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**On The Road to Multiculturalism:
A PCMA Seminar Report**

by Amy Schulz

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**The Program on Conflict Management Alternatives
at The University of Michigan**

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**On The Road To Multiculturalism:
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**Amy Schulz
Winter, 1992**

Multiculturalism
PCMA Seminar Series
Academic Year 1990-1991

INTRODUCTION

The Program in Conflict Management Alternatives (PCMA) at the University of Michigan was established in January, 1986, by a grant from the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation and additional funding from the University of Michigan. Core faculty are drawn from the disciplines of Sociology, Public Health, Social Work, Law, Psychology, Natural Resources and Education. The Program supports an agenda of research, application, and theory development that focuses on the relationship between social justice and conflict. Particular attention is given to: 1) the fundamental differences and inequalities between parties that often create conflict and threaten its stable resolution; 2) the use of innovative settlement procedures and roles for disputants and first and third party interveners; and 3) the institutionalization of innovative mechanisms and the adoption of organizational and community structures that permanently alter the way conflicts and underlying inequities are managed.

An annual seminar series is a central feature of the work carried out by members of the PCMA. Program faculty and outside speakers present case studies of actual dispute practice, research findings and conceptual models, providing a basis for theoretical and practice oriented discussions of social conflict and alternative forms of conflict management. In the 1990-91 academic year the focus of the seminar series was on multiculturalism. Strategies for change and the management of conflicts arising in this process were a central theme of this series.

The multidisciplinary nature of the seminar group is considered a strength, as it allows the exploration of conflict and social justice issues from multiple perspectives. In recognition of the different perspectives and disciplines as well as diverse working styles represented within the group, there is emphasis on process as well as content. During the first two years the faculty focused on group development and sought to clarify definitions and terms to develop common language. Experience within the seminar was used to analyze and redefine working relationships, and to establish trust and collaborative working relationships among the faculty. In addition, yearly retreats were held to assess accomplishments, barriers, and establish future directions for the Program.

This focus on process was continued and made more salient during the 1990-91 seminar discussions on multiculturalism. As PCMA explored the issues of multiculturalism, conflicts arose in our own group which

reflected both differences of perspective and differences in styles of handling conflict: our learning involved the exploration of multicultural group process as well as structure. This working paper describes and analyzes the content and process of the seminar series on multiculturalism. Included are sections on: the development of the seminar series; definitions of culture and multiculturalism; goals or benefits of multiculturalism; the process of developing a multicultural organization or group; conflict and power as components of multiculturalism; and critiques of multiculturalism. Our own group process and self reflection is used to illustrate issues, conflicts and themes which arose during the discussions of multiculturalism.

DEVELOPMENT OF MULTICULTURALISM SEMINAR SERIES

PCMA's interest in multiculturalism evolved from the Program's ongoing interest in intergroup conflict and the constructive management of conflict in ways that create more equitable social relationships. Difference in conflict situations may include differences in norms, cultures and belief systems, including beliefs and norms which influence styles of dealing with conflict. The management of these differences is a component of managing conflict and is essential to the process of building multicultural organizations which accept and value multiple cultures. Thus, understanding multiculturalism and processes of building and maintaining multicultural organizations are critical to dealing with conflicts in a multicultural society.

In May of 1990, PCMA held an annual retreat and planning meeting to discuss the current status of the program and develop plans for the 1990-91 academic year. A discussion of the University of Michigan's concern with diversity led to consideration of the process of developing a multicultural institution. While there appeared to be a serious commitment to multiculturalism in various units and offices throughout the University, there did not appear to be a clear idea of how to go about building a multicultural community. PCMA decided to use the 1990-91 seminar series to explore this question and to use various aspects of the Michigan situation as an example for other institutions.

A number of questions were raised in this discussion, including:

- what is our vision of a multicultural organization?
- beyond admission and retention of a diverse set of students, what does a multicultural university look like?
- how can those coming into the institution be helped to deal with that institution as it currently exists?

- how can the University environment be changed?
- once diverse groups are brought into the University, how do we develop a community, or a sense of how to work together?

These and other questions formed the basis for the seminar discussion through the academic year.

WHAT IS CULTURE? WHAT IS MULTICULTURALISM? DEFINITIONS AND CONCEPTS

One of the first questions considered by this multi-disciplinary group, none of whom are anthropologists, was "what is culture and what does it have to do with multiculturalism?" For this discussion, we are deeply indebted to Anthropologist David Scobey, whose presentation on the "genealogy of culture" forms the basis for this section.

WHAT IS CULTURE?

Culture has been described as the 'meaning-making' aspect of social life: the process through which individuals and groups ascribe meaning to symbols and actions. Culture has become an increasingly important arena for intellectual work and political action in the United States over the past 10 years. The politics of cultural categories have involved: 1) recognition of the heterogeneity of cultures in the U.S.; 2) issues of cultural representation and symbolism; 3) the increase in culture as contrasted with class as a forum for conflict in the U.S.; and 4) recognition of the cultural dimension of inequality and power struggles.

Early definitions of culture were based in a concept of 'high culture', representing the 'best' that has been thought and felt. This definition was explicitly political, and essentially elitist in its emphasis on cultural products of the upper classes. It was also static in its distinction between 'high' and 'low' culture, reifying these differences and failing to incorporate an historical perspective with a notion of change over time.

Later, culture was defined as the customs which characterize a group. This definition eliminated the boundaries between 'high' and 'low' culture embedded in the first definition and opened new aspects of social life for consideration. All of social life was considered socially constructed, with patterns and interconnections among different aspects. Within this framework, however, society was viewed as a closed, static system, rather than one which was open and in the process of constant change. There was a denial of conflict and of the political nature of culture. This definition of culture was relatively deterministic, and

did not address the potential for change through individual creativity within social systems.

Over the past 60 years, conceptions of culture have built on the idea of a collectively constructed social life and incorporated an historical dimension missing from the earlier definitions. Within this period there have been several waves of redefinition and reconceptualization. In response to earlier conceptions of society as homogeneous, theorists began to conceive of culture as community, with multiple communities existing in a given society. The United States began to be viewed as a multi-ethnic society, with not one but many cultures, and the idea of conflict between cultural groups became explicit. This period is exemplified in works such as Street Corner Society by William Whyte (1943).

A second wave was the exploration of culture as language: as the symbolic, meaning-laden dimension of social life. No universal content or understanding existed, only 'local knowledge' created within clearly bounded meaning-making communities (e.g. a community of physicians who create shared meanings of medical terminology which may not extend beyond the boundaries of the profession). A limitation of this model was the conception of bounded groups which failed to recognize the fluctuations and lack of clarity which characterize group boundaries.

A third wave conceptualized culture as meaning made through action, as in Marx' *praxis* and Bourdieu's *Outline of A Theory of Practice* (1977). Culture was seen as an ongoing, historical process of 'making' meaning: human agency was emphasized in the creation of meaning at the same time that interests and motives were recognized as culturally shaped. This work improved on past concepts through restoration of an historical dimension and the construction of culture as an ongoing, fluctuating process. This model stressed an open, indeterminate meaning of culture or symbols, with plural cultures but also plural meanings within cultures. In this definition, conflict was central to culture, and the political nature of the concept was restored.

Finally, the work of Antonio Gramsci and Raymond Williams, among others, conceptualized culture as power. Work in this area focused on the manner in which power shaped culture through its influence on the interpretation of meaning. Gramsci developed the concept of *hegemony* to describe an ideology which rationalizes the domination of some social groups by others, and this concept became an important tool for the exploration of the interactions between power and culture.

