

**Views on Diversity and Inclusion in Pittsburgh:
A Community-Based Rapid Appraisal**

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Truth never damages a cause that is just.

Mohandas K. Gandhi

. . . so many different religions,

so many different churches.

If God really loves me, then

why does life keep hurting me?

Kirk Franklin

African American Gospel Singer

Introduction

Racism continues to resonate as one dissonant chord in the chorus that resounds as American Democracy. However, race continues to be a topic that is largely avoided in informed public discourse, and it continues to be a polemic that separates “Black” and “White” world views. Researchers (Phelps, Taylor, & Gerald, 2001) have examined the impact of cultural mistrust and its potential association with an individual’s motivation to interact with members of other cultures. Kiselica (1999) has suggested that there are a series of both cognitive and emotional changes that individuals must undergo in the process of developing a non-racist identity.

Such polemics beget numerous questions. Why is there so little dialogue about race relations—especially dialogues that include cross-racial representation? Why do conversations about race and racism exclusively among Caucasians typically have such a dramatically different tone than do parallel conversations exclusively among persons of color? Why is there so little tolerance for *difference* in what has become our highly charged politic-identitarian social climate? How can we take better advantage of the richness of diversity found in our cultural and social heritages? Why is it so difficult for us to talk about the effects of exclusion and to embrace the opportunities associated with inclusion?

This study looked at local issues of diversity and inclusion in one metropolitan area of the US. A focus group and key informant interviews aimed to capture a preliminary view of how a purposefully selected sample of local residents regard inclusion. This paper presents a summary of findings, discusses mechanisms for improving cross-cultural communication, and suggests prospects for future research on diversity and inclusion.

Background

This inquiry has followed the work of Levers et al. (2002). The previous study examined social and cultural issues relating to racism and trans-generational trauma within African American families, as these issues were reflected upon by participants after viewing the photo exhibit “*Without Sanctuary*” [available on line]. The exhibit presented old post cards, mostly of

lynchings of African Americans. The purpose of the investigation was to better understand how the generational transmission of racism and its effects have had an impact on perceptions of democracy and social justice in contemporary American life. Findings of the study presented powerful data that suggest the need for more research concerning contemporary disconnects between Democratic ideals and the lived experience of Democracy among many African Americans. One of the participants in that study, the director of the local regional affiliate of a national organization concerning social justice, asked if Levers' 2003 cohort of qualitative research students could do a follow up study regarding the issue of diversity and inclusion in the greater Pittsburgh area.

Statement of the Problem

Pittsburgh represents one of the larger metropolitan areas in the US. The city is typically benchmarked in comparison to other metropolitan areas like Minneapolis-St. Paul, Denver, San Diego, Atlanta, Seattle, St. Louis, Tampa-St. Petersburg, Portland, and Phoenix. It has moved from primarily a steel industry-based economy to a relatively renowned health care-based economy and a newly emerged technology-based economy. Yet local residents complain that there has been a brain drain in recent years, especially of young professionals—and perhaps even more especially of young minority professionals. In fact, a recent Pittsburgh-based study (Griffen, Pickworth, & Bejarano, 2002) identified perceptions of Pittsburgh as being racist and closed-minded, noting the flight of young people—especially minorities—from the city and concluding that this does not bode well for attracting new residents to the area. While Pittsburgh is viewed as unique by some for its relatively “intact” ethnic neighborhoods, many residents do not feel included in the main stream.

Research (Lee & Ottati, 2002) has further implied that contemporary ethnic problems in the US do not only involve “Black and White” issues. Many experience exclusion based on factors associated with race, class, gender, ethnicity, ability, religion, appearance, and sexual preference. The *Inclusion Press* (2003) describes inclusion as embodied in the following four statements: (1) inclusion is about living full lives—about learning to live together; (2) inclusion makes the world

our classroom for a full life; (3) inclusion treasures diversity and builds community; and, (4) inclusion is about our ‘abilities’—our gifts and how to share them.

The local affiliate of the National Conference for Community and Justice (NCCJ) recently has inaugurated its *Inclusion Task Force* (ITF) as a first step in developing a strategic plan for achieving diversity in the city of Pittsburgh. The mission of the NCCJ, as described on its national web site, is as follows:

The National Conference for Community and Justice, founded in 1927, as The National Conference of Christians and Jews, is a human relations organization dedicated to fighting bias, bigotry and racism in America. NCCJ promotes understanding and respect among all races, religions and cultures through advocacy, conflict resolution and education (NCCJ).

The local regional NCCJ web site promotes the vision “to build community among our diverse peoples in order to make America a better place for all of us...not just some of us” (NCCJ/Pgh).

An underlying assumption in initiating the local *ITF* effort is that many residents do not perceive the local culture as embracing inclusion, in spite of relative diversity. This is personally problematic for any individual who does not fit local “norms” relating to race, class, gender, ethnicity, ability, religion, appearance, and sexual preference. On a social scale, the problem extends to the collective milieu, insofar as society does not benefit from the talents that are never realized by individuals who have not had opportunities to actualize their abilities. Identifying and understanding the nature of the problems associated with the experience of inclusion becomes an essential aspect of the inquiry here (Peshkin, 2000). Just what does inclusion mean? And how is inclusion experienced by stakeholders?

Purpose of the Study

The purpose for conducting this community-based study was to better understand how individuals experience inclusiveness—or a lack thereof—in a relatively diverse context. While the main focus was on race, the researchers also were open to nuances of gender, ethnicity, ability, religion, appearance, and sexual preference. This inquiry also provided an opportunity for

hands-on qualitative research experience for a group of doctoral students in the counselor education program at Duquesne University, located in Pittsburgh. Anticipated outcomes of the investigation were three fold: (1) to explore new ways to facilitate, increase, and improve cross cultural communication and interracial relations within the Pittsburgh Community; (2) to offer analyses of interview data from members of a focus group and from key informants who discussed inclusion issues in the Pittsburgh community; and, (3) to suggest a baseline for comparison of attitudes in the Pittsburgh community, as represented by focus group participants and other key informants, with the attitudes of parallel groups in other American metropolitan centers. It was hoped that such information can be useful in designing training for counselors, teachers, and others that aims to enhance cultural sensitivity in these fields and in the ability of these professionals to deliver culturally relevant public education.

