shared, "A big thing I learned, right away, [is] that people, everyone is in a different place on the path towards equity. So, allowing people to have flexibility with how they start being more equitable is really important."[199] This means not only being accepting of people who are at varying stages of their understanding of equity, but also encouraging people to advance down this path. When people are open to creating more access

---

[198] Brink-Johnson, July 11, 2016.
[199] Brittany Rice, interviewed by author, July 15, 2016.

within a workplace, change happens more smoothly and authentically. Danielle Shelton Walczak, head of the Civil Rights Department's Complaint Investigations Division, tried to create a culture within her office in which her employees were able to challenge her and ask for what they need at work. Shelton Walczak reflected that being receptive to the feedback of her employees made dialogue more open in her office. She said, "I think that the dialogue is more open. I've had my staff come to me and say that I treat them like peer and that no one has ever treated them that way before…[Her employees tell her that,] 'You give us a lot of freedom and when you say that you will give us a lot of freedom, you meant it'…I come to them a lot and say, what do you think about this? Could we do this?"[200] This exchange between leadership and employees is vital to making sure that the workplace reflects all needs present and does not restrain people from being successful.

Another piece of crafting a receptive environment is building relationships at work. As Okin reminds us, race and gender power structures in society still pervade the workplace. Through conversation and reflection, workers will become more aware latent sexist, racist, or other forms of discrimination within workplace norms and processes. When this happens, they will begin to challenge those structures among each other and with management. These conversations are uncomfortable and can be messy.[201] In order for those conversations to be productive, employees need to be in community with one another. Marsh Stephens argued that in order for discomfort to be handled well, "People have to feel…that there is some sort of support system in place to help them be able to know, 'Yep, I'm going on the right path,' or, 'Oh, you went down this path and this is what you experienced, okay, well, what did you do?' Yeah, I can

---

[200] Danielle Shelton Walszak, interviewed by author, July 21, 2016.
[201] Marsh Stephens, August 1, 2016.

do this over here and then we can walk down it together."[202] As people are pushed to realize discriminatory practices, there must be support to unpack the root causes of these issues in order to move forward. This process must be done together and people need to be able to vulnerably experiment with their behavior and practices. People will mess up, but the workplace has to be ready for those growing pains. Zemsky explained, "This work is not about comfort...Comfort is really a privilege because people want to get more comfortable with people different than themselves or they want to get more comfortable working in communities."[203] She went on to say that when she enters a space some of her identities, such as being a white person, she feels very comfortable, but others, such as being Jewish, she may not feel so comfortable.[204] She continued, "That [happens] in any space that we're in: there's always someone holding the discomfort for the room. So, part of the work is actually spreading the discomfort around."[205] In order to spread the discomfort around, members of a workplace must trust each other enough to be vulnerable. By building relationships and understanding coworkers as holistic people, hard conversations will be more productive and result in sustainable changes.

The final component of an adaptive workplace is systemic change in an organization. Puwar references Lefebvre's idea that bodies not only produce space, but are also produced by space.[206] In the context for public sector workplaces, many positions, such as department heads and elected officials, are historically held and created by white men. This means that behavior expectations for those who fill such roles are based on white male performance. In order to create more access and equity within a workplace, diverse bodies must inhabit positions of

---

[202] Ibid.

[203] Zemsky, August 2, 2016.

[204] Ibid.

[205] Ibid.

[206] Puwar, *Space Invaders,* 32.

power, influencing the roles they fill and normalizing how diverse bodies can also fill them. Just as scripts push bodies to perform particular role, the bodies also impact how that role should be performed. This can be thought of similar to the *habitus* that influences and is influenced by a *social field.*[207] If a person of color or woman fills a particular position, then the expectations for who can fill that role change. This redefinition is central to creating an even field for all bodies.