The plural and changing nature of culture and power differentials between groups are particularly important aspects of a discussion of multiculturalism. They focus attention on the historical and changing nature of cultures, rather than emphasizing a collection of holistic, static, separate cultures. Recognition that change is inherent in

culture and that power differentials influence the nature of change is fundamental to discussions of multiculturalism.

A discussion of difference which does not incorporate an analysis of power differentials is incomplete: there is no recognition of the use of power in the maintenance or valuing of difference, nor in the transformation of cultures. Incorporation of power into the analysis allows exploration of conflict and the use of power in shaping meaning. When analyses of power and inequality are limited to exploration of race, class and gender as sources of oppression, other forms of cultural and material oppression, such as on the basis of sexual orientation and age, are disregarded and race, class and gender are viewed as relatively ahistorical, static entities. These analyses may obscure change over time in who is considered the ethnic 'other' and who is oppressed. In addition, emphasis on race, class and gender as forms of oppression do not always distinguish between these forms of oppression. Inequalities based on radical separation of people, as in racial oppression, work quite differently than inequalities, such as gender, which involve day to day and often internal negotiations of power differentials. Analysis of the organization of power in different oppressions is important to understanding multiculturalism. Power and conflict are discussed more fully in the section on "Multiculturalism, Conflict and Power."

WHAT IS MULTICULTURALISM?

PCMA faculty also attempted to articulate and clarify a working definition of multiculturalism at the individual and small group level.

Growing out of these discussions was agreement that multiculturalism involves the ability to operate in and respect multiple cultures¹. This clarifies the distinction between multiculturalism and two other common perspectives: particularism and pluralism. Particularism refers to a social system in which individuals are fluent in and value only one culture. Pluralism involves a central identity rooted in one culture which is not renegotiated through contact with other groups (although relationships among groups may be renegotiated). Multiculturalism, in contrast, may involve reconstruction of personal identity, as values which have been accepted come into question and are reconsidered in the process of confronting and learning to value other perspectives. Moving from monoculturalism to multiculturalism may prove threatening or painful as individuals are challenged to reconsider fundamental values,

1. Multiculturalism at an organizational level is discussed in later sections: "Building Multicultural Groups" and "Moving Toward Multicultural Organizations."

and reconstruct aspects of their identity. It may also prove rewarding as new ways to view and interpret experience are learned, and groups develop new patterns of interaction.

The acceptance of multiple cultures does not imply an absence of conflict among groups. Rather, it means that these conflicts are acknowledged and confronted on the basis of empathy, understanding and respect, and with explicit recognition of differences in power and resources among groups. Groups whose beliefs and actions deny the rights of other groups or individuals, such as Nazi groups or the KKK, violate these conditions. Defense of the ideas of such groups under the aegis of free speech ignores the violence done to Jewish Americans or African Americans. Free speech that silences or promotes violence against another group may not be defensible, as it has the same effects as physical repression.

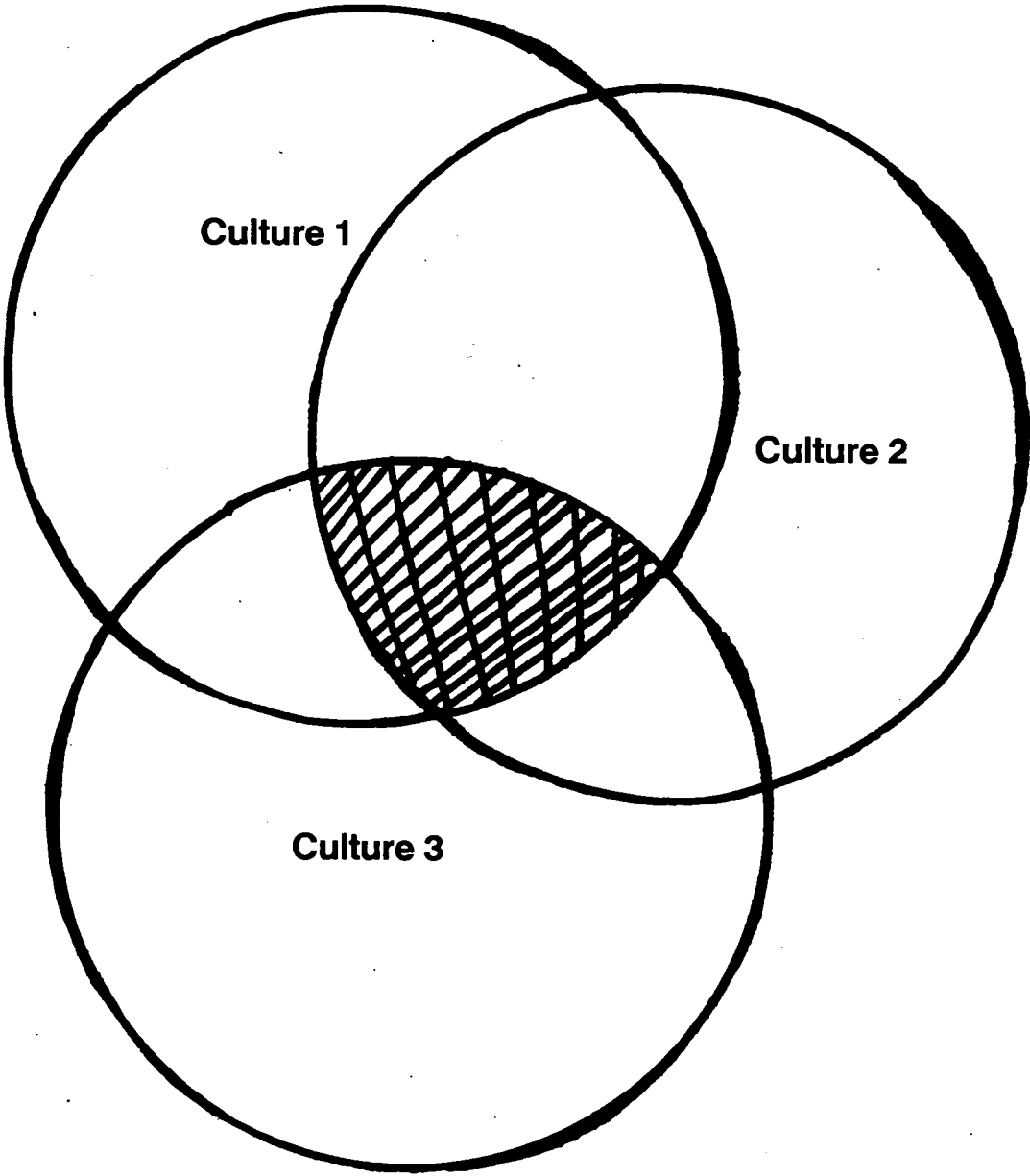
Legal scholar Catherine MacKinnon (1987) utilizes this argument in her feminist critique of pornography "Not a Moral Issue." She argues that the interpretation of the creation and marketing of images depicting violence against women as an issue of free speech fails recognize that this 'free speech' silences and promotes violence against women².

Habermas (1971, 1973) also has considered the conditions under which individuals interact and the effects of these conditions on the knowledge created. He argues that knowledge can never be separated from interests, and therefore, only a society which is organized to allow decision making processes based in discussion free from domination can create a knowledge which is more true and less biased by the interests of the dominant group. A true consensus is only possible in a society which is emancipated, in which the autonomy of individual members has been realized.

Discussions of the definition of multiculturalism led to a conversation about the characteristics of a multicultural space. The diagram shown in Figure 1 was suggested. Three groups are represented by three overlapping circles: each of the groups has a distinct culture shared by members of the group. The space where the three overlap is a multicultural space in which the groups share a common understanding, while each retains a space of its own. The overlapping space is characterized by trust and equal access to power, as well as common understanding and respect for the identities of members of other groups.