Significance of the Study

The results of this investigation have the potential to enhance our understandings of racism in American society. The study also offers an opportunity for exploring the possibilities associated with diversity and inclusion. Such an investigation is of particular significance to professional counselors and other mental health professionals, insofar as better understandings of culture and society positions the mental health field to develop services that are more responsive to the needs of typically underrepresented groups; the importance of this has been emphasized in a recent Surgeon General's report. This inquiry has attempted to inform the following question: What does inclusion mean to individuals within the local context?

Research Design

This was a field-based study, informed by the principles of Participatory Research and Rapid Appraisal Methods (RAMs). The RAMs included a focus group and key informant interviews. The focus group was comprised of nine individuals representing the multiple sectors of business, education, health, religion, the media, law, and government. Key informant interviews were conducted with six of the nine focus group participants and three additional subjects identified for their knowledge about the topic. Dr. Lisa Lopez Levers, of Duquesne University, supervised the project, and Ms. Betty Pickett, MSW, director of the local regional affiliate of the National

Conference on Community Justice and Chair of the *Inclusion Task Force*, orchestrated relevant community involvement. Dr. Emma Mosley, also of Duquesne University, served as an advisor to the project.

Beebe (2001) has pointed out that RAM uses ethnographic techniques and shares many of its characteristics; however, rapid appraisal “differs in two important ways: (1) more than one researcher is always involved in data collection and teamwork is essential for data triangulation; (2) more than one researcher is involved in an iterative approach to data analysis and additional data collection” (p. 1). Given the nature of the community/university research team, these tenets of RAM were easily accommodated. According to a USAID publication (1996) some of the strengths of rapid appraisal methods are their rapidity, low cost, and flexibility, as well as their effectiveness at “. . . providing in-depth understanding of complex socioeconomic systems or processes” (p. 2). This last point made rapid appraisal methods a highly suitable choice for examining the nexus of phenomena under study here. According to the authors of a British study of inclusive strategies for race and gender in urban regeneration (Brownill & Darke, 1998, p. 5), “One technique that has worked in development projects...and which takes an inclusive approach is Participatory Rapid Appraisal...There are very few examples of its use in Britain but it is a tool that could be more widely applied.”

The aims of this rapid appraisal research were accomplished by capturing the lived-experience responses of a purposefully selected group of community participants to questions related to local diversity and inclusion. Multiple research strategies were used to meet the aims of the study, and this methodological triangulation served to increase the trustworthiness of the study (Berg, 2001; Patton, 2002; Tesch, 1990).

While the focus group and key informant interviews were attentive to the spectrum of diversity-related issues, the main focus of this inquiry was on race as a beginning point of examination. The inquiry was framed by W. E. B. Du Bois’ discourse on race in America, in juxtaposition with the theories articulated in Alexis de Tocqueville’s *Democracy in America*; the theoretical framework also relied upon post-structural analyses of the nature of institutional power and of

socially constructed knowledge (Derrida, 2001; Foucault, 1980a, 1980b, 2001). Although the research design was based on the tenets of participatory action research and Rapid Appraisal Methods, it was further informed by an existential-phenomenological perspective, emphasizing van Manen's (1990) notion of *lived experience*. This theoretical triangulation enhanced the trustworthiness of the inquiry (Berg, 2001; Patton, 2002; Tesch, 1990).

Instrumentation

As is often the case in qualitative investigations, the researchers are the instruments. Focus group facilitators and interviewers used protocols with predetermined sets of semi-structured focus group and interview probes. All research participants were asked to sign participation agreements and consent-to-tape forms. Key informant interviews were audio taped, and the focus group was videotaped. The focus group agreements specified that the videotape could be used for instructional purposes. Otherwise, all usual forms of confidentiality were used in this study, including the use of codes rather than names in reporting the findings.

Purposive Sample

Initial consultation with professionals in the community who are well-networked around diversity issues yielded a list of individuals who are leaders within the sectors in which they work and who are knowledgeable about the various aspects of this study (Krueger, 1994; Morgan, 1998). An attempt was made to select a diverse group of people representing multiple sectors, ethnicities, gender, and age. We also felt that it was important that the group consist of both Pittsburgh natives and residents who had moved into the area. Potential participants were contacted, informed about the nature of the project, and asked if they would be willing to participate in the focus group and a follow up individual interview. Most were willing and able to do both; in a few cases, persons were able to do only one or the other. Of those contacted, nine persons were able to participate in the focus group. Subsequent to the focus group, six of the nine participants were available for key informant interviews, and three additional persons who had been unable to attend the focus group agreed to be interviewed. Demographics related to all participants in the study can be found in Tables 1 and 3 below.

Data Analysis

All audio and videotapes associated with the project were transcribed and word processed. Preliminary analysis included the initial elimination of superfluous material, followed by a coding process that sought to identify “units of meaning” (Kruger, 1981) and “lived experiences” (van Manen, 1990). Because the research team consisted of three principal- and nine student-investigators, both individual and group analyses and interpretations were conducted. This led to a richly iterative process of analytical triangulation, thereby enhancing the trustworthiness of the study (Berg, 2001; Patton, 2002; Tesch, 1990).