A key change in the Urban Scholars Program overtime is how they hire Scholars time to increase diversity within the program. This serves as a relevant example of systemic change. For the first three years of the program, the program used a hiring screening guide that gave points for GPA, pursuing a degree related to public service, having a former internship, and being on the Dean's List.[208] This guide privileged those with access to the top schools in the country and resources to pursue unpaid internships. While this screening guide allowed the program to compile racially diverse cohorts, it did not account for other types of diversity, such as type of higher education institution or socio-economic background.[209] For the 2015 cohort, the program switched to a category-based system. They called it "Rock, Paper, Scissor," which was based on quality of essay. The idea behind it was to create a cohort with varying educational, professional, and life experiences to facilitate peer learning in new ways.[210] The program compiled a more complexly diverse group as a result. For the 2016 cohort, they built on this approach, adding a competency-based component to construct a cohort with a drive to create equity and social justice through their work. This means they measured if potential Scholars had an experience in, knowledge about, or an awareness of a set of values, such as community and resiliency. This

---

[207] Butler, "Performativity's Social Magic," 116.
[208] Brink-Johnson, July 11, 2016.
[209] Ibid.
[210] Ibid.

model aimed to gauge potential, as opposed to only past experiences or achievements.[211] The

result was, according to Aaron Brink-Johnson, Program Assistant of the Urban Scholars Program

and a 2013 Urban Scholar, "not just racially, gender identity-wise in sort of this physical things

you can see upfront about diversity but I feel like in terms of life experience and like different

stages on their equity journey. I feel like we have the most diverse year."[212] The program

redefined which bodies should be given access to this pathway, expanding ideas of diversity.

Logan reflected:

> I think that's one of the biggest things that I thought about more this year [in 2016] is that
> [the program is] not only selecting people from this college or this college, like these big
> name places. But we have people from all over: community colleges, four year colleges,
> people in grad school, everything. And that is so cool because it brings a whole new lens
> to what we define as racial equity. I am sure me and you have different ideas [of what
> that looks like] but I learn from you and you learn from me and I think that the program
> has done a good job of not only making it, sometimes I think that we get caught up on the
> word "diverse" as meaning it has to be racial or ethnic, cultural. A visually diverse thing.
> But, you have age diversity, gender diversity, just all diversity, college, it's everything.
> It's so great because that shapes, even though we put a focus on racial equity bringing in
> those different viewpoints really shapes our view of equity. And so, I just really value
> that. Like I learned last year [in 2015] and am learning this year in a new way.[213]

Logan emphasized that the diversity these progressive hiring practices served as a new type of

learning experience. By learning across difference, it broadened the way she thought about racial

equity and how to adapt her own practices to be more inclusive. The crux of changing practices

on a system-wide level is that it redefines who can hold what role. Through engaging in such a

diverse cohort this summer, Scholars understood the benefits of learning from one another and

opened up new possibilities for how spaces can be constructed. This exposure helped shift ideas

---

[211] Gardenier, August 2, 2016.
[212] Brink-Johnson, July 11, 2016.
[213] Logan, July 18, 2016.

of how workplaces should be composed and who should hold leadership positions. In the previous chapter, I discussed how Logan, Ogbeide, and Kibira all tried opportunities and saw themselves in future positions of power as a result of the program. This shift in mindset is vital to changing the way workplaces are constructed and what bodies are seen as normative.

In order to have a more just workplace, not only do programs like the Urban Scholars Program need to continue to prepare and create pathways for students from diverse racial and ethnic backgrounds to enter the public sector, but also workplaces must continue to be accessible once diverse bodies enter them by adapting their norms so all bodies *succeed* in them. An adaptive workplace must operate in an authorizing environment. This means that leadership mandates and is receptive to shifting the workplace to a more inclusive model. Feedback must be asked for and encouraged from workers. This can take the form of formal processes, such as what Marsh Stephens and Urban Scholars conducted, or informal pathways, such as meeting with a supervisor about microaggressions. Furthermore, an adaptive workplace creates a culture that encourages conversations about identities and discrimination. This requires relationships being built among coworkers so that vulnerable conversations can occur. Finally, structural changes, such as adapting hiring practices, must occur. This could look like removing names initially from resumes as to not hiring people based on how "white" their name sounds, changing professional dress standards to incorporate variations of hair textures and styles, and eradicating hiring based on schools or school ranking. This opens pathways for diverse bodies to attain positions they would not traditionally hold and begin to shift how these roles are constructed. By making system-level changes, diverse bodies redefining how workplaces are structured and operate, alters the perception of who is "supposed" to have certain positions.