2. Italicized text highlights notes or references added during the process of analyzing the seminar discussions and writing this paper. They were not part of the original seminar discussions.

FIGURE 1
MULTICULTURAL SPACE



Within this multicultural space, each individual interprets events from a unique perspective. Individuals will speak, hear and respond to things differently, on the basis of different backgrounds and cultures. The common space illustrated in the diagram must include opportunities for definition, redefinition and back-translation as part of the communication process to clarify differences arising out of the various backgrounds and social locations of the participants.

This conception of a multicultural space implies that each individual must be fluent in and value multiple cultures, or at least be willing to make an effort to learn. It also suggests that identity will be continually constructed and reconstructed as individuals continually confront and consider different perspectives. While members of both dominant and dominated groups will confront this process, members of more powerful groups are more likely to have been sheltered from this necessity by privilege of race, class and gender (see Chesler, 1991 and McIntosh, 1983 for further discussion). Acceptance of the continual renegotiation of identity, and a willingness to engage in this process, are components of the process of becoming more multicultural. As noted earlier, this reconstruction of identity is different from the understanding of pluralism which implies that *relationships* are renegotiated, but not *personal identity*.

The model of overlapping circles as a representation of a multicultural space also has limitations. The diagram depicts cultures as static, with definite boundaries, rather than the fluid, indeterminate boundaries described in more recent conceptions of culture. The model does not adequately represent the ways in which cultural understandings are transformed both from within and through contact with other cultures. In addition, it is not clear that trust, equal access to power, common understanding, and respect for other groups can exist inside this common space, if these conditions are not also present outside.

Concern has been voiced by critics of multiculturalism that an acceptance of multiple cultural values will leave no standards for judging right and wrong. The multicultural group or process described above would be unlikely to accept a stable dichotomization of right or wrong. Rather, dialogue, discussion and discourse would form the basis for the exploration of concepts of right and wrong: questions of 'truth' would be pursued through discussion and dialogue or tested in action. A multicultural university becomes a space in which people come together and interact to pursue multiple truths, rather than one in which a single truth is passed on from professor to student.

Questions raised by this discussion included: the process of cultural identity formation; the relationship between cultural identity and personal identity; and the process through which cultural and personal identity may be transformed.

WHY WORK TOWARD MULTICULTURALISM?

Throughout the seminar discussions questions arose about the goals of multiculturalism- what do we think multiculturalism will accomplish? And, related to the first question - why would anyone work toward more multicultural organizations or groups. The latter question was considered especially with respect to the motivation for those who currently hold greater power to work toward more equitable relationships with other groups.

Some critics have portrayed multiculturalism primarily as a means to improve the self-esteem of individuals who are members of non-dominant groups, a perspective which others have called particularism. Particularism emphasizes a stable racial or ethnic identity, acknowledges and validates the accomplishments of racial, ethnic and other sub-groups, and aims to promote the self worth of individuals by attaching personal identity to the collective racial or cultural identity (Ravitch, 1990). Particularism is distinguished from multiculturalism by this essentially ethnocentric emphasis, as well as its implicit emphasis on and reification of cultural identities which are separate and stable.

In contrast, a multicultural perspective actively counters ethnocentrism through the acknowledgement and validation of multiple groups and the interconnections among these groups. Multiculturalism moves beyond emphasis on northern European accomplishments and recognizes African, Hispanic, Native American and Asian contributions to knowledge and culture. Thus multiculturalism has the potential to accomplish the goal of particularism - recognition of and respect for the contributions of multiple groups to current knowledge - without the fragmentation or splintering of social groups into separate factions implied by particularism.

Discussion of the second question considered in this section, the potential motivations for moving from a monocultural toward a multicultural agenda, yielded the following:

- 1) development of more equitable power relationships among groups;
- 2) joyfulness in experimenting with new ways of thinking;
- 3) easing guilt about the oppression of other groups;

- 4) opportunities for seeking truth through the confrontation of multiple truths;
- 5) expanded creativity as both dominant and non-dominant groups learn from each other about alternative ways of thinking; and
- 6) recognition and valuation of the culture and identity of disenfranchised groups counters one mechanism for denial of access to social resources.
- 7) development of a more stable and orderly society and less disruptive forms of conflict resolution.

Each of these motivations or goals involves consideration of power relationships within and between groups on some level. The process of building trust between groups whose past experience with each other is in relationships of dominance/oppression will be difficult.

This difficulty was illustrated in our own group through an exchange between a white woman and a white man who was participating in a men's group. The agenda of the men's group- to talk among themselves about sexism and gender relationships- was challenged by the white woman, who expressed distrust about groups of men who excluded women. An old pattern, of men excluding women, was mistrusted as having the potential for repeating old patterns of sexism.

The issue of power differentials and trust building is considered further in discussions of "Building Multicultural Groups," "Multiculturalism, Conflict and Power," and "Critiques of Multiculturalism."

BUILDING MULTICULTURAL GROUPS

The process of creating common ground for multicultural interactions was an important theme of discussions throughout the seminar series. Discussions were based on readings, presentations and case studies, as well as exploration of our own group process and composition. These discussions and learnings are presented here in three sections: a theoretical framework for thinking about multicultural organizations; discussions of how to move toward multicultural organizations; and case studies of three groups or organizations in the process of becoming more multicultural. These three cases, including our own analysis of PCMA, are presented as boxed examples in the following section.

I. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

We are indebted to Joe Feagin, Sociologist at the University of Florida, who attended an early seminar session and led a discussion on how to move toward multiculturalism in organizations. The theoretical framework presented here is derived largely from the guiding comments provided by Feagin and the subsequent discussion.

A Weberian theory of organizations has formed the basis for much social science thinking, and continues to influence thinking about multicultural organizations. Within this framework organizations are considered to be hierarchies with an ordered set of impersonal and culturally neutral roles and norms. Race, gender or other personal characteristics are seen as less important than characteristics of the role itself.

This theory does not recognize that most organizations in the United States are not impersonal or neutral, but are highly political and partisan in operation and outcome. The internal structure of these organizations has been shaped in both formal and informal ways by white men, who have applied their own criteria and standards to organizational forms. For example, police and fire department height and strength requirements are based on the assumption that applicants will be white males, thereby excluding most women, and most Asian or Hispanic men. This exclusion is not necessarily intentional, but based on unexplored assumptions about who can and will work within these organizations.

Organizations are also imbedded with formal and informal rules, again shaped predominantly by the white male culture. Competition and individualism, hierarchy, and rules are emphasized, while consensual decision making and collaborative efforts are de-emphasized or devalued. Cultural differences within organizations may also appear in other forms, such as dress or fashion, and whether and how a show of emotions is acceptable.

In some instances, these cultures are contradictory. For example, an Asian-American emphasis on humility comes into direct conflict with a European-American emphasis on individualism and aggressiveness. It may not be possible to have an organization which both emphasizes and de-emphasizes the individual, which values both humility and aggressiveness. Rather than valuing one and devaluing the other, multiculturalism may require that everyone give up something in the process of creating something new.

Figure 2: Cultural Differences Within Organizations

Kochman Communications Consultants, Ltd have developed lists of cultural differences among groups as an aid in moving toward more multicultural organizations. While cautioning against stereotyping and essentialism, an excerpt from one of these lists is provided below as an example of group differences which may create conflict within organizations.

Pacific Asian/ Anglo Cultural Differences

<u>Pacific Asian</u>	<u>Anglo</u>
Group (rather than self) oriented	Self (rather than group) oriented
Need to stand in ("the nail that stands out will be hammered back in")	Need to stand out (If you don't think you're good enough, why should anyone else?)
Emphasis on changing self to fit group/ environment	Emphasis on changing (or or finding) environment that best fits self

From: Kochman Communications Consultants, Inc.