Findings and Discussion

The main focus of this paper relates to an increased understanding of and sensitivity to diversity and inclusion issues; therefore, the preliminary results of the focus group and the key informant interviews are offered below. However, a secondary focus here includes the pedagogical use of the research project; therefore, relevant pedagogical issues have been identified, and these also are presented and discussed below as findings of the inquiry.

The Diversity/Inclusion Focus Group

The focus group video captured a powerful dialogue and provided a useful format for reviewing the data. The makeup of the focus group and participants’ demographics are detailed in Table 1.

Table 1: Focus Group Demographics

Code	Sector	Education	Ethnicity*	Age**	Gender	Residence***
FG-1	Education	Graduate Degree	EA	L	F	Res
FG-2	Business	Graduate Degree	AA	Y	M	New
FG-3	Media	Graduate Degree	EA	L	F	Lifer
FG-6	Religion	Graduate Degree	EA	L	M	Lifer

FG-8	Government	Professional Academy	AA	L	M	Lifer
FG-9	Government	Professional Academy	EA	L	M	Lifer
FG-10	Education	Graduate Degree	EA	M	F	Res
FG-11	Health/Education	Graduate Degree	ME	L	F	Res
FG-12	Health/Education	Graduate Degree	H	L	F	New

*Ethnic Classification: African American = AA

European American = EA

Hispanic = H

Mixed Ethnicities = ME

**Age classification: Young Professional (under 35 yo) = Y

Mid-Career Professional (35-50 yo) = M

Later-Stage Professional (over 50 yo) = L

***Residence Classification: Life-Long Native Resident of Pittsburgh = Lifer

Pittsburgh Resident of more than 10 years = Res

Pittsburgh Resident of less than 10 years = New

One purpose of the focus group was to define “inclusion” and generate discussion about “inclusion” as a goal for the Pittsburgh community, as this relates to the various broad constituencies represented by these individuals. Two of the principal investigators led the group in answering the questions, “how do we define full inclusion and how do we achieve it?” The facilitators informed the group that they were seeking language that would represent or embody all, where anyone could recognize himself or herself within the language.

In defining “inclusion,” the group members determined that the expression goes beyond the mere presence of a diverse people, to full acceptance and active participation of those individuals at work and in the community. Although they did not use the word, the participants seemed to be

describing what might be called “heart,” or perhaps what professionals in the counseling field term “unconditional positive regard,” or perhaps “full acceptance”—as one might accept the member of the same family—one family. They described inclusion as beginning with the assumption that all belong; all are accepted and understood—one does not have to prove him or herself to be a member. A theme of empowerment emerged, of having a voice, of having the opportunity for full and real participation—of moving beyond mere presence to “engagement.” A theme emerged of progressing from a mere number representing some classification of people to an active viable involvement; evolving from a guest invited to only sit at the table, to one who can eat, and drink, and laugh, and cry in understanding and empathy with others at the table. Participants expressed frustration and yearning for an inclusion that would move individuals in the work place to a higher level of self-worth and value, and that should in turn lead to retention of a diverse body of people. The terms “full,” “real,” and “involved” persisted throughout the conversation.

In addressing the question of how one would know if a person feels included, an emphatic consensus declared that one should simply *ask* the person. This suggested themes associated with the dominant culture’s reluctance to raise issues associated with “delicate” matters, like race. As the group defined a vision of inclusion and how to determine fulfillment, the group also moved toward how this might be achieved. The group discussed the need for education, mandates, policies, political will, and role models. Emphasizing the importance of political will, **FG-8** stated the following:

We are having this discussion at a time when the “moral leader” of the country has issued a directive to the Justice Department to join in an interpretation of inclusion that opposes affirmative steps being taken by the University of Michigan to create diversity on campus. So, for me, diversity and inclusion require deliberate steps to be taken to achieve that diversity, or it will not be achieved. And I’ve heard many groups, like this one, in discussing inclusion, value the principle of inclusion, but have some problems with the implementation. So I just think that we have to be clear that our ideological value of it is insufficient. We have to be willing—we have to value it enough—to take the steps necessary to achieve it—and to achieve it without compromising equality—and

to achieve it and maintain it—even if it costs some money—and often times it will. But the implementation of it is far more important than the idea of it.

In discussing education, an emergent theme related to sensitizing the *Majority* to the benefits of inclusion of the *Minority* in an effort to remove barriers and change perceptions. Skeptical by virtue of history, the group participants shifted the topic to mandated inclusion, and the discussion focused on difficulties in the 2003 political arena. The group seemed to experience some cognitive dissonance, as the group expressed concern for “losing ground” and losing opportunities, but this concern gave way to further descriptions of “true” inclusion. This vision for inclusion would define “normal” as a diverse community where differences abound, beginning with children who might find it strange to be in the company of only those who look like or act like them—diversity would be expected—the norm—room for everyone at the table. The group returned to themes of sensitivity and awareness. Participants expressed the need to move beyond formal education and socially constructed knowledge to an *essential* or *true* knowledge. Inclusion would mean all individuals, all differences—even those they oppose—together, as the standard.