Conclusion

Workplaces privilege white male performance in the form of "professionalism" scripts, causing those with other social identities to contort and deny parts of their performance to fit into rigid behavior expectations. This is unjust because not only are the experiences and perspectives of women and people of color devalued, but by forcing historically marginalized bodies to suppress aspects of their identity performance to be successful also can result in a violent estrangement from the self.[214] Justice in the workplace means that the work norms take into account and strive to overcome oppressive structures, such as racism and sexism, embedded in how workplaces function. Rather than seeing workplaces as homogenous, workplaces must see employees holistically and adjust practices to accommodate for the uneven playing field. This can be thought of as Fraser's *representation* dimension of justice which is chiefly concerned with all perspectives and identities being heard and valued evenly.[215]

People should not have to decide between existing as their full self and being influential and successful at work. The way workplaces currently operate allow for the perpetuation of white supremacy and sexism because they push diverse bodies to fit into dominant norms of behavior, or "professionalism" scripts, and separate themselves from their gendered or racialized performances. Workplaces are not neutral spaces in which all bodies are able to engage evenly.[216] A new construction of the workplace must arise that encourages intentional and consistent efforts to adapt how behavior expectations are valued in order to respectfully and holistically allow *all* bodies to perform their full social identities at work.

---

[214] Zeiler, "A Phenomenology of Excorporation, Bodily Alienation, and Resistance," 76.

[215] Fraser, "Mapping the Feminist Imagination," 305.

[216] Puwar, *Space Invaders,* 8.

Bodies perform particular patterns of behavior based on their social identities. The body itself is an actor and is acted upon by its environment, shaping and reshaping its engagement in the world. Butler emphasizes that bodies and their material characteristics hold historical and cultural significance that predetermine how they are expected to show up in spaces.[217] From these influences, bodies develop a *body schema,* a set of ritualized actions and can be thought of as "being in line" for Ahmed or the *habitus* for Bourdieu. Bodies perform the *habitus* associated with their expected gendered and/or racialized performances.[218] When these ritualized patterns are contradicted by other performative demands, excorporation, or rupture in identity, can occur.[219] This is a violent process that people should not have to undergo. When women and people of color take on performance scripts that counter or push them to suppress parts of their identity performance, white supremacist and patriarchal structures are privileged and rewarded.

Workplaces privilege "professionalism" scripts based on white, male performance, over others identity performances, resulting in an uneven playing field for success. Gioia and Poole argue that scripts of behavior exist in the workplace. These scripts establish appropriate scripts of interaction within the workplace.[220] Bévort and Suddaby build on this idea by positing that individual actions compile workplace scripts. In order for a script to be established, the workers agree to abide by workplace scripts.[221] Puwar unpacks that workplaces are constructed for particular bodies and performances. The somatic norm in the workplace is a white male body. No matter how well a diverse body performs a professionalism script or how many positions of power they hold in an organization, there will always be dissonance because "professionalism"

---

[217] Butler, "Performative Acts and Gender Constitution," 403.

[218] Butler, "Performativity's Social Magic," 113-7.

[219] Zeiler, "A Phenomenology of Excorporation, Bodily Alienation, and Resistance," 76.

[220] Gioia et al., "Scripts in Organizational Behavior," 450.