The ways in which organizations are racialized and gendered need to be more fully understood in order to learn how to develop multicultural organizations in a world which values only one culture. The process of bringing together different cultures or groups to build multicultural organization is likely to involve conflict. Questions to explore related to these conflicts include:

- A. Are there large differences in basic underlying values, or are the differences largely in style or process?
- B. How do we develop a framework for allowing different groups to interact effectively?
- C. Are there ways to facilitate a multicultural process?
- D. Are there ways to share power?
- E. Are there ways to enhance flexibility in operating under different conditions?

II. MOVING TOWARD MULTICULTURAL ORGANIZATIONS

Early seminar discussions focused on identification of the demographic characteristics of multicultural groups - which ethnic or cultural groups were present and in what proportion. Later discussions considered group characteristics and processes which would promote the participation of a more diverse range of people: the focus of the discussions shifted from group composition or membership to group processes which encourage equitable participation among groups.

Jackson and Holvino (1988) outline dimensions of organizational change during the transition from a monocultural to a multicultural organization (Figure 3). Within this framework, PCMA seminar discussions focused heavily on the characteristics of a multicultural organization, and the structures and processes necessary to create and maintain these organizations or groups.

The following were discussed as characteristics of multicultural group processes: mutual trust and safety; empathy; community or group identity across sub-groups; relatively equal access to power across groups; commitment to each other and/or a larger goal; respect for the identities of members of other sub-groups; and development of common understanding among sub-groups. These characteristics, which are not independent, are discussed in the following paragraphs.

Mutual trust and a sense of safety are important components of a multicultural group if it is to contribute to the development or enhancement of self knowledge - itself an important aspect of learning to work in a multicultural community. As assumptions about roles and processes are explored and challenged, individuals may learn both about their own roles in the group, and their experience of group interactions. Ambiguity may occur as roles are transformed in the process of becoming more multicultural and may contribute to a sense of discomfort or disorientation among individuals caught up in this process. This sense of anomie may have been a factor in the rise of right wing fundamentalism in the U.S., as individuals encountering a changing and ambiguous world have sought the apparent coherence and structure offered by authoritarian belief systems. Clarification of roles and respect for people who fill those roles may help to alleviate discomfort, but should not be allowed to truncate the process of learning and redefinition which are part of the transformation. Members of both previously dominant and previously oppressed groups will encounter this ambiguity and need to work for clarification. Building a sense of safety and mutual trust can facilitate risk taking and experimentation, while fear and mistrust may encourage rigid adherence to old patterns.

Figure 3
**Three Dimensions of Organization Change
 at Each Phase of the MCO Process**

	<u>Exclusionary</u>	<u>The Club</u>	<u>Compliance</u>	<u>Affirmative Action</u>	<u>Redefining</u>	<u>Multicultural</u>
Target of Change	--	Upper level management or Members of oppressed groups	Personnel and other systems and mechanisms	System: -structures -rewards -relationships -climate	System: -mission -values -structures	System and environment
Types of MCO Interventions	--	Management training Support and CR groups	EEO audits EEO training goal setting and action planning "Minority" training	Performance appraisal systems Racism and "isms" Career development programs	Visioning and strategic planning Skills for managing differences MC team building	Ecological planning MC autonomous teams and self- mangement sytems
Required Skills	--	Confronting and Interrupting offensive behavior	Law and policy analysis Education Bargaining	MCO systems diagnosis Intergroup relations	Value clarification Conflict management skills	Synergistic problem solving Alternative work structures

From: BW Jackson and E Holvino, "Multicultural Organization Development." PCMA Working Paper #11,
 University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, Michigan. July 1988

One way to increase safety within multicultural groups is to develop norms for the common spaces where groups come together. One important ground rule may be reciprocity. For powerful groups, who have previously assumed that interactions will occur in their language and in their interaction style, this may mean working with others to create or learn an alternative language and alternative patterns of interaction. New norms can help to create an atmosphere which is both collaborative and 'safe' for members of all groups. One example of such groundrules for a classroom setting is illustrated in Figure 4.

Empathy, or the ability to make an imaginative leap across groups, is a fundamental aspect of multiculturalism as members strive to understand the perspectives of others. Empathy must extend to include imperfect individuals and imperfect organizations at the same time that these imperfections are acknowledged and efforts made to work toward change.

The creation of a common identity across groups was considered in several discussions. Rituals were discussed as an example of a process which binds groups of people together through common experience. Rituals are often present within cultural groups, but less common across groups. The development of multicultural rituals may help to create bonds among groups. A collaborative process in which all groups participate to create common rituals may help both to develop community or group identity and enhance commitment to the transcendent group. However, this process may not be inherently equalizing: building multicultural rituals may simply serve to transfer power from one set of power holders to another. Attention to inclusive patterns of participation and power is necessary as the process of developing multicultural groups.

This discussion also considered ways to acknowledge and celebrate difference in the process of building commonality. A basis of respect is required before groups or individuals can begin to work together. Interfaith Councils are one example of organizations which have worked together toward common goals while respecting differences in belief systems. Groups which achieve this goal often operate in ways which are antithetical to principles of Weberian organizations: they tend to be non-hierarchical, and to be built on principles of shared decision-making power and responsibility.

Discussions acknowledged that the development of commitment and respect for members of other groups was not simply a matter of learning more about different groups. Non-dominant groups are not simply ignored in our society, but are actively oppressed: inclusion and information will not resolve the problem. We are a society of dominant and dominated groups, and racist and sexist ideologies are part of a culture and power structure which reinforce inequality. Discussion of multiculturalism without discussion of ideologies which maintain inequalities does not address the

Figure 4

Movement From Monocultural to Multicultural Classroom Environments

	MonoCultural Classroom	Transitional or Pluralistic Classroom	Multicultural or Anti-oppression Classroom
Membership	Exclusive to certain groups	Others are allowed in, Urged to 'fit'	Many kinds of people actively sought
Knowledge Source	Instructor Tradition or Cannon	Instructor open to students' reactions Include some Black, Latino, etc. and women sources as examples	Students and instructor interact and co-generate new know Framed by concern for multiculturalism Open focus on oppression - in content & proces
Ground rules/ norms (power & safety)	Set by instructor on basis of dominant culture One style - verbal/rational	Instructor sets & checks w/class, so 'safe' for some Recognize alternative styles	Jointly generated by students and instructor so 'safe' for all Use multiple styles Analyze white/male basis of "normal" rules
Authority	Instructor locus	Instructor locus, but friendly & open to suggestions Dominant student groups informally participate	Shared between instructor and students Shared among students of all groups Not white & male style
Pedagogy	Lecture Tests standard papers Instructor focus Instructor "fills" students Verbal/rational	Guided group discussion Instructor leadership Standard activities Open to alternatives	Co-leadership Open & evolving discussion Groupwork with attention to race/gender issues Interactions and activities to different learning styles Experiential focus
Out-of-class Contact	Limited, Formal Student initiative Focus on correcting errors	Accessible Informal	Pro-active by instructor On students' turf Focus on relationship an learning
Conflict Response	Repress Avoid	Recognize but deflect Prevent by being nice, courtesys and tolerant	Treated as opportunity for learning Created or sought
Evaluation	Stress "right/wrong" Rational/logical/ Verbal emphasis Uni-modal & standard	Stress 'right/wrong' with some expression Multi-modal & varied	Focus on expression & application Multi-modal & differentiated for various groups

societal norms which make these inequities untroubling for so many. Multicultural education within a racist society must incorporate anti-racist and anti-sexist agendas in opposition to the dominant culture (see Brandt, 1986, for a more complete discussion of anti-racism and multiculturalism).