A final theme of “modeling” emerged. Beyond education, awareness, and sensitivity, participants expressed the need for action by those in a position of power. They discussed sensitization as an avenue for building inclusion; however, they felt that change could be accomplished only by witnessing those in the media and in leadership positions actually valuing inclusion and displaying inclusion-based behaviors. They felt that this moved beyond policy, to people in power—people who could demonstrate a difference by their behavior, modeling to influence those in less powerful positions. The group moved to a conversation about racism as a dimension of interpersonal relationships versus institutional racism. **FG-1** reported an incident involving the local construction site of a school building; she reported that a blast forced all workers to evacuate, and in viewing the stream of 180 construction workers, not one was African American. In response to this report, **FG-8** stated the following:

That’s an important definition of racism that often gets obliterated from the discussion because we want to make the definitions have to do with interpersonal relations and not institutional racism. And quite frankly, it’s the institutional racism that does more of the

damage than the question of attitudes. I was really pleasantly surprised to hear the Republican governor of Michigan defend the death row exonerations with the kind of data and background that he had amassed before making his speech. And so it wasn't a liberal Democrat—the typical/usual suspect—this was an otherwise conservative Republican governor. But the data couldn't be refuted—it couldn't be refuted. And he made his case quite well. We do not have business and political leaders who are leaders in the discussion of diversity. White political leaders have a key role to play in sensitizing and educating the White general public—and they most often fail or shy away from bringing up controversial issues such as racism and inclusion—that's both political leaders and business leaders—it's left to religious leaders and minorities. And those are the usual suspects, and people don't hear them the same way they would hear a White Republican governor of the state of Michigan. So unless in a city like Pittsburgh the president of PNC and Mellon and Citizens Bank, and unless the Chief of Police and the Mayor of the city and the President of City Council and all the Council members are running around the city—in months other than February—talking about inclusion, then we're really not serious about doing it, we just want to talk about it.

In closing, the group returned to the theme of “heart,” and to the need to nurture acceptance and inclusion on a continual basis—rearticulating the overall push/pull tensions of the burning desire for true acceptance and the stinging reality of mandated implementation. Yet, the group expressed a sense of hopefulness and appeared to feel that the discussion had meaning and worth. Some also looked to the possibility of engaging in an assessment of the level of diversity satisfaction through the use of a potential self-inventory tool. Others hoped for a day when “diversity committees” and other such efforts would no longer be necessary, because diversity would be interwoven throughout all aspects of an organization and a community. The major themes that emerged from analyses of the data are found in Table 2.

Table 2: Focus Group Themes

Themes	Thematic Content

<p>Defining Inclusion</p>	<p>Moving beyond the presence of a diverse people to full acceptance and active participation at work and in the community all belong Heart—the need to nurture acceptance Values Inclusion as an identified emotion (feeling of inclusion) Engagement—“just showing up is not going to do it!” How to know if a person feels included? Ask! “Inclusion becomes the standard that we expect to see without exception—and all are represented”</p>
<p>Achieving Inclusion</p>	<p>All sectors must cooperate to make it happen Asking people for their opinions Allowing everyone to have a voice Engaging people in the effort Education - Sensitivity - Awareness Mandates Policies Political will Role models Commitment Being intentional or deliberate in efforts to include Activism Race must become a non-issue Media</p>

	Churches
Barriers to Achieving Inclusion	<p>Lack of education</p> <p>Local perceptions of racism</p> <p>Pittsburgh as a diverse yet segregated city</p> <p>Local brain drain</p> <p>Economic disparity</p> <p>Social class bias</p> <p>Differing generational perceptions, attitudes, and expectations</p> <p>Local versus “Transplanted” Pittsburgher attitudes</p> <p>In past 15 years energy/commitment/will for inclusion on decline</p> <p>Media</p> <p>Churches</p>
Empowerment	<p>Having a voice</p> <p>Opportunity for full and authentic participation</p> <p>Moving from <i>presence</i> to <i>engagement</i></p>
Racism	<p>Maladaptive Interpersonal Relationships versus Institutional Racism</p> <p>There is a need for government to take a leadership role in addressing institutional racism—and ultimately inclusion</p>
Knowledge Construction	<p>Moving beyond formal education</p> <p>Use of a self-inventory to provide more knowledge about inclusion</p>
Modeling/Leadership	<p>Need for action by those in power</p> <p>Witnessing behavior/action that values inclusion</p> <p>“Helping people believe it’s happening”</p>

	White leaders have a key role in educating the general public Diversity of leadership is needed
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At the end of the focus group, participants concluded that as a community we talk about inclusion and diversity on a surface level. To effectively create constructive change, “We all need to talk” at a deeper level and to take action.

The Key Informant Interviews

Each of the nine student-investigators conducted a key informant interview with one co-researcher/subject as assigned by the professor. Of the nine, six co-researchers had participated in the focus group, and three had agreed to the interview but had been unable to attend the focus group. The demographics of the nine co-researchers are detailed below, in Table 3.

Table 3: Key Informant Interview Demographics

Code	Sector	Education	Ethnicity*	Age**	Gender	Residence***
KI-1	Education	Graduate Degree	EA	L	F	Res
KI-2	Business	Undergraduate Degree	AA	Y	M	New
KI-3	Media	Graduate Degree	EA	L	F	Lifer
KI-4	Business	Graduate Degree	EA	Y	F	New
KI-5	Law	Graduate Degree	AA	M	M	New
KI-6	Religion	Graduate Degree	EA	L	M	Lifer
KI-7	Education	Graduate Degree	ME		F	Res

				L		
KI-8	Government	Professional Academy	AA		M	Lifer
KI-9	Government	Professional Academy	EA		M	Lifer

*Ethnic Classification: African American = AA

European American = EA

Mixed Ethnicities = ME

**Age classification: Young Professional (under 35 yo) = Y

Mid-Career Professional (35-50 yo) = M

Later-Staged Professional (over 50 yo) = L

***Residence Classification: Life-Long Native Resident of Pittsburgh = Lifer

Pittsburgh Resident of more than 10 years = Res

Pittsburgh Resident of less than 10 years = New

Key Informant Interviews were conducted with nine co-researchers in order to better understand local experiences of inclusion. The interviews produced a volume of data, which is still undergoing analyses. For the purpose of a timely delivery of this paper, only the most preliminary analyses are offered below; for this reason, interpretations here are limited to only the most salient aspects of the interviews. A brief synopsis of each interview is provided, followed by a synthesis of the themes that emerged from the interviews.