[221] Bévort et al., "Scripting Professional Identities," 18-9.

scripts contradict diverse racial and gendered performances.[222] Building on this idea, Mor-Barak and Ahmed argue that when bodies and their performances are labeled "diverse," they are also marked as "other," which perpetually sets them in contrast to white male bodies. This reinforces the idea that white male behavior is the norm and that women and people of color are not supposed to hold positions of power at work.[223]

The adaptive workplace model creates the foundation for more equitable practices and outcomes at work. Through analyzing the Urban Scholars Program, it becomes clear that structural changes must occur in the workplace. The Urban Scholars Program equips diverse bodies with the skills to understand how the system works, develop a racial equity lens, and obtain leadership positions. It does not, however, address the structural barriers to creating equity within the workplace itself. Furthermore, the program teaches "professionalism" scripts and how to become, as Kibira put it, "cookie-cutter" employees.[224] This disregards the gendered and racialized performances of Scholars and attempts to overwrite those facets of Scholars' identities through colorblind professional development. The program currently relies on Urban Scholars to shift the workplaces they inhabit without the proper skills and for the benefit of predominantly white workplaces.

What is needed, then, is an adaptive workplace. In this model, the workplace must adapt to those who compose it. The adaptive workplace embraces all forms of identity performance as valid and acceptable at work. By shifting workplace culture to value the social identities of its workers, this model recognizes the *habitus*, or the way that bodies perform their identities, and

---

[222] Puwar, *Space Invaders.*
[223] Mor-Barak, *Managing Diversity* and Ahmed, *On Being Included.*
[224] Kibira, July 27, 2016.

the field, in this case the workplace, as mutually dependent.[225] This means that personal experiences based on identity and the workplace are recognized as being intertwined. By allowing for this interplay, the adaptive workplace allows for diverse bodies to bring their racialized and gendered identities to work, so to speak, and creates the opportunity for workers to perform holistically. In order to do this effectively, leadership needs to encourage and be receptive to employee feedback about exclusive practices. Furthermore, a culture of openness and vulnerability must be established. Uncomfortable conversations are vital to create authentic change. This can only happen if people are in community with each other. Finally, structural changes must occur. We learn from the Urban Scholars Program that changing hiring practices is the key to crafting true diversity. Puwar builds on Lefebvre's idea that bodies not only produce space but are also produced by space.[226] This means that if workplace norms were initially crafted by and for white male performances, diverse bodies must enter and engage in a workplace fully in order to craft an adaptive workplace. As diverse bodies and performances alter a workplace, the norm of who can fill particular spaces shifts. By adopting an adaptive workplace model, workplaces will become more just because they will not only accommodate for diversity of experience, but workers will be able to holistically engagement in an equitable workplace environment.

---

[225] Judith Butler, "Performativity's Social Magic," 113-7.
[226] Puwar, *Space Invaders,* 32.

Bibliography

Ahmed, Sara. *On Being Included : Racism and Diversity in Institutional Life*. Durham; London: Duke University Press, 2012.

Austin, Algernon. "Uneven pain—Unemployment by Metropolitan Area and Race." *Economic Policy Institute*. June 8. http://www.epi.org/publication/ib278/ (accessed March 19, 2017).

Bévort, Frans, and Roy Suddaby. "Scripting Professional Idenities: How Individuals Make Sense of Contradictory Institutional Logics." *Journal of Professions & Organization* 3, no. 1 (2016): 17–38.

Butler, Judith. "Gender as Performance." In *A Critical Sense : Interviews with Intellectuals*, edited by Peter Osborne, 111–25. London; New York: Routledge, 1996.

Butler, Judith. "Gender: The Circular Ruins Of Contemporary Debate." In *Gender Trouble : Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*, 11–18. New York: Routledge, 1999.

Butler, Judith. "Performative Acts and Gender Constitution: An Essay in Phenomenology and Feminist Theory." In *Writing on the Body : Female Embodiment and Feminist Theory*, edited by Katie Conboy, Nadia Medina, and Sarah Stanbury, 401–17. New York: Columbia University Press, 1997.

Butler, Judith. "Performativity's Social Magic." In *Bourdieu : A Critical Reader*, edited by Richard Shusterman, 113–28. Oxford, UK; Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishers, 1999.

City of Minneapolis. "Urban Scholars." http://www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/civilrights/urbanscholars/index.htm. (accessed January 9, 2017).

Cohen, G. A. *Why Not Socialism?* Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009.