Multicultural groups which work together toward an overarching goal may transcend intergroup conflict in the process. A common goal provides a basis for commitment to the larger collective, and provides a forum for learning about other groups in the process.

Movement toward more multicultural organizations will encounter resistance and conflict as well as gains. Antiracism and multiculturalism involve costs for white people and especially for white males. The process can and will be personally as well as socially uncomfortable as new systems of social relationships are created and as the positions of privilege occupied by whites and males are challenged. Some will resist change for this reason. Resistance to a multicultural agenda may take many forms, some of which are discussed in a later section of this paper, "Critiques of Multiculturalism."

Multiculturalism also involves change for groups which historically have occupied subordinate positions in the social structure. Movement from a system in which some groups are systematically silenced and excluded to one in which those groups have an active voice involves change for members of these previously silenced groups also. The transition from a position of relative powerlessness to one of relatively equal power has been called empowerment (See Paulo Freire, 1970, John Gaventa, 1980; Barbara Solomon, 1979; Maria Meis, 1981 for treatments of this topic)³.

Three examples of groups or organizations in the process of becoming more multicultural were discussed. One of these was the PCMA seminar group, as we explored our own process of learning about and implementing change. Two other case studies were presented during the course of the year. The first of these describes a long term 'consultation project' in a large corporation using small groups to engage staff at all levels in discussions of racism, sexism and change. The second case study described the results of a task force on diversity in a nationwide program in a government agency. These cases are presented in Appendix B.

3. Empowerment and empowering processes were explored in the 1989-90 PCMA seminar series. Discussions from this series are recorded in "Empowerment and Empowering Processes: A Theory Development Seminar Series," by A. Schulz and B. Israel. PCMA Working Paper #23, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, MI. (1991)

MULTICULTURALISM, CONFLICT, AND POWER

Multiculturalism necessarily involves conflict: this conflict may be intrapersonal, interpersonal or intergroup. Management of this conflict and the effects of power differentials among groups in conflict management, are central questions of concern to PCMA. Recognition and affirmation of multiple cultures does not create conflict, but rather forces issues to be addressed which might remain unacknowledged in a system in which only one culture is valued.

Discussions of multiculturalism which do not recognize and incorporate a discussion of power differentials and relevant conflicts mask a critical component of intergroup dynamics. Conflicts may arise between groups with relatively equal power, and especially between groups with great differences in access to resources. Working toward multiculturalism involves the acknowledgement of power and conflict, whether conscious or unconscious, a willingness to place limits on the exercise of that power by individuals/groups with traditionally greater access to power and a commitment to find productive and integrative ways of dealing with conflict.

I. SEPARATION AND COMMUNITY: CONFLICTS BETWEEN GROUPS

U.S. citizens of European and African descent have great historical differences in access to resources: these differences have both shaped and been shaped by intergroup conflict. Relationships between African Americans and European Americans have included enslavement, forced separation imposed on African Americans by whites, the removal of legal barriers based on race as a result of the Civil Rights Movement, and movement toward integration in at least some arenas (e.g. education). Now, in an apparent reversal of Civil Rights era goals, some educators are speaking out for segregated classrooms for African American students.

Initiatives to create separate classrooms or schools for African American students are an example of efforts to deal with power differentials between groups and the dominance of the white perspectives in classroom settings. Separation may provide an opportunity to be buffered from the debilitating effects of an educational system imbedded with implicit or explicit racism. It may also provide a forum from which to challenge inequities and injustices in the existing systems.

Discussion groups also may provide a forum for relearning and transforming old behavior patterns in groups which have dominated others. Individuals operate on the basis of internalized rules which may be difficult for them to perceive or change. Individual members of groups which

have been dominant or have exploited other groups may inadvertently enact patterns of behavior which oppress others. Small group discussions provide one forum within which to reflect on these behavior patterns and develop alternatives. However, these groups may be viewed with mistrust when they meet in a forum which excludes the non-dominant group (e.g. groups of white discussing racism or groups of men discussing sexism). They are likely to encounter suspicion that a structure which repeats old, exclusive structures will repeat old, oppressive processes and outcomes. Systems which allow the monitoring of these discussion groups by members of oppressed groups may help alleviate this mistrust.

While separatism may be one stage of movement toward more egalitarian relationships among groups: it may also indicate polarization between groups or a halt in efforts to work together. One task is to determine whether the separate groups are working toward different goals or whether they are working toward the same goal but with different strategies and within different forums. Differences may reflect differences in underlying assumptions and goals, or simply different strategies to reach similar ends. In addition, processes to bring the groups back together on a more equal footing are needed to prevent fragmentation and particularism. If separation of groups is one part of movement toward multiculturalism, transitional phases and transitional structures (bridge-building) must also become part of the process.

Building community and trust among groups is part of a discussion of multiculturalism. While separation can provide safety for considering and relearning ways of being and may be an important step for members of both dominated and dominating groups, this does not complete the process. Building a multicultural community involves forging links between these separated groups to learn new ways of being together. The task involves building a community which transcends ethnic, gender and class boundaries while recognizing and cherishing differences among groups.

II. INTERNALIZED POWER STRUCTURES: CONFLICT WITHIN

Issues of policy and access to resources may underlie conflict between groups, as discussed in the previous section. In addition to inter-group conflict, movement toward multiculturalism may also involve conflicts within the self which center around what is considered real, what is considered sacred, and challenges to power structures which have been internalized and incorporated into the psyche. In this sense, social transformation also involves personal transformation and may require the renegotiation of both personal and cultural identity. Perceived risks and incentives for personal change are important aspects of this process.

Issues of safety are likely to arise in the process of creating and enacting alternative visions of reality. If multiculturalism involves a process of learning to give credibility to other accounts of the world, internal conflict is a likely result, as individuals begin to question what is 'known'. In addition to anxiety and loss associated with relinquishing or renegotiating portions of an old identity, this transformation may also risk change in established social relationships. Resistance to change may be based in fear of these risks associated with personal transformation. Acceptance and acknowledgement of the discomfort created in this process can help to create a sense of safety which may allow individuals to move forward with the exploration of their beliefs, and the reconstruction of a new belief system within a more multicultural framework.

Motivation to work actively toward change may be based in experiences of alienation from mainstream culture and in experience with the abusiveness of that system. Individuals who have benefitted from current social structures and power differentials may need to discover and admit their own alienation to be able to challenge the injustice of the system. Those who have been oppressed within existing social structures may benefit from opportunities to validate their experience as well as their power to resist. Both processes will involve internal struggle and conflict, and the modification of power structures which have been internalized as fundamental belief systems.

III. CULTURAL DIFFERENCES IN DEALING WITH CONFLICT

Conceptions of the uses of conflict and of styles of managing conflict vary by culture as well as by gender within cultural groups. Creating multicultural processes involves both the development of respect for group differences and recognition of the ways in which differences may be intertwined with inequitable access to resources. Ethnic or cultural differences in conflict management style may perpetuate differences among groups in access to resources. This dynamic may be further exacerbated when issues of ethnicity or culture are part of the dispute⁴. Change involves the empowerment of oppressed groups as well as the obligation and motivation of members of dominant groups to modify interaction patterns which maintain inequities.

One aspect of patterns of interaction is language. The language in which conversations and negotiations are carried out may both reflect and reinforce power differentials between groups. The language of the dominant group may disadvantage non-native speakers, and the use of elite forms

4. See Mark Chesler (1989) "Racial/Ethnic/Cultural Issues in Dispute Resolution" PCMA Working Paper #28, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor.

of a language may disadvantage those with less formal education. In addition to language itself, styles of communication, norms about whether and how to address conflict, and cultural differences in the use of silence all influence multicultural interactions, and the use of conflict. While members of oppressed groups may have the ability to function in both dominant and non-dominant styles and languages, members of dominant groups are likely to communicate primarily in the dominant mode, having been protected by their position in the social structure from the necessity of learning other languages and styles. Thus, multiculturalism may involve the development of multilingualism, as well as flexibility in communication styles, depending on the demands of the situation.