KI-1. This Key Informant felt that the focus group itself was a milestone for Pittsburgh, as the diversity within the group was broad, and this diversity felt natural. She described diversity with children and adolescents locally as not only based on race, ethnicity, and culture, but also as based on socio-economic status, residency from different parts of the area, coming from blue color versus professional families, and mental and physical challenges. **KI-1** believed that inclusion-related growth has been incremental and is a step in the right direction. She felt that it has had positive effects on some kids with some issues. She said that there is now a “rainbow of students” involved in school-based student advisory councils. She said that city

schools now have the ability to maintain a middle class, as well as an ability to maintain a 40% Caucasian population, instead of migrating back to segregated schools. **KI-1** identified numerous local challenges. Kids continue to adopt the morays and belief systems of parents. A racial incident at a school typically started 20 years prior at a kitchen table. It is difficult for schools—and even churches—to have an impact on race-related feelings and attitudes. A challenge specific to schools relates to school counselor job descriptions that emphasize scheduling and paperwork, rather than working with the children. The schools need career counselors, developmental counselors, and experts in groups; the system needs to enhance the management of student service personnel by providing training around coping with bullying, communication, and crisis intervention. The schools also need to reinforce confidentiality policies. **KI-1** viewed the largest challenge for schools as the “loner” kid—the one who does not stand out, who cannot be recognized. She expressed concern about issues related to guns, violence, and suicide, and for finding a way for these at-risk, invisible students to connect. She believed that the greatest challenge for the city relates to labor unions’ hesitancy toward diversity and inclusion, and to how Pittsburgh is seen as a closed community.

KI-2. This Key Informant moved to Pittsburgh two years ago to work for a large area corporation. As a transplant, the small minority population inhabiting Pittsburgh surprised him. He believed that it is difficult for Pittsburgh to attract many transplants because there is such a small minority population here. He observed that people tend not to migrate out of their neighborhoods; although ethnic identity is an important aspect of local life, communities tend to be inwardly focused and remain within extended families. **KI-2** offered valuable insights into fostering inclusion in the Pittsburgh area. He believed that inclusion should start with learning how to manage relationships through the work environment, communities, schools, and other social systems. He said that one way to facilitate such connective relationships is by asking people what they think. If people are able to understand and know what others believe, want, and need, then they can begin to construct a foundation for relationship building. Another way to facilitate change for adults in the working arena is through having them *act* their way into a *new way of thinking* and through having them *think* their way into a *new way of acting*. More specifically, if adults in the work environment begin to behave in more appropriate ways toward

inclusion, the individual may eventually start believing in it. Inclusion can occur if Pittsburghers can figure out a way to leverage the positive and negative aspects of the city. The solution he offered relies upon beginning to build these connective relationships.

KI-3. This Key Informant was very interested in diversity issues and excited to be part of the project. She talked about the media and their responsibility in covering “good” and “bad” news. Her sector is sensitive to representing all people in the news; there is a diversity committee that is exploring diversity training with all employees. She spoke about inclusion within her organization, saying that, “It is important to begin this dialogue and process in our own organizations and environments.” **KI-3** lived on the west coast for 10 years and sees Pittsburgh as 20 years behind them on inclusion and diversity issues. Raised in Pittsburgh and dedicated to city progress, she is a community leader and involved at many levels. She is also an activist; this has made her more aware of “White privilege,” and she is eager to promote diversity, thus challenging people out of their comfort zones. She strongly supports volunteerism—especially in the schools—and encourages people to get out into the community to be with people who are different than they are, thus affecting their personal paradigms. She emphasized that paradigms need to be changed in order to embrace inclusion in our communities.

KI-4. This Key Informant defined inclusion as “everyone who is interested in being included in whatever it is you’re doing—is invited, available, and can attend without any restrictions.” She introduced topics that pertained to business, claiming that racial inclusion was highly valued in her organization, and that the more people were included, the more networking power they have at the negotiation table. She said that inclusion made good economic sense: “There is certainly an interest in including as many peoples’ opinions as possible during the planning process so that whatever comes out of it is truly representative of a large cross-section of people.” She seemed to imply that inclusion gave a higher chance of economic gain. **KI-4** then discussed inclusion in her non-professional life. She claimed “It is less clear to me what inclusion means, we don’t talk about it as much, you know, among my friends and such.” She discussed that being a transplant to Pittsburgh and making friends is like being adopted. She met

her local friends through her fiancée who is a “Pittsburgher.” She admitted that a vast majority of friends in her social life were Caucasian and that as a rule these groups were close-knit. Joining them was difficult or sometimes impossible. **KI-4** redefined inclusion later in the interview in a business sense as “talking to people about what they need and helping them drive their own agenda.” She said that this typified the shifting theme of racial and social class inclusion in the business sector; communities that were less economically viable were more likely to be excluded by outside business investors—larger organizations carry power and do not listen to or include communities of low economic status. **KI-4** claimed that racial discrimination happens subtly in Pittsburgh. She stated: “It is almost like they tell you that they are sorry, they just didn’t think about you—it is not purposeful, they didn’t think about it. That is almost more insidious than outright discrimination, which is easier to fight against.” In this type of discrimination, people become invisible or insignificant in daily interactions. **KI-4** described local minority communities as predominantly lower to lower-middle class. Minority transplant professionals have difficulty setting down roots in the area because they are seeking minorities from the middle to upper class with no “baggage” from living in poverty. This led to discussion about how Pittsburgh is not attractive to some groups of people because of its economic/class structure.