Crenshaw, Kimberlé. "Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and Violence Against Women of Color." *Stanford Law Review* 43, no. 6 (1991): 1241–99.

Fanon, Frantz. *Black Skin, White Masks*. New York: Grove Press, 2008.

Fraser, Nancy. "Mapping the Feminist Imagination: From Redistribution to Recognition to Representation." *Constellations: An International Journal of Critical and Democratic Theory* 12, no. 3 (2005): 295–307.

Fry, Richard. "Millennials Overtake Baby Boomers as America's Largest Generation." *Pew Research Center*. April 25, 2016. http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2016/04/25/millennials-overtake-baby-boomers/ (accessed March 19, 2017).

Gioia, Dennis A., and Peter P. Poole. "Scripts in Organizational Behavior." *Academy of Management Review* 9, no. 3 (1984): 449–59.

Haraway, Donna. "Situated Knowledges: The Science Question in Feminism and the Privilege of Partial Perspective." *Feminist Studies* 14, no. 3 (1998): 575–99.

Harris, Duchess. "'All of Who I am in the Same Place': The Combahee River Collective." *Womanist Theory and Research* 2, no. 1 (1999): 9-21.

Hawkesworth, Mary. "Congressional Enactments of Race-Gender: Toward a Theory of Raced-Gendered Institutions." *The American Political Science Review* 97, no. 4 (2003), 529-50.

"History of Universal Design." *Institute for Human Centered Design.* http://www.humancentereddesign.org/universal-design/history-universal-design (accessed January 9, 2017).

Holvino, Evangelina. "Intersections: The Simultaneity of Race, Gender and Class in Organization Studies." *Gender, Work and Organization,* 17, no. 3 (2010): 248–77.

Maguire, Augus. "Illustrating Equality vs. Equity." *Interaction Institute for Social Change*. January 13, 2016, http://interactioninstitute.org/illustrating-equality-vs-equity/ (accessed January 9, 2017).

Mendelberg, Tali, Christopher Karpowitz, and J. Baxter Oliphant. "Gender Inequality in Deliberation: Unpacking the Black Box of Interaction." *Perspectives on Politics; Cambridge* 12, no. 1 (2014): 18–44.

Mills, Charles. *The Racial Contract*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1997.

"Minneapolis Population Estimates." *U.S. Census Bureau*. July 1, 2015. www.census.gov/quickfacts/table/PST045215/2743000 (accessed March 19, 2017).

Mor-Barak, Michàlle. *Managing Diversity: Toward a Globally Inclusive Workplace*. Los Angeles : SAGE, 2011.

Okin, Susan Moller. *Justice, Gender, and the Family*. New York: Basic Books, 1989.

Pateman, Carole. *The Sexual Contract.* Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1988.

Prasad, Pushkala, Alison Konrad, and Judith Pringle. "Examining the Contours of Workplace Diversity: Concepts, Contexts and Challenges." In *Handbook of Workplace Diversity*, edited by Alison Konrad, Pushkala Prasad, and Judith Pringle, 1-22. Lund University, SAGE Publications, 2006.

Puwar, Nirmal. *Space Invaders : Race, Gender and Bodies out of Place*. Oxford: New York: Berg, 2004.

Rawls, John. *A Theory of Justice*. Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1971.

Schechner, Richard. "What Is Performance?" In *Performance Studies: An Introduction*, 28–51. London; New York: Routledge, 2013.

Taylor, Charles, and Amy Gutmann. *Multiculturalism : Examining the Politics of Recognition*. Princeton, NJ : Princeton University Press, 1994.

Walzer, Michael. *Spheres of Justice : A Defense of Pluralism and Equality*. New York: Basic Books, 1983.

Wolff, Richard. *Democracy at Work : A Cure for Capitalism*. Chicago, Illinois: Haymarket Books, 2012.

Zeiler, Kristin. "A Phenomenology of Excorporation, Bodily Alienation, and Resistance: Rethinking Sexed and Racialized Embodiment." *Hypatia-A Journal of Feminist Philosophy* 28 no. 1 (2013): 69–84.