While differences in conflict management styles may have cultural bases, they may also be related to position in the social structure. Those with low power may develop different strategies for managing conflict than those with greater access to resources. Gender, race, culture and class often become proxies for power or participation, obscuring the effects of dominance and oppression. More complex conceptualizations might explore interactions among gender, race, class and position in the power structure as they influence styles of conflict management, access to resources, and outcome.

Power in and itself may not be a barrier to multiculturalism, but some power structures may interfere with equitable processes. Centralized power over the distribution of resources may be used to maintain inequalities and group dominance. Severe power differentials interfere with cultural pluralism, serving instead to solidify inequities between groups. In contrast, transformational or collaborative power systems may be used to change or challenge inequalities and move toward more equitable processes.

CLIFFORD GEERTZ: POWER AND PRIVILEGE IN THE CONSTRUCTION AND USE OF CULTURAL STEREOTYPES

An early seminar discussion was based on a pair of readings, "The Uses of Diversity" by Clifford Geertz and "On Ethnocentrism: A Reply to Clifford Geertz" by Richard Rorty. Geertz, in his discussion of different cultural values chooses to relate a story which he calls "The Case of the Drunken Indian and the Kidney Machine." The story, which Geertz uses to illustrate contrasting values and hierarchies of values which create conflict between and within cultures, is then picked up in Rorty's reply, as an illustration for Rorty's defense of liberal democracy. Neither critiques the use of this demeaning cultural stereotype in the course of their discussions of diversity. The selection of the readings as seminar materials sparked a heated discussion among the seminar participants.

Some argued that these articles should not have been selected as seminar readings, imbedded as they were with the unchallenged cultural stereotype of a 'drunken Indian.' To give these articles a 'proper and considered intellectual forum' reflected insensitivity to the very issues which were central to the seminar topic. Seminar participants expressed concern that the article might alienate and offend readers by its apparently unselfconscious use of stereotypes in the context of a discussion of diversity. For these readers, the intellectual arguments presented by both Geertz and Rorty may be overshadowed and made inaccessible by the stereotypes presented unproblematically in the text.

Other group members argued for the inclusion of the Geertz reading, despite the use of the troublesome stereotype, as an important opportunity to analyze the use of cultural stereotypes. It was suggested that Geertz may have deliberately chosen to use this example in a discussion of diversity to be problematic for the reader and to promote the examination of personal boundaries.

These arguments reflect differing responses to the article. While some welcomed an opportunity to explore and discuss the ideas put forward in the article regarding diversity, others found the use of the cultural stereotype as an illustration so problematic that an academic discussion of Geertz's analysis became secondary. Cultural stereotypes are a means to reinforce and rationalize inequities between groups. The use of these readings, which perpetuate a demeaning stereotype while purporting to advocate diversity, raised important issues for participants in the seminar. While such examples can provide a forum for deconstruction and discussion of stereotypes, they may also serve to reinforce such beliefs and may be offensive to group members.

The discussion of Geertz's use of this example also considered whether it is possible to eliminate stereotypes from selections of readings (whether for seminars or courses), or whether such readings should be included and the racism or ethnocentrism they portray dealt with in discussion. There was agreement that the use of the illustration without comment by either Geertz or Rorty was problematic. Neither acknowledge the power structure imbedded in the illustration (although Geertz does allude to this in the closing paragraph of his article), with the result that the differences appear as "just difference." The absence of an analysis of dominance and oppression with respect to this example perpetuates acceptance of cultural stereotypes and the social inequities they reinforce.

CRITIQUES OF MULTICULTURALISM

There has been an organized and extensive backlash in response to discussions of multiculturalism, and proponents,

especially in academic settings, have been put on the defensive. The first apparent formal attack was framed by William Bennett, then Secretary of Education under the Reagan Administration. This has been followed by articles in Time (April, 1991), Newsweek (December, 1990) and The Chronicle of Higher Education (October, 1990), which have subsequently been linked to an attack on 'political correctness.

Some of the arguments raised in opposition to multiculturalism are considered in this section, along with some thoughts in response⁵.

1. Multiculturalism views ethnicity as destiny.

This critique is grounded in a perception that a focus on ethnicity or group identity undermines the emphasis on individuality which is fundamental to Western belief systems. An emphasis on ethnicity is seen as a denial of individual complexity and the ability to move across boundaries or groups. This critique assumes a model of multiculturalism in which groups have clearly defined, static boundaries, and is actually closer to what we have described as particularism or ethnocentrism, where emphasis is placed on reification of group characteristics. In contrast, the model of multiculturalism we have attempted to develop here emphasizes change and individual complexity, and the development of structures and processes which facilitate communication and understanding across group boundaries. Using the more flexible and fluid concept of culture described by more current cultural models, multiculturalism views ethnicity not as destiny but as an opportunity for growth and change beginning with the recognition of multiple perspectives and experiences.

2. Multiculturalism sacrifices 'Truth.'

A second criticism of multicultural arguments has been that they reduce knowledge to issues of power and culture, leaving no objective measure of 'truth' or what is 'right.' Advocates of multicultural thought do recognize a relationship between the construction of knowledge and the interests of powerful groups⁶. 'Truth' has been created disproportionately by those

5. This list of arguments in opposition to multiculturalism was first developed by Alex Aleinikoff, University of Michigan Professor of Law and a participant in the seminar sessions. Responses were articulated during the seminar discussions.

6. See for example, the discussions of J. Habermas (1971 and 1973) and C. MacKinnon (1987) referred to in the section "What Is Multiculturalism?"

with greater access to resources, including those resources which shape popular understandings and beliefs. The knowledge created has included myths and stereotypes about groups which are economically, politically or culturally marginalised. These have served, in turn, to justify the denial of social resources to these groups. Attempts to counter these stereotypes through critical examination, the reinterpretation of information, and the advancement of new information about oppressed groups are all aspects of multiculturalism. Such efforts do not seek to sacrifice the truth, but to construct new and more balanced knowledge which is based on dialogue among those with different conceptions and experiences.

3. Multiculturalism results in a sacrifice of standards.

Another critique argues that there are not enough 'qualified' members of some groups for each to be represented proportionately in higher education and employment. Attempts to equalize representation lead to a lowering of standards, and critics raise concerns about decreased quality and competitiveness.

This argument is based in an assumption that the current standards which predominate in educational and employment systems are the only legitimate standards. The challenge offered by multiculturalism is a critical examination of these standards, and their reconsideration in light of the values and criteria for excellence offered by other groups. It is likely that the standards of educational institutions and other organizations will be transformed - not sacrificed - as members of previously excluded groups are represented in greater proportions.

4. Multiculturalism loses what is central to Western culture.

Critics of multicultural thought argue that multiculturalism fails to value the core of Western culture: its liberatory nature, great books, great art, political theory.

Multiculturalism is not so much an attack on Western culture as an effort to acknowledge and enhance its richness. It challenges the ethnocentrism implicit in interpretations of Western thought which do not recognize the influence of African, Hispanic, Asian and Native American knowledge. And it challenges the assumptions which place Western culture at the center of knowledge, rather than recognizing its place within the context of the accomplishments of other cultures.