KI-5. This interview illuminated the contrast between minorities who are “transplants” to Pittsburgh and minorities who are “native” Pittsburghers. **KI-5**, who was a transplant, had migrated from a region with a large African American population. He was aware that Pittsburgh’s small minority population lacks power and influence on the larger local environment and within the power structure, but he had a refreshing and more positive viewpoint of the circumstances faced locally by African Americans. Unlike the participants in the focus group discussion, he attributed more responsibility for local change to African American residents and identified a need for them to initiate and improve social interactions. He did not focus as much as the focus group participants on the systemic causes of exclusion. Although he was aware of local inequities, his interpretations and solutions differed from those of natives, and he had a far more optimistic outlook. It was this outlook that illustrated the divergent experiences between transplants and native African Americans. Some native African American Pittsburghers

historically have pointed to these differences as an element that complicates the issue of local inclusion. Many native African American Pittsburghers see the hiring of African Americans from areas outside of Pittsburgh as another way that they have been excluded throughout the region. It also has been argued that transplants come to Pittsburgh with skills, training, and education that they have received elsewhere and that this makes them successful. Based on the success of these African Americans, other groups sometimes argue that there is no discrimination. On the other hand, local African Americans are sometimes born into trans-generational poverty, receive poor educations, and are stuck in circumstances that make them unable to advance economically, politically, and socially. However, if they are able to achieve these things, they often feel compelled to leave Pittsburgh to make a better living. Finally, **KI-5** believed that the next step would be to start dialogue groups on inclusion in various small local venues, and that these groups should intentionally include people from different races and cultures.

KI-6. This Key Informant exhibited genuine interest and passion in the topic of inclusion in the greater Pittsburgh area; it seemed that the purpose and intentions of this research study were meaningful to his personal and professional mission, identity, and beliefs. He demonstrated a pro-active awareness and attitude through his responses to the interview questions. Several times, he expressed the opinion that although bringing people together to discuss the topic of inclusion in the greater Pittsburgh area is valuable and positive in thought and action, its validity is based on the actions of those involved in the discussion *ex post facto*. This primary theme of pro-action was additionally demonstrated by his persistent vocal inference that reaching out and actively listening to members of minority cultures, while questioning members of majority cultures, is of significant importance. He further stressed his belief that those who have power not only have a duty to those they are leading, but have an additional responsibility to promote full-inclusion. **KI-6** discussed a number of relevant tensions that he felt are associated with racism and inclusion: nepotism versus representation; discussion versus taking action; and, being closed and passive versus openness and being personally and professionally inviting. He also emphasized the importance of moving beyond electing to exhibit a caring attitude to actively promoting and encouraging inclusion.

KI-7. This Key Informant defined inclusion as “the full opportunity to be included in all aspects of life.” She emphasized that there is a lack of total inclusion of the races—especially African Americans—throughout the fabric of life in the Pittsburgh area. She expressed great concern about the lack of progress of inclusion locally, especially in the housing, employment, and education sectors. She noted the caution and reserve still experienced on a daily basis by women of color in simply routinely acquiring and maintaining personal safety; she stressed the need for safe living areas in the city. She discussed the exodus of young, educated, minority professionals and the lack of migration of these persons to Pittsburgh. She felt that there continues to be a White community power base within the area. **KI-7** advocated for the improvement of dialogue among local ethnic and racial groups. She voiced some hope for a gradual change in racial attitudes and behaviors within the area, as well as a gradual positive change toward inclusion in the within the city’s ethnic neighborhoods. However, **KI-7** stressed, increased political power at all levels of government is key to such an outcome.

KI-8. This Key Informant provided a rich and in-depth understanding of the issues related to inclusion in Pittsburgh. When asked how he defines inclusion, he stated: “Inclusion only becomes relevant if there has been a history of exclusion, and then you have to take specific steps to make sure that people who have been systematically excluded are able to participate in all aspects of social life to some degree proportionate to their representation in the general population. So, inclusion has been called different things at different times. At one time, it was called integration. At another time, it was called affirmative action. At another time, it was called diversity. Democracy should suffice, but it doesn’t.” He stated that we, as a country, want to talk about the realities of Democracy and be represented as civil, but “When it comes to actuality—the cost, the price you have to pay for a Democratic, multicultural society—we have not yet risen to the call to be able to create that.” He believed that city leaders can articulate, for the majority population, the importance of their fulfillment of true Democracy and true inclusion by fighting racism, fighting bigotry, and fighting male chauvinism. Most (Caucasian) leaders, especially political leaders, are afraid to challenge racism, so they take the easy way out and talk about the things that are easy for people to digest. What these leaders could do effectively is to

actually personify the Democracy that they say they represent. To achieve inclusion in Pittsburgh, an attempt needs to be made to get the “most powerful business, political and religious leaders in the city” to the table for a discussion similar to that of the focus group. These are the people who can “take the message to the people who control the large institutions that affect the lives of a large number of people.”

KI-9. This Key Informant paused and contemplated before giving any response to questions. In spite of his slow and calculated speech pattern, it was interesting to note that the quickest response to a question occurred when asked if he believed there is an inclusion problem in Pittsburgh. His response was an emphatic “no.” It was the only response to a question that had evidence of emotion associated with it. **KI-9** seemed to sincerely believe this, in that his body language was congruent. He reported believing that the problems attributed to inclusion are contrived by outsiders—“Outburghers”—who do not understand Pittsburgh. **KI-9** voiced the belief that inclusion is not an issue in his work sector, because promotion occurs based upon credentials and performance. The interviewer was left with the following impressions: this Caucasian male in a leadership position truly does not believe that racism or inclusion is a local issue; he perceives current educational programming in the city schools to be adequate in how it addresses inclusion issues; he believes that a strong work ethic and education lead to positive inclusion in any community; he believes that programs designed to provide affirmative action promote failure and are a cause of inclusion problems; he believes that the relationship between members of the African American community and the political infrastructure is positive and open; and, he believes that Pittsburgh can serve as a model city for much of the nation because of its rich diversity from both past and present settings.

The major themes and thematic content from all nine key informant interviews have been synthesized and are presented below in Table 4.