5. Multiculturalism is relativism.

Opponents of multiculturalism argue that it leads to a lack of standards or relativism: that it leaves no way to critique or evaluate. In reality, multicultural arguments challenge the reification of belief systems based on Western European thought, and explore what can be learned from other systems of knowledge and other perspectives. As in #3 above, multicultural arguments do not promote the destruction of standards per se, but rather the critical examination and reconstruction of standards incorporating the experience, beliefs and knowledge of multiple groups.

6. Multiculturalism is the 'New McCarthyism'.

It has been argued that multiculturalism, as it becomes a new form of 'political correctness', is the 'new McCarthyism', placing limits on what can and can not be voiced. This argument portrays multiculturalism as a new ideology attempting to silence opposing or discordant voices. In contrast, multiculturalism is an effort to recognize the ways in which some groups have been silenced by others, and to uncover, acknowledge and strengthen these voices.

7. Multiculturalism threatens a loss of power and prestige to currently powerful elites.

This argument may have some validity as multicultural discussions explore social asymmetries which perpetuate inequities of power and access to social resources. As these social and culturally constructed inequities are uncovered and challenged, currently powerful elites may experience a loss of relative power and prestige. In turn, others who have been systematically denied access to resources may gain greater access to decision making processes and other social resources as we move toward more egalitarian social relationships.

8. Multiculturalism destroys community.

Opponents have argued that multiculturalism emphasizes particular ethnic identities, denying the possibilities for community or collaboration across groups, and creating or exacerbating divisions in the social fabric. It is portrayed by these critics as the 'new provincialism' or 'Balkanization'. However, as discussed in the sections of this text on "Why Work Toward Multiculturalism" and "Separation and Community," multiculturalism seeks to create community

across different groups, not to maintain ethnocentric models which divide groups from each other.

The language used in many of the critiques of multiculturalism is vague and inflammatory, and the arguments are seldom grounded in an historical context⁷. In addition, arguments are taken to a level of abstraction which makes interpretation of meaning difficult: describing multiculturalism as the 'new McCarthyism' calls up an emotional response but does little to advance a clear and specific argument as grounds for discussion. Core themes within the criticisms outlined above suggest that the anti-multiculturalism argument is rooted in an ideology of assimilation which denies or seeks to obliterate differences among groups. This ideology involves a psychological defense of identity (see discussion of internalized power structures in the section titled "Multiculturalism, Conflict and Power"); preservation of the myth of neutrality and value-free research and knowledge; and an attempt to preserve the class and power privileges of an academic and economic elite.

The strategy of response to the backlash against multiculturalism rests on the ideological framework in which the arguments are imbedded. Many of the arguments have been framed as attacks against white, liberal academics who have been active in discussions of multiculturalism in academic communities. If the backlash is grounded in an assimilationist ideology along with a fear on the part of white men of being displaced by other ethnic groups and women, and if there are prohibitions or sanctions against attacking women and ethnic groups directly, the attack may target white, liberal academics as proponents of multiculturalism. The response framed by those under attack should recognize this potential displacement, and address the underlying issues in their response.

The myth that the university is a place to pursue apolitical interests without regard for culture and status (or race or gender) may be a starting point for an argument in response to this backlash. While the pursuit of disinterested knowledge is arguably a legitimate goal, it is essential to acknowledge the ways in which the pursuit of knowledge has been and is likely to be influenced by political processes and partisan values. Recognition of the imperfection and the political nature of academic knowledge includes recognition that an essential component of academia

7. See for example, J. Adler, "Taking Offense", in Newsweek, Dec. 24, 1990, and W.A. Henry III "Upside Down in the Halls of Academia", in Time, April 1, 1991. For a critique of these arguments, see M. Berure, "Public Image Unlimited: Political Correctness and the Media's Big Lie", Village Voice, June 18, 1991.

is the presence of multiple perspectives and ongoing debate. Multiculturalism is an extension of this debate and contributes by providing new and previously unacknowledged perspectives to the discussion.

CLOSING COMMENTS AND FURTHER QUESTIONS

The seminar series provided opportunities to explore the concept of multiculturalism, to clarify definitions, and to examine the processes which might move some individuals and groups toward more multicultural processes and structures. These discussions allowed examination of the extent to which our own group incorporated multicultural principles and processes, and ways in which we might move toward that goal.

The seminar discussions left many questions unresolved and unaddressed. These included:

1. Can there be multiple truths? How do we create an environment in which one truth will not destroy other truths?
2. Who is in and out of the multicultural space?
3. The notion of multi-racial/multi-ethnic is one of our characteristics for a multicultural space. The challenge remains of how to create this space.
4. How do we create community which respects and honors diversity?
5. What are the criteria for wisdom? What are the standards?

During the summer of 1991, faculty met as a group to discuss the seminar series for the 1991-92 academic year. Initial discussion of seminar topics included several themes which explore further some of the discussions of multiculturalism described in the preceding pages: what is the relationship between diversity and community (how to build community with diversity; and how to foster diversity within community); working for justice in an unjust and conflict-ridden world; exploration of the lives of change agents and conflict resolvers; building multicultural organizations and communities; and managing conflict arising from advocacy of multiculturalism and backlash to multicultural change efforts. A subgroup of faculty are working to create a new series of seminars for the 1991-92 academic year based on these and other unanswered questions from the multiculturalism seminar series.

Appendix A: Seminar Readings

Basso, KH. 1979. Portraits of "the Whiteman." Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

D'Souza, D. 1991. The New Segregation on Campus. American Scholar, Winter.

Feagin, J. 1991. The Continuing Significance of Race. Handout.

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The derisory tower, The New Republic. Feb 18, 1991: 5-6, 18-47.

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Appendix B THREE CASE STUDIES

CASE STUDY I: PCMA

Throughout the seminar we discussed the ways in which the group was multicultural and the ways in which we might become more multicultural. Power differentials within the group revolved around gender, race/ethnicity, and status within the university (staff, students, tenured and non-tenured faculty status). These differences were explored as they influenced the dynamics within the group, and contributed to our growing understanding of group process as an aspect of multiculturalism. Conflicts which arose through the discussions provided opportunities for learning about difference. Some of the themes and learnings which grew out of this examination of our own group process are discussed briefly below.

1. Alternative Ways of Learning

In our discussions we explored the process of the seminar and underlying assumptions about ways of creating learning situations. True to the academic model, early seminars were most often based on readings or presentations, followed by group discussion. Academic language was the norm, and familiarity with academic texts was often assumed. Both contributed to the exclusiveness of seminar discussions, limiting participation to those with an academic background. We explored alternative ways of learning which would be more inclusive, such as discussions based on the life experience of group members, or analysis of the process within the group itself. These forms of learning are accessible to a wider range of participants, and help move the discussion from the abstract to the personal and concrete.

2. Group Composition and Group Process

An ongoing theme in the seminar discussions was the extent to which multiculturalism is defined by the demographic composition of a group, and the extent to which it is a function of the process of the group. Demographic composition, or the extent to which individuals from different social groups are present, was considered one indicator of multiculturalism. However, also important are group processes and dynamics which influence the extent to which group members feel able to participate in the process, and to express conflicts, concerns or alternative perspectives.

In these discussions, particular attention was given to styles of interaction as they reflect power relationships within the group. The use of language, patterns of communication, and styles of conflict management can all reflect and reinforce power differentials within the group, and may ultimately discourage some from participation in the

group. Thus, multiculturalism involves attention to demographic composition, but also attention the dynamics within the group or organization which promote participation and comfort of all group members.

3. Insiders and Outsiders

Related to the above discussion, participants in the seminar talked about their own experiences of feeling like 'insiders' and 'outsiders' in the discussion group. A strong sense of solidarity among the original members of the seminar contributed to the comfort these individuals felt within the group. However, newer group members expressed feelings of 'outsiderness' with respect to the group, particularly when they first joined the group. The need to create processes which would facilitate the integration of new group members was considered, and a series of processes were put in place as a result.

4. Managing Conflict and Discomfort

Conflicts arose during the process of group self-examination and management of these conflicts was important to continuing the dialogue as well as the solidarity of the group. Some discussions were more difficult than others, and more difficult for some members of the group than others. To help manage this discomfort, the following guidelines were suggested: 1) when necessary, take a break from the discussion; 2) slow down the discussion and say things more slowly and carefully - stay grounded in your own feelings and the feelings of others in the room; and 3) be careful of how you say things - recognize that not everyone is fully protected at all times.

As discussions of the ways in which the seminar group was and was not multicultural progressed, we became more explicit about who we were as a group. We became increasingly aware of our internal construction and issues of race, gender and class within the group. We also became increasingly aware of barriers to confronting these issues, including fears of losing the sense of solidarity which existed among group members through conflicts which might arise through discussions of these differences.

CASE STUDY II: CHANGE THROUGH SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION

Two of the PCMA seminar discussions focused on a case study of a high technology corporation working on issues of racism and sexism through small group discussion. This discussion group, a "cultural studies group", was one of several interventions simultaneously operative in the organization. None of these interventions around discrimination and multiculturalism, by themselves, might be expected to have significant impact, but several of them together (with structural and technologic, as well as interpersonal goals) have the potential for (re)training a substantial cadre of organizational members and infusing the workplace with new norms, and with people committed to modelling and actualizing these new norms of multicultural behavior.

Each small group was comprised of twelve staff members and two co-facilitators (one African-American woman and one white male) contracted from outside the organization. Group members are heterogeneous by race, gender and position within the organization. Each group met for a twelve month period, one day or one weekend each month. The groups discussed race and gender relationships as a means to both share wisdom and confront others. The theory of change represented in this program is that as people begin to see their own experience and reality in different ways, they will begin to apply it to their own behavior: ultimately such personal changes can be translated into new organizational behavior. It is based in part on a belief that what is relevant to people is their own experience, and that change must be experientially based: didactic sessions will not accomplish this.

The agenda for the twelve-month period follows:

Session I

- A. Goals for the group. Personal introductions.
- B. Racism and Sexism - definitions and examples.
- C. Reports and discussion of personal race and gender experiences in the workplace.
- D. Creating learning partners for ongoing work between monthly sessions.

Session II

- A. Fishbowl exercises, by race, on what were people's learning agendas.
- B. In same race groups: a discussion of the helps and hindrances to trust and openness on racial issues. Then sharing this information across groups.
- C. Film and discussion: Bill Cosby on Prejudice
- D. Presentation of Jackson-Hardemin concepts of the development of racial identity. Then each participant developed their own racial identity chart

- E. Lecture on organizational racism and discussion of workplace examples.

Session III

- A. Full day discussion of advantages and disadvantages of membership in different racial groups.
 1. First in same race groups
 2. Then, come together for extended discussion in total group.

Session IV

- A. Discussion of the personal changes that each person needs to make to move toward multiculturalism...sacrifices and incentives.
- B. Discussion of where each person gets support for making such changes.

Session V

- A. "Red/Blue Game" (aka Prisoners Dilemma) by racially separate teams.

Session VI

- A. Discussion of books everybody was assigned: Autobiography of Malcolm X and the Martian Chronicles.
- B. Discussion of our own internal group dynamics.

Session VII

- A. Summary of Learnings about Race

Session VIII

- A. Guided fantasy on gender development issues.
- B. Fishbowl with separate gender groups.
- C. Gender specific rights of passage.
- D. Film "Tootsie"
- E. Same sex discussion groups of "one-up one-down" situations and behaviors.
- F. Experiences with gender fairness/unfairness and sexual harassment in the workplace.

Session IX

- A. Discussion of assigned readings on "multiculturalism" and "political correctness."
- B. Personal exploration of examples of 'sexism' and collusion with sexism in daily life. Then shared with larger group.
- C. Discussion of time women felt disempowered by men and men acted in ways that disempowered women.

Session X

- A. Discussion of assigned readings: Every Goodbye Ain't Gone and Innocents Abroad.
- B. Watch and discuss tape of Bill Moyers interviewing Robert Bly
- C. Go together to evening performance of "Sweet Honey On The Rock."

Session XI

- A. Fishbowl of men discussing Palmer's article on "10 Ways to Disempower Women" and its relevance to this group and workplace.
- B. Fishbowl of women discussing experiences of disempowerment in this group and workplace.

Session XII

- A. Presentation of personal plans to create/implement change in race/gender relations within the workplace.
- B. Discussion of assigned movies: "Thelma and Louise" and "Jungle Fever."
- C. Plans for final session.

Session XIII

- A. Continued discussion of workplace change plans.
- B. Review of personal learnings through the year.
- C. Goodbye Celebration.

CASE STUDY III: MOVING FROM DIVERSITY TO MULTICULTURALISM

A seminar participant had been working as a member of a task force on diversity for a nationwide federal program which was under some pressure to increase the diversity of their work force. The task force was created and assigned responsibility for development of definitions, goals and strategies for achieving workforce diversity. The task force was primarily comprised of members of the organization, along with two outside members. While there were more women and people of color than white men on the task force, it was chaired by a white man who was perceived as part of the traditional white male leadership of the organization.

The first meeting of the task force was spent entirely on team building. Following preliminary discussion of the issues, the task force was divided into four working groups. Each group was formed with attention to race and gender diversity, but also with diversity of scores on the Myers-Briggs personality scale. Three of the task force subcommittees were headed by women of different ethnicities, while the fourth was headed by a white male.

In the large group meetings, when the four task forces came together, there was increasing silence by people of color, although there was a lot of direct verbal confrontation in the small group sessions. A process session was held to consider these concerns, and the faculty members who presented this case was asked to share his perceptions of what was occurring and later was requested to draft a paper describing the fundamental organizational change involved in moving toward multiculturalism within organizations. Diversity is described as increasing the representation of people of color and white women in the organization, while multiculturalism refers to change in fundamental values, processes and structures of the organization. The recommendations made by the task force to promote organizational change include change in organizational mission, resources, power, structures and processes, and values and behaviors (see Chesler and Crowfoot, 1989 for further discussion of these components of organizational change).

Implementation of the changes recommended by the task force has begun. There has been some resistance among the core management to the changes, although some members have moved forward visibly to support the plan. Discussion of change in power structures has been met with resistance and a lack of understanding of why this is an important element of movement toward multiculturalism. A marketing approach has been used to design and execute the changes advocated by the task force, in the hope that this will facilitate change and reduce resistance.

The core decision making group for this organization is almost entirely comprised of white men. One of the decisions which came out of the task force work was to

supplement this core group of white men with a group of women and people of color staff whose regular positions will be modified to provide two year, part time appointments which will enable them to participate in the top level decision processes within the organization.

PCMA discussion of this presentation considered the shift from an initial focus on diversity within the existing organization to the more fundamental organizational changes implied by multicultural organization. These changes may be perceived as threatening, and resistance or backlash may arise from power holders within the organizations, as in this case. There may be times when it is useful to underline change and the implications, and at other times it may be more constructive to simply begin a change process without calling too much attention to it. A process which is too overt, too visionary, or too visible may mobilize backlash and make the operation more vulnerable. As an alternative to the multicultural concepts used in this case, the process could have been framed primarily as workforce diversity, and simply slipped in some more multicultural elements without calling attention to them.

However, explicit articulation of longer range goals may also have positive effects. It makes a clear statement of commitment to achieving organizational conditions in which members of all groups are respected, valued and supported in maintaining their identities. When such a visible approach is chosen, potential resistance should be anticipated, and strategies prepared in response.

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