Table 4: Key Informant Interview Themes

Themes	Thematic Content
Defining Inclusion	Full opportunity in all aspects of life

	<p>More vague in personal than professional life</p> <p>Having the information, resources and power to drive own agenda</p> <p>Inclusion has been called different things at different times—integration, affirmative action, diversity—</p> <p>Democracy should suffice, but it does not</p>
Achieving Inclusion	<p>One must actively promote and encourage inclusion</p> <p>More responsibility for change taken by minority residents</p> <p>Initiating representative dialogue groups</p> <p>Within-sector diversity committees</p> <p>Increasing inclusion within city’s ethnic neighborhoods</p> <p>Need increased political power at all levels of government</p> <p>Greater inclusion increases networking power</p> <p>Need to change paradigms to embrace inclusion</p> <p>Developing volunteerism</p> <p>Everyone has a responsibility</p> <p>Learning how to build connective relationships</p> <p>Learning how to manage relationships</p> <p>Ask people what they think</p> <p>Figuring out ways to leverage positive and negative aspects of the City</p> <p>Bringing together a broad cross-section of the most powerful business, political, and religious leaders in the city to begin the dialogue</p>
Barriers to Achieving Inclusion	<p>Class discrimination</p> <p>Local tendency not to migrate out of neighborhoods</p> <p>Lack of progress for inclusion in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - housing

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - employment - education - personal safety <p>Lack of migration of young, educated, minority professionals</p> <p>Lack of inclusion within city's ethnic neighborhoods</p> <p>Denial that racism and lack of inclusion exist locally</p> <p>Myths about racism, racial relations, and inclusion</p> <p>Trans-generational poverty</p> <p>Lack of education</p> <p>Low socioeconomic status</p> <p>Pittsburgh not attractive to some due to economic and class structure</p> <p>Lack of consciousness regarding "White privilege"</p> <p>Children continue to adopt prejudicial values of parents</p> <p>School counselor job descriptions that mandate scheduling and paper work over counseling the students</p> <p>Labor unions' hesitancy toward diversity and inclusion</p> <p>Perception that Pittsburgh is a closed city</p> <p>Trying to begin at the grassroots level</p> <p>Vigilant proaction</p>
Racism	<p>Exodus of young, educated, minority professionals</p> <p>Myths about racism, racial relations, and inclusion</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - there are no local race problems - problems are contrived by outsiders - - a hard work ethic and education precludes racist treatment - promotion based upon credentials and performance precludes racist treatment

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - affirmative action programs promote failure - affirmative action programs cause inclusion problems <p>Discrimination is subtle in Pittsburgh</p> <p>Subtle racism can be more insidious than more overt racism</p> <p>Subtle racism makes people invisible/insignificant in daily interactions</p>
Knowledge Construction	<p>Learning new ways to relate and connect</p> <p>Considering relevant tensions associated with racism and inclusion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - nepotism versus representation - discussion versus taking action - being closed and passive versus openness and being personally and professionally inviting
Modeling/Leadership	<p>Leaders need to challenge people out of their comfort zones</p> <p>Those in power have a duty responsibility to promote full-inclusion</p>
Transplant versus Native Residents	<p>Different perceptions of diversity issues by “native” and “transplant” residents</p> <p>Divergent experiences between African American “natives” and “transplants”</p>
Exclusion	<p>Taking specific steps to make sure that people who have been systematically excluded are able to participate in all aspects of social life</p>

Discussion of Focus Group and Key Informant Interview Findings

We found a strong overlap between the thematic content of the focus group and that of the interviews; however, some important data emerged from the key informant interviews that had not arisen from the focus group. For example, one salient issue that emerged from the key informant interviews that was not discussed in the focus group related to the divergent

perceptions and experiences between transplant and native African American residents. Much of the dialogue focused on the tension between the deleterious consequences of discrimination and the possibilities of self-efficacy. This begs questions related to making fine distinctions between recognizing and acknowledging when a member of the society has been unjustly victimized and the instance of attributing “victimness” to individuals in ways that hamper or restrict self-efficacy. An example of the latter is the way in which social welfare policies implemented in African American communities have had disastrous effects on African American family structures and the role of father/husband.

Another salient issue related to the relativity of inclusion to a history of exclusion. As reported above, Key Informant **KI-8** stated the following: “Inclusion only becomes relevant if there has been a history of exclusion, and then you have to take specific steps to make sure that people who have been systematically excluded are able to participate in all aspects of social life to some degree proportionate to their representation in the general population. So, inclusion has been called different things at different times. At one time, it was called integration. At another time, it was called affirmative action. At another time, it was called diversity. Democracy should suffice, but it doesn’t.” While the focus of the study was the experience of *inclusion*, we observed that much of the dialogue actually referenced experiences of *exclusion*. For this reason, we argue that one interpretive iteration of the data involves a full discussion of the tensions between inclusion and exclusion in a Democratic society (although space does not permit such a discussion here).

American Democracy has always assumed an ethos of social justice, as exemplified by the US Constitution, and another interpretive turn of the data here involves this issue. The five ethical principles commonly associated with a justice-based paradigm of ethical conduct are Beneficence, Autonomy, Nonmaleficence, Justice, and Fidelity (Cottone & Tarvydas, 1998; Shapiro & Stefkovich, 2001). These principles are based upon the *desire* to do good, the *desire* to promote the freedom of others to make personal choices, the *desire* to prevent harm, the *desire* to promote the fair treatment of people, and the *desire* to be true to one’s commitments. What happens to the fabric of a Democratic society when some members of the society do not

subscribe to core ethical values in their treatment of select groups of persons within the society? It would seem that in a Democratic society, elected institutions would uphold the ethical ideals of the culture. But what occurs when the political will of at least part of the populace is in opposition to the ethos of social justice? How does such a dilemma affect the flow and appointment of institutional power? What relationship is there amongst the ethos of social justice, ethical conduct, contemporary political will, institutional power, and inclusion?

The tension of individual exclusion versus systemic exclusion parallels the tension between an internal locus of control versus an external locus of control. As indicated by a number of the co-researchers, the inclusion/exclusion continuum is more easily navigated and affected through constructing and managing interpersonal relationships. The individual has a much higher level of control, influence, decision-making, choice, and so forth, interpersonally (internal locus of control) here than in attempting to navigate an entire system—where unforeseen risk factors may be influenced by unknown (systemic rather than personal) forces. There are many potential complexities inherent in such an ecological understanding of this matter, not the least of which involves reciprocal response. When some are excluded, the included are also affected.

From Pedagogy to Inquiry

Since the secondary reason for conducting the study was to provide hands-on qualitative research experience for a group of doctoral students in counselor education, a brief discussion of the pedagogical considerations is presented here. An introductory qualitative research course was designed for a cohort of doctoral students at an early phase in their counselor education program. The course was designed as an all-day-Saturday, weekly class format. Most of the class assignments revolved around the inclusion project. The first class session offered an introduction to the course content and to the research project.

The focus group was conducted in the early part of January 2003, prior to the beginning of the doctoral qualitative course. The video tape of the focus group was shown during the second all-day class session to promote additional questions about qualitative research design, to introduce the students to focus-group methodology, to provide an opportunity to identify and analyze data culled from the focus group tape, and to assist in introducing and explaining the class

assignments that involved the key informant interviews. Individual students addressed a variety of academic and project-related dynamics in their writing; their salient issues included early exposure to a research methodology course in the doctoral program, first-time exposure to qualitative research methodology, assessing the impact of viewing and analyzing the focus group video tape, the impact of conducting a key informant interview, exposure to field work, learning about racism from an ethnographic perspective, and analyzing the interview data. One student captured the impact of the project and many of the salient issues in the following narrative.

Student Reflection (Lenora A. Angelone). The work accomplished through this class gave me the opportunity to directly experience qualitative research. This experiential process focused my learning and moved me to a deeper level of understanding.

In viewing the focus group video, I was able to distinguish themes provided by the participants, which assisted me in realizing how fertile such research can be. Through my interpretative process, I identified numerous areas that have the potential for further study. It was at this point that I recognized how valuable and important qualitative research can be, envisioning exciting opportunities for my own work in this area. Without this experience, my curiosity regarding inclusion may have withered.

I found the experience of conducting my own interview with a key informant to be absorbing. Not only did I gain significant insight into the research topic, I gained information and collected data that I never expected—opening my mind to broader, more intriguing questions regarding the topic of inclusion.

Notably, I suggest that the key informant was also changed by participation in this project. This individual worked passionately over the past two-and one-half decades in the area of diversity, believing that she was modeling inclusiveness in her life. As we closed the interview, a realization came over her that I could see was new and profoundly important to her. In discussing inclusiveness, she recognized for the first time that although her professional and

work relationships were rich in diversity, her personal relationships were not. This self-realization was significant, important, and troubling to her. This new understanding challenged her to explore this knowledge more fully; and it appreciably provided me with the same.

Learning to conduct qualitative research through hands-on involvement with an actual research project was an ideal learning environment. I had the opportunity to build upon my base of knowledge with strategies, information, and techniques that I developed through my own self-inquisitiveness, as the process provided this rich grounding in self-reflection and critical thinking. Most importantly, the experience moved me to a deeper level of thinking, as I completed the research project with more questions than answers, motivating me to uncover more information in the future.

Hypothesis Generation

One very important tenet that distinguishes qualitative from quantitative research methods is that qualitative research methods are hypothesis generating rather than hypothesis testing. There are numerous hypotheses that can be generated from this study, and we feel that we must sit with the data for a while longer in order to formulate a set of hypotheses that resonates fully with the rich data gleaned in this study. However, a number of theme-connected questions have surfaced at this stage of the iterative process and can serve as guiding points for future research in the Pittsburgh area, as well as in other areas of the country concerned with diversity and inclusion. These include the following questions:

- How can inclusion be defined in ways that are efficacious at personal and systemic levels?
- What are the necessary steps to implement and achieve inclusion?

- How can barriers to inclusion be minimized, diminished, and translated into action that leads to increased inclusion?
- How can subtle racism be illuminated so that local myths are exposed and the public benefits from new understandings?
- How has the ethos, upon which local exclusion practices are based, been socially

constructed?

- What can a deconstruction of these practices reveal that assists in building local inclusion?
- How can local leadership assist in designing and implementing effective inclusion-based strategies for local sectors?

In addition to these categorical questions, the data suggest the need for new theories that are more responsive and accountable to notions of Democratic inclusion. The tensions between inclusion and exclusion need to be explored more fully. Participation in the ethical practices assumed by the justice ethos of a Democratic society needs to be analyzed. Reciprocal responses need to be better understood within an ecological perspective of the individual's interface with a diverse social structure.

Conclusion

This paper has described how selected individuals in the Pittsburgh area experience inclusiveness—or a lack thereof—within this relatively diverse context. The investigation has offered a baseline for possible comparison of attitudes found in the Pittsburgh community with the attitudes of parallel groups in other American metropolitan centers. It was hoped that such information could be useful in designing training for counselors, teachers, and others that aims to enhance cultural sensitivity in these fields and in the ability of these professionals to deliver culturally relevant public education and counseling services. This inquiry has raised serious and complex questions about the accessibility of inclusion within the existing institutional structures of our diverse society. If we are members of a culture truly built upon an ethos of civility, justice, and Democratic ideals, then we will all assume the challenges of the inclusion discourse with continued dialogue and social action until all members of our diverse society have equitable access to the benefits of being included.

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